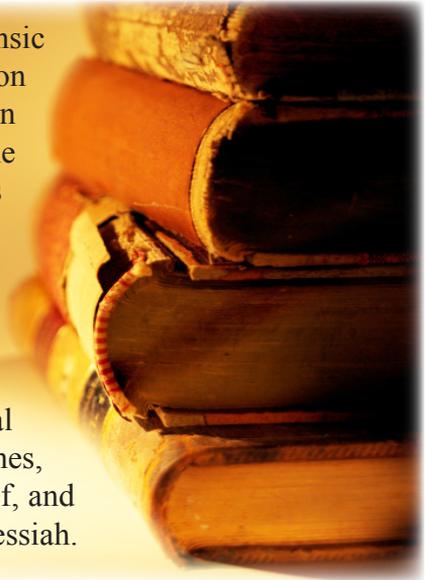


IDENTIFYING Father, Son, and HOLY SPIRIT



For nearly 2,000 years the intrinsic nature of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit has been in dispute. To remedy this problem the Roman Church convened councils and passed several creeds, which continue to influence modern worship today. But do these creeds reflect the truth of Scripture? To answer this crucial question, this booklet will explore the historical and biblical accuracy of these doctrines, including the Trinity, oneness belief, and the preexistence of Yahshua the Messiah.



An Early Paradigm Shift

The main inducement for interpreting the essence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in a triune deity came through Greek and Roman cults. The early church constituted Jews and proselytes to the Jewish faith. With the introduction of gentile converts came a shift in thought and theology. Unlike the Jews, who viewed the worship of Yahweh in a monotheistic manner, the gentiles were polytheistic, worshiping many false gods.

Besides the monotheism versus polytheism issue, there was another key distinction between Jew and gentile. While the Jews emphasized their relationship with Yahweh, the Greeks were more concerned with His essence. This difference in emphasis along with the burgeoning numbers of gentile converts led to understanding Yahweh from a Greco-Roman perspective.

According to authors Alan Johnson and Robert E. Webber, “The view of God in the ancient church passed through the Greco-Roman grid. Consequently the emphasis in this early period of the church is not so much on the relationship of God to the world as on God as he is in himself” (*What Christians Believe, A Biblical and Historical Summary*, p. 82).

The authors go on to state, “The issue the church faced in the

pagan Hellenistic culture was to affirm both the unity and the diversity of God in the midst of a polytheistic culture. On the one hand, the church needed to remain faithful to the Old Testament emphasis on the oneness of God. On the other hand, it could not ignore the New Testament revelation of diversity. So the questions were: How do you maintain the unity of God without losing the diversity? How do you maintain the diversity of God without falling into polytheism? While the church was eventually to affirm both the unity and the diversity of God in the creeds, various groups in the second and third century overemphasized either the unity or the diversity” (p. 83).

The authors explain here the overwhelming task that the Church had in the first few centuries. As gentile-minded believers were coming in they had to please both them and the Jewish converts who established the early assembly in the New Testament. Many Jews were arguing that a convert to Messiah had to become a Jew first through physical circumcision, which is the controversy in Acts 15.

So what was the church to do? Should they continue to maintain the monotheistic beliefs of the Jews or change their theology to more closely align with the many new gentile converts? At the root of this question was the essence of the Father and Son. Were they one and the same, were they distinct beings, were they co-equal, were they co-eternal, was one subservient to the other?

To answer these critical questions, the church went through several stages of meetings (counsels) and developed several creeds until they solidified the position of the church. The major advocates of each side were Arius (250 CE – 336 CE) and the bishop Athanasius (296-336). While there were other arguments and contributors, the positions that the men proposed became the two competing views of the church.

Arius’ Hebraic View

Arius was a prominent priest in Alexandria, Egypt. He chose an ascetic life, rejecting the many pleasures of the world. From historical accounts, Arius was a man of devotion and sincere motives. He received his religious training at Antioch, the first location of the early assembly. Unlike Alexandria, which was dominated by the Greek mind, Antioch maintained a Hebraic view, including a strict

monotheistic interpretation of Scripture. He was taught under Lucian of Antioch, a well-known teacher and martyr of the early church; some blamed Lucian for Arius' opposition to the Trinity.

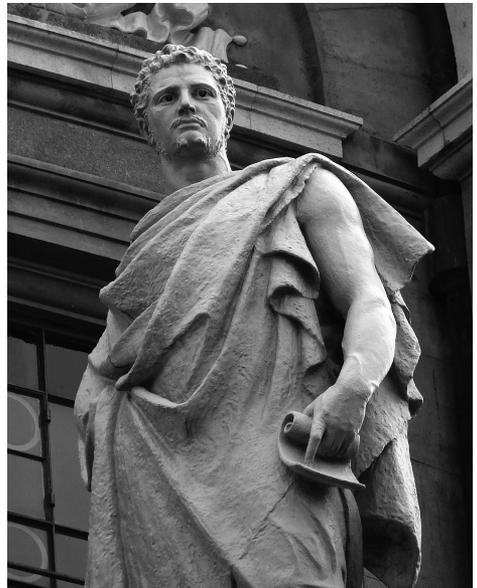
Arius held that the Father and Son were distinct from one another and that the Father was superior to the Son. He also maintained that the Son pre-existed with the Father and rejected the belief that the Son was co-eternal with the Father. He maintained that the Messiah was created by His Father Yahweh. For these beliefs he was branded a heretic and suffered persecution.

Author Wayne Gruden concurs, "Arius taught that god the Son was at one point created by God the Father, and that before that time the Son did not exist, nor did the Holy Spirit, but the Father only. Thus, though the Son is a heavenly being who existed before the rest of creation and who is far greater than all the rest of creation, he is still not equal to the Father in all his attributes—he may even be said to be 'like the Father' or 'similar to the Father' in his nature, but he cannot be said to be 'of the same nature' as the Father" (*Systematic Theology*, p. 243).

Athanasius for the Opposition

While historical records are sketchy, records show that Athanasius was born in Alexandria and was mentored under Alexander, the bishop of Alexandria. From an early age he showed promise in the church. As a result, he was ordained a deacon in the Roman Church before age 30.

Because of these early achievements, Athanasius was instrumental at influencing the most important council in the history of the church. "Although many early church leaders contributed to the gradual formulation of a correct doctrine of the Trinity, the most



St. Athanasius (1883-84) by Carl Rohl-Smith, Frederik's Church, Copenhagen, Denmark

influential by far was Athanasius. He was only twenty-nine years old when he came to the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, not as an official member but as secretary to Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria. Yet his keen mind and writing ability allowed him to have an important influence on the outcome of the Council, and he himself became Bishop of Alexandria in 328” (*Ibid*, p. 245).

Athanasius understood the relationship between the Father and Son much differently from his opponent, Arius. He believed that the Father and Son were co-equal and of the same substance. According to author Earl E. Cairns he “insisted that Christ had existed from all eternity with the Father and was of the same essence (*homoousios*) as the Father, although He was a distinct personality. He insisted upon these things because he believed that, if Christ were less than He had stated Him to be, He could not be the Saviour of men. The question of man’s eternal salvation was involved in the relationship of the Father and the son according to Athanasius. He held that Christ was coequal, coeternal and consubstantial with the Father...” (*Christianity Through the Centuries*, pp. 142-143).

Political Unity the Overriding Concern

Because of the competing beliefs of Arius and Athanasius, many were concerned about not only the stability of the church but of the empire, including Emperor Constantine. Authors Anthony F. Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting in their book, *The Doctrine of the Unity*, describe this deep fear: “The marked ideological differences between Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch were matters of concern to the Roman Emperor. The power of religion played so great a role in the stability of the fourth-century Roman Empire that religious turmoil had to be brought under control by the State, lest it disrupt political unity.

“Constantine determined to resolve the dispute by means of the following identical, conciliatory letters sent to each faction, urging reconciliation of differences: ‘Constantine the Victor, Supreme Augustus, to Alexander and Arius...How deep a wound has not only my ears but my heart received from the report that divisions exist among yourselves...Having inquired carefully into the origin and

foundation of these differences, I find their cause to be of a truly insignificant nature, quite unworthy of such bitter contention” (pp. 149-150).

Emperor Constantine simply wanted political unity in his empire and he failed to grasp the magnitude of what was being discussed. This is consistent with his heathen background, wherein both pagan Greek and Roman cults’ theological differences were inconsequential. The overriding concern was only that the many gods in Greece and Rome got their due obeisance. Doctrine was not critical.

The theological impact of the two views being espoused was enormous, with Athanasius firmly holding to the view that the Father and Son were of the same substance, co-eternal and co-equal, while Arius contended that the Father and Son were distinct with the Son being neither co-eternal nor co-equal with His Father. According to historians, their differences led to numerous bloody conflicts. “Before the orthodox doctrine of the relationship of the two natures was finally formulated, many scenes of passion and violence occurred” (*Christianity Through the Centuries*, p. 146).

According to Arthur Cushman McGiffert, “In the hope of securing for his throne the support of the growing body of Christians he had shown them considerable favor and it was to his interest to have the church vigorous and united. The Arian controversy was threatening its unity and menacing its strength. He therefore undertook to put an end to the trouble. It was suggested to him, perhaps by the Spanish bishop Hosius, who was influential at court, that if a synod were to meet representing the whole church both east and west, it might be possible to restore harmony. ‘Constantine himself of course neither knew nor cared anything about the matter in dispute but he was eager to bring the controversy to a close, and Hosius’ advice appealed to him as sound’” (*A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 1, p. 258).

It’s ironic that the motivation for finding a resolution on this central issue was not scriptural but political. To accomplish this, the church convened a council, which would become the method of resolving disputes in the church. In most cases, the emperor would preside over the councils. In the case of the Council of Nicea, Emperor Constantine chaired the proceedings.



Illustration of Emperor Constantine and the bishops convened at the First Council of Nicaea (325 C.E.) holding the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381

Hot Debate at the Council of Nicaea

From June 19 through August 25, 325 CE, leaders of the Church met at the council of Nicaea. Constantine invited 1,800 bishops, but only a fraction attended. In addition to discussing the canonization of the New Testament and the date for Easter, the council was there to finally resolve the debate between Arius and Athanasius.

According to author Earl E. Cairns, “Three hundred and eighteen

leaders were present, but less than ten were from the Western section of the Empire...Arius, who was backed by Eusebius of Nicomedia (to be distinguished from Eusebius of Caesarea) and a minority of those present, insisted that Christ had not existed from all eternity but had a beginning by the creative act of God prior to time. He believed that Christ was of a different (*heteros*) essence or substance than the Father. Because of the virtue of His life and His obedience to God's will, Christ was to be considered divine. But Arius believed that Christ was a being, created out of nothing, subordinate to the Father and of a different essence from the Father. He was not coequal, coeternal or consubstantial with the Father. To Arius He was divine but not deity.

“Athanasius became the chief exponent of what became the orthodox view. His wealthy parents had provided for his theological education in the famous catechetical school of Alexandria. His work *De Incarnatione* presented his idea of the doctrine of Christ. At the council this young man, slightly over thirty, insisted that Christ had existed from all eternity with the Father and was of the same essence (*homoousios*) as the Father, although He was a distinct personality. He insisted upon these things because he believed that, if Christ were less than He had stated Him to be, He could not be the Saviour of men. The question of man's eternal salvation was involved in the relationship of the Father and the son according to Athanasius. He held that Christ was coequal, coeternal and consubstantial with the Father, and for these views he suffered exile five times before his death” (*Christianity Through the Centuries*, pp. 142-143).

After much debate, Athanasius won the day. While this was a major setback for those who embraced the original Jewish tenants as taught by the Messiah and His Apostles, this was a notable win for the Greek minded gentiles that influenced the church. Authors Anthony F. Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting state, “The Greek philosophically-minded Alexandrian theologians, led by Athanasius, won the day. Those more under the earlier influence of Jewish monotheism were defeated. Dissenters who refused to sign the agreement were immediately banished. The Church was now taken over and dictated to by theologians strongly influenced by the Greek mind... ‘When

the Greek mind and the Roman mind, instead of the Hebrew mind, came to dominate the Church, there occurred a disaster from which the Church has never recovered, either in doctrine or practice” (*The Doctrine of the Trinity*, pp. 151-152).

To ensure uniformity in the Church, the council drafted its first creed, which was called the Nicene Creed. It read, “We believe in one God the Father all-sovereign, maker of all things. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, things in heaven and things on the earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and became man, suffered, and rose on the third day, ascended into the heavens, and is coming to judge living and dead. And in the Holy Spirit. And those that say ‘There was when he was not,’ and, ‘Before he was begotten he was not,’ and that, ‘He came into being from what-is-not,’ or those that allege, that the son of God is ‘Of another substance or essence’ or ‘created,’ or ‘changeable’ or ‘alterable,’ these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.”

While the first Nicene Creed set out to express the official position of the Church regarding the persons of the Father and Son, it did little to address the Holy Spirit. Consequently, while this council gave a final dogmatic ruling on the Father and Son, it did not fully substantiate the Trinity doctrine. It would take almost fifty more years to solidify the Trinity doctrine into church teaching.

How Constant Was Constantine?

With Emperor Constantine presiding over and greatly influencing the results at the Council of Nicea, it must be asked, was this emperor ever converted? Even though many in Christendom desire to show him as a champion of the Church, the reality is he was nothing more than a crafty politician and a pagan sun worshiper, as was his father before him.

“Constantine appears to have been a sun-worshiper, one of a number of late pagan cults which had observances in common with Christians. Worship of such gods was not a novel idea. Every Greek



Colossal marble head of Emperor
Constantine the Great,
Roman, 4th Century

or Roman expected that political success followed from religious piety. Christianity was the religion of Constantine's father. Although Constantine claimed that he was the thirteenth Apostle, his was no sudden Damascus conversion. Indeed it is highly doubtful that he ever truly abandoned sun-worship. After his professed acceptance of Christianity, he built a triumphal arch to the sun god and in Constantinople set up a statue of the same sun god bearing his own features. He was finally deified after his death by official edict in the Empire, as were many Roman rulers” (*Ibid*, p. 147).

Author Norbert Brox endorses this position. “Constantine did not experience any conversion; there are no signs of a change of faith in him. He never said of himself that he had turned to another god. . . at the time when he turned to Christianity, for him this was Sol Invictus (the victorious sun god)” (*A Concise History of the Early Church*, p. 48).

Another historian writes of Constantine, “He did not make Christianity the sole religion of the state. That was to follow under later Emperors. He continued to support both paganism and Christianity. In 314, when the cross first appeared on his coins, it was accompanied by the figures of Sol Invictus and Mars Conservator. To the end of his days he bore the title of pontifex maximus as chief priest of the pagan state cult. The subservient Roman Senate followed the long-established custom and classed him among the gods” (*A History of Christianity*, Kenneth Scott Latourette, p. 92).

Despite his penchant for sun worship, the church in its attempt to recognize the legitimacy of Constantine's involvement at the Council at Nicea deified him as a saint. Such recognition is hardly justifiable on any level. For this reason all those who bow their knee to Athanasius

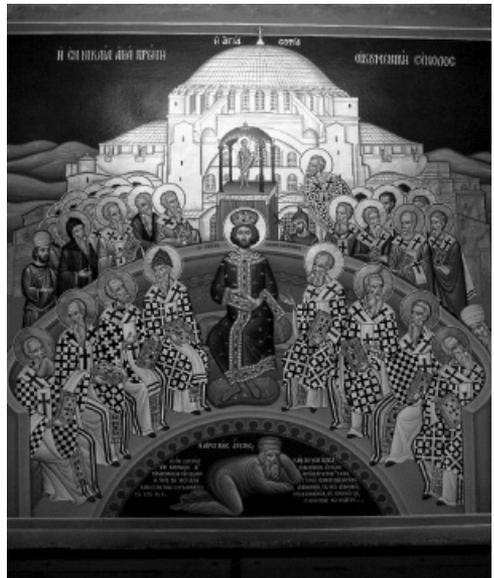
and to the Nicene Creed justify this pagan emperor who changed the church forever!

If not for Constantine's involvement, it's possible that the Church would have preserved its monotheistic heritage. "The bulk of Christians, had they been let alone, would have been satisfied with the old belief in one God, the Father, and would have distrusted the 'dispensation,' as it has been called, by which the sole Deity of the Father expanded into the Deity of the Father and the Son... 'All simple people,' Tertullian wrote, 'not to call them ignorant and uneducated...take fright at the "dispensation"...They will have it that we are proclaiming two or three gods'" (*The Doctrine of the Unity*, Anthony F. Buzzard and Charles F. Hunting, p. 145).

Council at Constantinople Solidifies the Trinity

After the first council at Nicea and the persistent strife that followed, Emperor Constantine began to regret convening the council. According to historians, little changed after this council. Church leaders continued teaching their preferred position, whether it was Arius (also known as Arianism) or the doctrine solidified by Athanasius at Nicea. "For two centuries after Constantine, slaughter followed slaughter as professing Christian vied with Christian in a bloody struggle in defense of what became a hardened religious orthodoxy. It was required that one accept belief in the Godhead of two persons (later expanded to a Deity of three persons) or face banishment, exile, torture and death..." (*Ibid*, p. 153).

In an attempt to finally resolve the division in the church, in 381 CE Emperor



Council of Nicea
Arius depicted beneath the feet of the
Emperor Constantine and the bishops

Theodosius I, also known as Theodosius the Great, who ruled from 379 CE to 395 CE, called a second ecumenical council. A total of 150 bishops attended. It was held at Constantinople, which is Istanbul, Turkey, today. Gregory of Nazianzus chaired the council, an educated philosopher who infused Hellenistic beliefs into the church. Being an advocate of the Trinity, including the divinity of the Holy Spirit, he urged his fellow bishops to accept his view. However, during the council, Gregory of Nazianzus became ill and resigned his chair. In his place, a man named Nectarius was appointed. Oddly, Nectarius was not even baptized and was now in a position to help determine the theological fate of Christianity. This was the second time a layman presided over a prominent council.

The council ultimately confirmed the Holy Spirit as a third equal “person” in the Trinity. As a result, the original Nicene Creed, now known as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, was updated to read,

“We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven. By the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended in heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living



Constantine burning Arian books

and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.”



Theodosius

This final step by Theodosius the Great not only produced an updated creed, but also established the doctrine of the Trinity that we know today.

Scholars: Zero Evidence in New Testament for the Trinity

Being that it took 350 years after the Messiah to solidify the Trinity, the simple question is, why so long? If the Trinity is found and supported in the Bible, why did it require many centuries and numerous church schisms, arguments, debates, and even violence to legitimize and propagate this doctrine? Why wasn't it authenticated from the very beginning, in the book of Acts, avoiding endless questions and wrangling over it? Where is the New Testament teaching of a triune being?

The fact is the word “Trinity” is not found anywhere in the Bible. Even the concept is missing. Clearly it was contrived in the imaginations of man. An exhaustive review of Scripture and history reveals the simple fact that the Trinity teaching was unknown to the early New Testament assembly, as supported by numerous authorities:

- “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 credal formulations cannot be clearly detected within the confines of the canon” (*Oxford Companion to the Bible*, 1993, p. 782).

- “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. The language of the doctrine is the language of the ancient church taken from classical Greek philosophy” (*Christian Doctrine*, Shirley Guthrie, Jr., 1994, pp. 76-77). It’s important to observe here that the author attributes the notion of the Trinity not to Scripture, but to influence from Greek philosophy.
- “This is not itself a Biblical term, but was a term coined by Tertullian to refer to this whole concept under one word” (*Classic Bible Dictionary*, Jay P. Green, p. 483). Tertullian was a Christian author and apologist who lived from 160 CE to 225 CE. Before Tertullian the word trinity did not exist in Christian writing.
- “Many doctrines are accepted by evangelicals as being clearly taught in the Scripture for which there are no proof texts. The doctrine of the Trinity furnishes the best example of this. It is fair to say that the Bible does not clearly teach the doctrine of the Trinity” (*Basic*



Martin Luther

Theology, Professor Charles Ryrie, 1999, p. 89).

- “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” (*The Sermons of Martin Luther*, John Lenker, Vol. 3, 1988, p. 406). Even though Martin Luther was an avid supporter of the Trinity, he correctly recognized that the doctrine was derived from man and not from the Bible.
- “The term ‘Trinity’ is not a biblical term... In point of fact, the doctrine of the Trinity is a purely revealed

doctrine...As the doctrine of the Trinity is undiscoverable by reason, so it is incapable of proof from reason” (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* , vol. 5, p. 3012, “Trinity”).

- “It is admitted by all who thoughtfully deal with this subject that the Scripture revelation here leads us into the presence of a deep mystery; and that all human attempts at expression are of necessity imperfect” (*New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, 1988, p. 1308, “Trinity”). Should we rest our entire faith on a belief that is a “deep mystery?”
- “Respecting the manner in which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit make one God, the Scripture teaches nothing, since the subject is of such a nature as not to admit of its being explained to us” (*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, p. 553, “Trinity”).
- “Precisely what that doctrine is, or rather precisely how it is to be explained, Trinitarians are not agreed among themselves” (*A Dictionary of Religious Knowledge*, 1885, “Trinitarians”). Disagreements abounded through the centuries even among those who advocate this doctrine. Should not a belief so critical and indispensable be not only plainly and clearly taught in the Scriptures, but at least be understood and agreed upon by its very proponents?
- “The formal doctrine of the Trinity as it was defined by the great church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries is not to be found in the NT” (*The Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*, 1996, “Trinity”).
- “The doctrine developed gradually over several centuries and through many controversies... The council of Nicea in 325 stated the crucial formula for that doctrine in its confession that the ‘Son is of the same substance...as the Father,’ even though it said very little about the Holy Spirit...By the end of the 4th century...the doctrine of the Trinity took substantially the form it has maintained ever since” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Trinity”).
- “...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, 1976, p. 84, “God”).
- “The formulation ‘one God in three Persons’ was not solidly established, certainly not fully assimilated into Christian life and its

profession of faith, prior to the end of the 4th century... Among the Apostolic Fathers, there had been nothing even remotely approaching such a mentality or perspective” (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1967, Vol. 14).

Both secular historians and Bible scholars readily admit that the doctrine of the Trinity was not official church teaching until the council of Nicea. This is startling! Neither the Apostles nor the early apostolic fathers had a concept of a triune relationship among the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It is freely admitted that the doctrine was not established until 400 years after the Savior’s resurrection. If the doctrine of the Trinity is not biblical, how did it originate?

Legions of Pagan Trinities

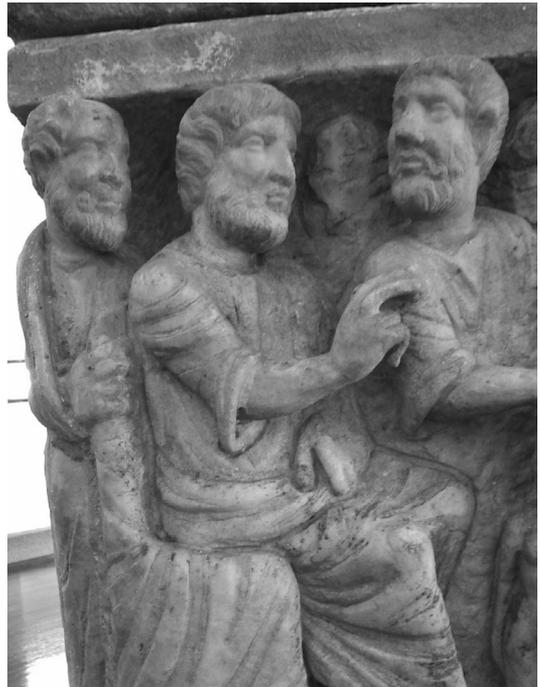
Author Marie Sinclair writes, “It is generally, although erroneously, supposed that the doctrine of the Trinity is of Christian origin. Nearly every nation of antiquity possessed a similar doctrine” (*Old Truths in a New Light*, 1876, p. 382). The belief in a triune deity is also very ancient, and can be traced back to ancient Babylon. “Will anyone after this say that the Roman Catholic Church must still be called Christian, because it holds the doctrine of the Trinity? So did the pagan Babylonians, so did the Egyptians, so do the Hindoos at this hour, in the very sense in which Rome does” (*The Two Babylons*, by Alexander Hislop).

Hislop’s statements are supported in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, “Although the notion of a divine triad or Trinity is characteristic of the Christian religion, it is by no means peculiar to it. In Indian religion we meet with the trinitarian group of Brahma, Siva, and Vishnu; and in Egyptian religion with the trinitarian group of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, constituting a divine family, like the Father, Mother and Son in mediaeval Christian pictures” (Trinity, p. 458). According to the *Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology*, Sumer, an ancient civilization first settled around 4500 BCE to 4000 BCE in southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), contained a similar belief, “The universe was divided into three regions each of which become the domain of a god. Anu’s share was the sky. The earth was given to Enlil. Ea became the ruler of the waters. Together they constituted

the triad of the Great Gods” (1994, pg. 54-55).

Perhaps even more important is the influence of Greek philosophy. According to Aristotle, “All things are three, and thrice is all: and let us use this number in the worship of our gods; for, as the Pythagoreans say, everything and all things are bounded by threes, for the end, the middle and the beginning have this number in everything, and they compose the number of the Trinity” (Author Weigall, *Paganism in Our Christianity*, p. 197-198).

A question few ever stop to ask is, why is the Trinity a belief held firmly by most of Christendom, being completely lacking in the Bible’s teachings? The historian Will Durant offers this revealing explanation, “Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it...The Greek language, having reigned for centuries over philosophy, became the vehicle of Christian literature and ritual; The Greek mysteries passed down into the impressive mystery of the Mass. Other pagan cultures contributed to the syncretist result. From Egypt came the ideas of a divine Trinity” (*The Story of Civilization*, vol. III).



The Dogmatic Sarcophagus 320-350 A.D.,
Earliest known depiction of the Christian Trinity.
Currently in the Vatican Museum

This blending with paganism, which was commonplace in the early church, changed Christianity forever. Like the development of the Trinity, many practices and beliefs today developed over time without biblical support.

A Son Unequal to His Father

What does the Bible actually say about the relationship between the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit? Does any evidence for the Trinity exist in the New Testament? The answer is a resolute no. The first problem with the Trinity doctrine is that the New Testament says expressly that the Father is greater than the Son. Yahshua called Yahweh His “Father” for the simple reason that Yahweh was superior to and preceded the Son in existence—as do all fathers.

The doctrine of the Trinity says that the Son is both co-equal to and co-eternal with the Father, while the Scriptures maintain the opposite.

Yahshua the Messiah Himself affirmed that he was not co-equal with the Father, but was in submission and subjection to the Father. “You have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If you loved me, you would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). One cannot be equal with another if the other is greater.

Yahshua again confirms his submission to his Father in John 10:29, “My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” Since Yahshua is speaking, He included Himself here. In His own words Yahshua confirms that the Father is superior to everyone, including the Son Himself. As we note in the *Restoration Study Bible*, “... This precludes the possibility of a duality or trinity of Father and Son.”

The Apostle Paul also confirms Yahshua’s subordinate relationship to the Father. “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Messiah; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Messiah is Yahweh” (1Cor. 11:3). As Yahweh appointed the man over the woman at creation, Paul states in like manner that the Father is over His Son.

In another of Yahshua’s statements we find that the Father is superior in knowledge to the Son, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32). If the Father and Son were equal, why is it that the Son is not privy to the timing of His own coming? If they are indeed co-equal, something is amiss here.

In Matthew 20:23 Yahshua is confronted by the mother of Zebedee's children about future positions for her sons. In response to her inquiry, Yahshua clearly shows that the Father is superior, "And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father."

The Father alone prepares Kingdom rewards. This is not something that the Son can provide. He again defaults to His Father. If they were equal and of the same being, why is this honor not bestowed also upon the Son?

In several instances the Messiah stated that he could do nothing outside of His Father. In response to the Jews' hatred for doing His Father's will, He stated, "...Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19). If the Father and Son shared equal authority, why then was He limited by what He saw the Father do? Clearly, the concept of the Father and Son being co-equal is scripturally unfounded.

The Son Is Not Co-eternal with the Father

These passages pose serious problems — but not the only ones — with the Trinity. The definition of the Trinity states that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are co-eternal. This assertion is another misunderstanding, arising from the Council of Nicea.

John of Patmos wrote the Book of Revelation under the direction of Yahshua the Messiah. He confirmed that Yahshua was the first of Yahweh's creation. "And unto the angel of the assembly of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of Elohim" (Rev. 3:14).

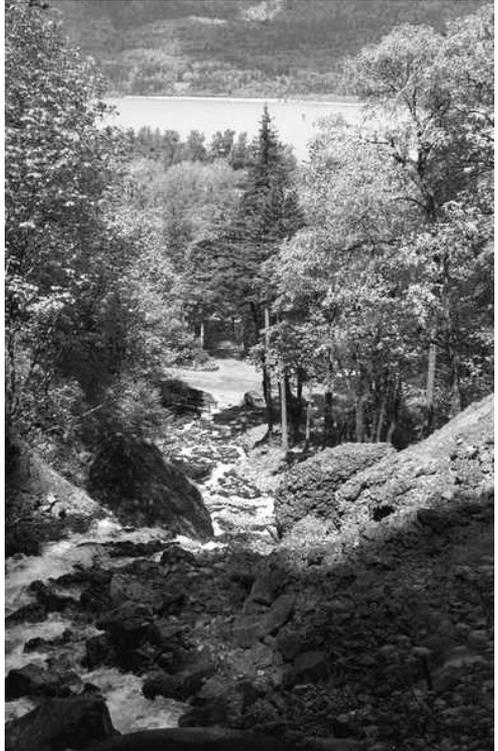
The Greek for the word "beginning" here is *arche* and means, "a commencement, or (concretely) chief (in various applications of order, time, place, or rank)," Strong's. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* further defines this word: "...NT:746 means 'a beginning.' The root *arch* primarily indicated what was of worth. Hence the verb *archo* meant 'to be first,' and *archon* denoted 'a

ruler.” While some will argue for the latter definition, the primary and most reasonable definition conveys that Yahshua was the first in the commencement of His Father’s creation. If Yahshua was created by His Father how then can He be co-eternal with His Father? Knowing that one existed prior to the other, reason alone would conclude that a co-eternal relationship between the Son and Father is illogical.

To further confirm Yahshua’s statement in Revelation, in Proverbs 8 we find Solomon confirming Yahshua’s creation, “Yahweh possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth” (vv. 22-25).

The preceding verses speak of wisdom. Yahshua the Messiah is the personification of wisdom. Solomon here was not referring to simply an attribute, but to the creation of Yahweh’s Son. The word “possessed” comes from the Hebrew *qanah* and is a primitive root. Strong’s defines this word as, “to erect, i.e. create; by extension, to procure, especially by purchase (causatively, sell); by implication to own.” Even though *qanah* most often refers to procurement in context of Scripture, the primary meaning in Strong’s is “to erect, i.e. to create.”

In addition to the aforementioned passages, the Bible clearly



states that only Yahweh, the Heavenly Father, has immortality and is the only one who ever possessed innate immortality. “Who only has immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man has seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting” (1Tim. 6:16). This statement can only apply to Yahweh, the Father. How can a Son be co-eternal with His Father if only His Father contains immortality? This is further proof that a co-eternal relationship between the Son and Father cannot be scripturally established.

The Power of Yahweh

The Nicene - Constantinopolitan Creed defined the Holy Spirit as, “We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified...” There are several contradictions between this creed and the Bible regarding the Holy Spirit. However, before examining these inconsistencies, let’s first seek to understand the terms.

The term “Holy Spirit” is from the Hebrew *ruach qodesh*. The word spirit is derived from the Hebrew *ruach*, occurring 389 times in the Old Testament. That includes 232 as “spirit,” 92 times as “wind,” and 27 times as “breath” in the King James Version.

Note the definition of the word *ruach*: “The basic meaning of *ruach* is both ‘wind’ or ‘breath,’ but neither is understood as essence; rather it is the power encountered in the breath and the wind, whose whence and whither remains mysterious...2. *ruach* as a designation for the wind is necessarily something found in motion with the power to set other things in motion...The divine designation also apparently has an intensifying function in a few passages: *ruach elohim* (Gen 1:2) and *ruach yhwh* (Isa 59:19)” (*Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, “Ruach”).

This lexicon states that *ruach* implies a power that is within the breath and wind, which is connected to the Name YHWH or Yahweh. The Holy Spirit is the power emanating from our Father Yahweh. It is Yahweh’s power that puts all things into motion. It is His power that brings life into creation. In Genesis 1:2 the Spirit of Elohim “moved”

upon the face of the waters. The word is *rachaph* in the Hebrew and means, “to brood (flutter, move, shake).” Yahweh’s power (not an individual) energized the planet, after which the earthly creation began in earnest.

The Greek word for Spirit is *pneuma*, which shares a mirror definition with the word *ruach*. “Pneuma; to breathe, blow, primarily denotes the wind. Breath; the spirit which, like the wind, is invisible, immaterial, and powerful” (*The Complete Word Study New Testament*, “Pneuma”).

It can be further demonstrated that the Holy Spirit is not a separate being, but an inanimate power that proceeds from the Father. In Isaiah 32:15, 44:3, and Acts 2:17 the Holy Spirit is described as being poured. How can a being be poured into another? Titus 3:5-6 and Acts 2:33 testify that the Spirit is shed. How can a being shed itself onto another? The Spirit is also described as something that can be stirred up, 2Timothy 1:6; quenched, 1Thes. 5:19, and renewed, 2Cor. 4:16. These attributes are far more fitting for a power than a person.

Holy Spirit Facts

- There is no evidence in Old or New testaments that the Father or Son communicate with the Holy Spirit.
- There is no instance where anyone prayed to the Holy Spirit.
- Nowhere in scripture is the Holy Spirit called the “third person” or even “person” of the Spirit, or “Spirit being.” If the Holy Spirit were a separate individual, as are the Father and Son, then it should at least have a personal name as do Yahweh the Father and Yahshua the Son! Yet, it remains nameless. Just more evidence that it is a power and not a being.
- We know that Yahshua was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:20), therefore if the Holy Spirit were a person then Yahshua prayed to the wrong “father” in John 17 and other places. But it all makes sense if He prayed to Yahweh who created Him by the power of Yahweh’s spirit.

Father and Son, but No Spirit

In addition to this, there is another key fact consistent in the New Testament. Paul never addressed the Holy Spirit in the salutation of his letters, as he did the Father and Son. Notice:

- "... Grace to you and peace from Yahweh our Father, and the Master Yahshua Messiah" (Rom. 1:7).
- "Grace be unto you, and peace, from Yahweh our Father, and from the Master Yahshua Messiah" (1Cor. 1:3).
- "Grace be to you and peace from Yahweh our Father, and from the Master Yahshua Messiah" (2Cor. 1:2).
- "Grace be to you and peace from Yahweh the Father, and from our Master Yahshua Messiah" (Gal. 1:3).
- "Grace be to you, and peace, from Yahweh our Father, and from the Master Yahshua Messiah" (Eph. 1:2).
- "Grace be unto you, and peace, from Yahweh our Father, and from the Master Yahshua Messiah" (Phil. 1:2).
- "...Grace be unto you, and peace, from Yahweh our Father and the Master Yahshua Messiah" (Col. 1:2).
- "...Grace be unto you, and peace, from Yahweh our Father, and the Master Yahshua Messiah" (1Thess. 1:1).
- "Grace unto you, and peace, from Yahweh our Father and the Master Yahshua Messiah" (2Thess. 1:2).
- "...Grace, mercy, and peace, from Yahweh our Father and Yahshua Messiah our Master" (1Tim. 1:2).
- "...Grace, mercy, and peace, from Yahweh the Father and Messiah Yahshua our Master" (2Tim. 1:2).
- "...Grace, mercy, and peace, from Yahweh the Father and the Master Yahshua Messiah our Saviour" (Tit. 1:4).

In these twelve passages not once does Paul mention the Holy Spirit; however, he consistently mentions both the Father and Son. Is it possible that Paul, one of the greatest apostles in the New Testament, simply forgot about one-third of a heavenly triunity? Of course not, Paul recognized that it was not proper to include the Spirit, since it

represents Yahweh's power and not a sentient being.

Paul is not alone in his omission of the Holy Spirit. There are two key passages that mention the Father and Son with no reference to the Holy Spirit. The first is Acts 7:55-56, "But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of Elohim, and Yahshua standing on the right hand of Yahweh, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of Yahweh."

As Stephen was being stoned for his open rebuke of the Jewish leaders, he saw a vision of the Father and Son. While Scripture states that he was "full of the Holy Spirit," the fact is the Spirit was missing from his supernatural vision. He saw only the Father and Son. If the Trinity is biblical, why does Stephen see only two heavenly Hosts in this profound vision? There is no better opportunity to reveal it than in a sacred visualization of the heavenly majesty, especially at such key times like these.

In our second example, we find again the Father and Son present, but the Spirit absent. "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our Elohim which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Rev. 7:9-10).

If the Trinity were legitimate and understood by the writers of the New Testament, why is the Holy Spirit missing in this passage and in so many others where it should be found? It's quite simple—no heavenly triumvirate exists in either old or new testament.

Alvan Lamson, author of *The Church of the First Three Centuries*, offers a summation as to the legitimacy of the Holy Spirit in composing part of a Trinity. "...we must look, not to Jewish Scriptures, nor to the teachings of [Yahshua] and his apostles, but to Philo and the Alexandrine Platonists. In consistency with this view, we maintain that the doctrine of the Trinity was of gradual and comparatively late formation; that it had its origin in a source entirely foreign from that of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures; that it grew up, and was ingrafted on Christianity, through the Platonizing Fathers..."

Why the Pronoun ‘He’?

In the New Testament the Holy Spirit is often referenced with the personal pronoun “he,” “him,” or “himself.” Many will point to this as proof for the Trinity. For example, in John 14:16-17 Yahshua stated, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”

The “whom” here refers to the comforter, which comes from the Greek *parakletos*, a masculine word in Greek. Even though the Holy Spirit is described in the both the neuter and masculine throughout the New Testament, it’s likely that the translators used the Greek *parakletos* as an indicator for the gender of the Holy Spirit. As such, the Spirit has been incorrectly rendered by the masculine pronoun in the New Testament.

Referring to inanimate objects in the masculine and feminine is not unusual. We find it in many languages. For example, in Italian the words for “love,” “sea,” and “sun,” are masculine and the words for “art,” “faith,” and “light” are feminine. In like manner, in Arabic, which contains no neuter gender, the words for “book,” “class,” “street” are masculine while the words “car,” “university,” and “city” are feminine.

Similarly, Hebrew, a semitic language that shares many parallels with Arabic, including being without the neuter gender, has many cases where inanimate objects are rendered in the masculine or feminine. Masculine examples include the words for “word,” “day,” and “room.” Instances of the feminine include “land,” “animal,” and “spirit.” Even though the word for spirit (Heb. *ruach*) is feminine in the Hebrew language, Judaism views *ruach* as an inanimate object, i.e., wind. Likewise, *parakletos* is masculine in Greek, notwithstanding, its usage is neuter. Translators with preconceived ideas about the Spirit would use “he” when they had no justification to do so.

While many follow the pattern found in the King James Version in rendering the Holy Spirit in the masculine, a few translations correctly render it in the neuter, including the Diaglott, Rotherham, Goodspeed, and Literal Concordant. In addition to the above references, there

are three instances in the KJV where it correctly refers to the Holy Spirit in the neuter. The first is found in Matthew 10:20, “For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” Instead of “who,” the translators correctly used the form “which” in reference to the Spirit. The last two examples are both found in the eighth chapter of Romans, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of Elohim...Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (vv. 16, 26).

The Meaning of Elohim

In addition to the gender gap, much confusion over the Trinity has developed from the Hebrew word *elohim*. According to the *Englishman’s Concordance*, this term occurs 2,597 in the Hebrew text. While it is singular in usage, it can be used in the plural form, as a collective noun. Strong’s defines this term as, “...plural of OT:433; gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God; occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates; and sometimes as a superlative.” *The Complete Word Study Old Testament* further states, “Elohim; this masc. noun is pl. in form but it has both sing. and pl. uses. In a pl. sense it refers to rulers or judges with divine connections (Ex. 21:6); pagan gods (Ex. 18:11; Ps. 88:8); and probably angels (Ps. 8:5; 97:7)...In the sing. sense it is used of a god or a goddess (1 Sam. 5:7; 2 Kgs. 18:34); a man in a position like a god (Ex. 7:1); God (Deut. 7:9; Ezra 1:3; Is. 45:18 and many other passages,” *Lexical Aids*, 430. The following provide additional evidence for the singular and plural usages of *elohim*, beginning with the singular.

Singular:

- “And Elohim said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Yahweh Elohim of your fathers, the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations” (Ex 3:15).

- “When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses’ father in law, heard of all that Elohim had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, and that Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt” (Ex. 18:1).
- “Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto Yahweh thy Elohim in the place which Yahweh shall choose: because Yahweh thy Elohim shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice” (Deut. 16:15). The above examples illustrate *elohim* in the singular; the remainder provides examples of this word in the plural.

Plural:

- “And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their mighty ones [elohim]: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their mighty ones” (Num. 25:2).
- “Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their mighty ones [elohim], and do sacrifice unto their mighty ones [elohim], and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice” (Ex. 34:15).
- “And they forsook Yahweh Elohim of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other mighty ones [elohim], of the mighty ones [elohim] of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked Yahweh to anger” (Judg. 2:12).

Many assume that because *elohim* is usually used in the plural, that it must refer to a Trinity. This is an erroneous assumption by many who attempt to force the concept of a triad into the Hebrew *elohim*. Elohim does not specify a number, only a plurality. It can just as easily mean two heavenly beings.

Problematic ‘Trinitarian’ Passages

Two New Testament passages are popularly used to support the doctrine of the Trinity. One is Matthew 28:19: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (KJV).

The Jerusalem Bible questions whether the formula given for

baptism here is inspired or liturgical (added later by the church). The Hebrew version of Matthew omits the verse entirely. And although the passage is found in the three earliest known Greek New Testament manuscripts, without any original New Testament manuscripts in existence we have no evidence to substantiate that the present form of Matthew 28:19 is accurate.

One reason biblical scholars question the authenticity of this passage is that it conflicts with the actual method used for baptizing in the New Testament. In all other instances baptism is done only into the singular name of Yahshua (see Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). *The Companion Bible* makes special note of this: “To some, perplexity, and even distress, is caused by the apparent neglect of the disciples to carry out the [Master’s] command in Matthew 28:19, 20, with regard to the formula for baptism. . . . Turning to Acts and onwards, they find no single instance of, or reference to, baptism in which the Triune name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is employed. On the contrary, from the very first, only ten days after the injunction had been given, Peter is found (Acts 2:38) commanding all his hearers including those of the dispersion to be baptized in the name of [Yahshua the Messiah]” (p. 206, Appendix 185).

A second reason why biblical scholars are skeptical of Matthew



Eusebius of Caesarea

28:19 is because of conflicting historical documents. Eusebius of Caesarea is known as one of the greatest Greek teachers and historians of the early church. He lived approximately between the years of 270 CE and 340 CE. In citing Matthew, Eusebius omitted the Trinitarian formula found in Matthew 28:19. “The facts are, in summary, that Eusebius quotes Matthew 28:19, 21 times, either omitting everything between ‘nations’ and ‘teaching,’ or in the form ‘make disciples of all nations in my name,’ the latter form being the more frequent”

(Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics).

The *Jewish New Testament Commentary* says, “Although nearly all ancient manuscripts have the trinitarian formula, Eusebius, the Church historian, who may have been a non-trinitarian, in his writings preceding the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E., quotes the verse without it. Most scholars believe the formula is original, but papers by Hans Kosmala (‘The Conclusion of Matthew,’ Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute, 4 (1965), (pp. 132-147) and David Flusser (‘The Conclusion of Matthew in a New Jewish Christian Source,’ *ibid.*, 5 (1966-7), pp. 110-119) take the opposite view” (note on Matt. 28:19, p. 86).

Obviously, Eusebius did not recognize the current form of Matthew 28:19. Instead of quoting the phrase, “in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,” he most often used the phrase, “in my name,” which would agree with all other accounts of baptism in the New Testament.

The *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, p. 380, further reveals that Justin Martyr, another church father, was also possibly ignorant of the present form of Matthew 28:19. “Justin Martyr quotes a saying of Christ as a proof of the necessity of regeneration, but falls back upon the use of Isaiah and apostolic tradition to justify the practice of baptism and the use of the triune formula. This certainly suggests that Justin did not know the traditional text of Matthew 28:19.”

The second passage in question is 1John 5:7. “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one.” Most biblical scholars will admit that 1John 5:7 was a late addition to the New Testament. In other words, this passage is not found in the oldest Greek New Testament manuscripts.

Note the following on 1John 5:7: “During the controversy of the 4th cent. over the doctrine of the Trinity the text was expanded - first in Spain ca. 380, and then taken in the Vulg. - by the insertion: ‘There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one.’ A few late Greek manuscripts contain the addition. Hence it is passed into the KJV. But all modern critical editions and translations of the NT, including RSV, omit the interpolation, as it has no warrant in the best and most ancient

manuscripts or in the early church fathers” (*The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*, note on 1John 5:4-12).

The Jerusalem Bible note on 1John 5:7-8 says, “Vulg. vv. 7-8 read as follows ‘There are three witnesses *in heaven: the Father the Word and the Spirit, and these three are one; there are three witnesses on earth: the Spirit the water and the blood*’. The words in italics (not in any of the early Greek MSS, or any of the early translations, or in the best MSS of the Vulg. itself) are probably a gloss that has crept into the text,” 1 John 5:7.

There should be no question regarding the faulty rendering of 1John 5:7-8. Historically, along with modern scholarship, it is freely admitted that this passage is a later addition to the original New Testament manuscripts. This passage, along with Matthew 28:19, cannot be used to establish the doctrine of the Trinity.

“From both the inspired Word of Yahweh and biblical scholarship, the error of the Trinity is exposed.”

From both the inspired Word of Yahweh and biblical scholarship, the error of the Trinity is exposed. It is freely admitted through historical and present scholarship that the Trinity was not established during the time of the Apostles, but took an additional three hundred years to become firmly established in the church. This occurred at a time when the church was assimilating many people of pagan beliefs, most of whom held to a Trinity teaching in their heathen background.

Like so many beliefs practiced by mankind, the Trinity was developed through syncretized theology from various religions, and not from the inspired Word.

Modalism (Oneness)

In addition to the Trinity, there is another doctrine that developed during the first few centuries of the early Church. It was called “Modalism” or “Sabellianism” and emphasized that there was only one mighty one. Those who held to this belief rejected the Trinity. According to author Wayne Grudem, “Another term for modalism is ‘modalistic monarchianism,’ because this teaching not only says

that God revealed himself in different ‘modes’ but it also says that there is only one supreme ruler (‘monarch’) in the universe and that is God himself, who consists of only one person,” *Systematic Theology*, p. 242.

The online *Catholic Encyclopedia* states, “The Monarchians properly so-called (Modalists) exaggerated the oneness of the Father and the Son so as to make them but one Person; thus the distinctions in the Holy Trinity are energies or modes, not Persons: God the Father appears on earth as Son; hence it seemed to their opponents that Monarchians made the Father suffer and die. In the West they were

Inspired Word of
Political scholarship,
Trinity is exposed.”

called Patripassians, whereas in the East they are usually called Sabellians. The first to visit Rome was probably Praxeas, who went on to Carthage some time before 206-208; but he was apparently not in reality a heresiarch, and the arguments refuted by Tertullian somewhat later in his book ‘Adversus

Praxean’ are doubtless those of the Roman Monarchians” (newadvent.org, “Monarchians”).

A modern version of Modalism is “Oneness.” This doctrine is a cornerstone of the Pentecostal faith and other charismatic groups. It’s also believed by many in today’s messianic movement. Like Modalism, they accept only the singleness of G-d. They emphatically state that the G-d of the Bible presented himself in different “modes” at different times. In the Old Testament He was the Father; in the New Testament (prior to the giving of the Spirit) He was the Son and lastly; on the day of Pentecost appeared as the Holy Spirit. Along with the Trinity, they also reject the Messiah’s preexistence, which will be discussed at length later.

The Pentecostal Oneness movement arose in the early 1900s from a desire to follow Acts 2:38, baptism into the singular name of the Messiah. While most Oneness advocates accept Matthew 28:19, they reinterpret the passage as referring to the singular name of the Son. The movement soon broke away from its parent church, the Church of God, and formed an independent Oneness denomination.

The movement then merged with the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. Since they emphasized the singleness of “Jesus,” they were also called by the name “Jesus Only,” implying their rejection of the Father and Holy Spirit.

The two largest Oneness Pentecostal organizations today are the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and the United Pentecostal Church International (UPCI). According to the UPCI statement of beliefs, “There is one God, who has revealed Himself as our Father, in His Son Jesus Christ, and as the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is God manifested in flesh. He is both God and man. (See Deuteronomy 6:4; Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 2:9; 1Timothy 3:16.)”

Does Scripture show that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are simply different modes existing at separate times in history? As we have already seen in our discussion of the Trinity, the Father and Son are distinct; they are neither co-equal nor co-eternal.

Passages Cited for Oneness

We will now look at some of the common passages used by those who advocate the oneness doctrine. One of the most cited is Deuteronomy 6:4, also known as the Shema. It states, “Hear, O Israel: Yahweh our Elohim is one Yahweh.”

While there is debate as to the meaning of this passage, the word “one” can be interpreted two ways. The first is as a single being. In this case it refers to the Father. The second way is as a collective noun. The Hebrew for “one” is *echad*, meaning, “... united, i.e. one; or (as an ordinal) first,” Strong’s. In Genesis 2:24 this word is used to express the relationship of a husband and wife. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and



shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Clearly, the word *echad* here doesn’t refer to one being, but to one in unity. The

same relationship exists between the Father and Son. They are not one being, but one in mind and goal. This is likely what the Shema conveys.

Another passage cited in support of Oneness is Deuteronomy 32:39, “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no mighty one with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.” This passage is simply expressing the omnipotence of our Father in heaven. There is nothing in this passage indicating that the Father and Son are one.

A third and very common reference is Isaiah 9:6, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty El, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” This is a prophecy of the Messiah when He will reign as King in the millennial Kingdom. Many who promote Oneness point to the title “everlasting Father.” As the *Restoration Study Bible* note reads, “This literally means, ‘Father of eternity.’ However, The Chaldee renders this passage, ‘The man abiding forever’; The Vulgate as, ‘The Father of the future age.’ The Jews understand the term ‘father’ in a variety of ways, including: as a literal father, a grandfather, a ruler, or an instructor. Since the context seems to refer to the Messiah, perhaps, this would be better rendered, ‘everlasting ruler’ or ‘instructor.’ Yahshua will both rule and instruct mankind in the Millennium and for all ages to come (Isa. 11:1-5; Mic. 4:1-2).”

No Other El

The next three claims for the Oneness teaching are related and found in Isaiah. We will therefore refer to them together:

- “O Yahweh of hosts, Elohim of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the Elohim, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth” (Isa. 37:16).
- “Ye are my witnesses, saith Yahweh, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no El formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Yahweh; and beside me there is no saviour. I

have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange elohim among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith Yahweh, that I am El. Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it? Thus saith Yahweh, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; For your sake I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships. I am Yahweh, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King” (Isa. 43:10-15).

- “I am Yahweh, and there is none else, there is no Elohim beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am Yahweh, and there is none else” (Isa. 45:5-6).

Those who maintain the oneness of Yahweh will typically say of these passages:

- Yahshua the Messiah did not preexist.
- Yahweh alone formed man from the womb.
- Yahweh alone made the earth.
- Yahweh alone stretched forth the heavens.

In short, Yahweh created all things without the presence of Yahshua the Messiah. From these verses one can see how they might come to these conclusions; however, as with most points of study there is another possible explanation. This passage is not expressing the literal act of creation but the Father’s authority.

In Exodus 3:14 the Father revealed Himself as the great “I AM,” conveying His ultimate superiority to all creation, including His Son, Yahshua the Messiah. In this light all that is done is the result of Yahweh’s greatness, regardless of whether He is the active force involved. It is for this reason that He alone receives the recognition for the creation of the heavens and earth, as we find here in Isaiah.

This is no different from notable historical figures like Alexander the Great or Nebuchadnezzar claiming complete credit for their empires. In truth, probably neither Alexander the Great nor Nebuchadnezzar ever laid a brick, but it was by their authority and power that they

built their kingdoms and as a result received full acknowledgment for their grand achievements.

A scriptural example can be found with King Solomon and the building of the temple. “So Solomon built the house, and finished it. And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir. And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar:



Aristotle tutoring Alexander

he even built them for it within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place...And the oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of Yahweh...So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold. And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold” (1Kings 6:14-16, 19, 21-22).

This passage gives all credit to Solomon as the builder in every phase of temple construction. Does it mean he was out there with gloves and hammer chipping away at stones while sweating in the hot sun? No, Solomon was just overseeing and directing the construction. Yet, he received full credit for the work. Similarly, Yahweh also oversaw creation of the universe and justifiably received all credit. In both cases each was acknowledged for the accomplishments but the actual work was carried out by others.

What ‘One’ Means

The New Testament passage most often used to support the Oneness doctrine is John 10:30. Yahshua states there, “I and my Father are one.” Was He referring to one in being or one in unity? Dr. E. W. Bullinger

states, “Gr. *hen*. Neut., one in essence, not one person...” (*Companion Bible*, John 10:30). *Barnes Notes* further clarifies, “The word translated “one” is not in the masculine, but in the neuter gender. It expresses union, but not the precise nature of the union. It may express any union, and the particular kind intended is to be inferred from the connection.”



Dr. E.W. Bullinger

Again, John 10:30 speaks of one in mind and purpose. Yahshua provides many illustrations of this unity in the New Testament. One of the clearest is John 17, where He is praying to His Father prior to His impalement. “And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are” (vv. 10-11).

The word “one” here is the same word in John 10:30. According to Yahshua, in the same way we believers are one, the Father and Son are one. Are we all one person? Obviously not! As we find from the Apostle Paul, we are one in conviction and heart: “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind,” Philippians 2:2. Consider the following:

- “Yahshua saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34).
- “Then answered Yahshua and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” (John 5:19).
- “Then said Yahshua unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things” (John 8:28).
- “For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me,

he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak” (John 12:49).

Clearly Yahshua is not stating that He and His Father are the same being, but simply that they are one in mind and heart. As a son follows the instructions of his father, Yahshua followed the instructions of His Father Yahweh. He repeatedly said that He did not come to do His own will, but the will of the Father. They cannot possibly be the same individual! See Luke 22:42; Matthew 26:39; John 5:30; 6:38.

Another passage that is commonly used to support Oneness is John 14:6-7: “Yahshua saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.” Some will make the claim from this passage that Yahshua and His Father are the same individual; however, this passage would again be better understood as being one in goal and mind. As previously noted, just as a son obeys and shares the same interests as his father, the Son shares the same interest, desire, motivation, and character as His Heavenly Father.

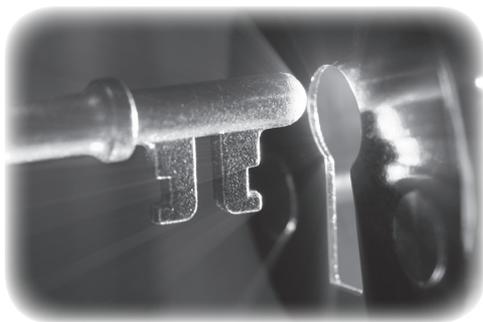
The Son’s Authority

Another approach used by Oneness advocates is the testimony found in John 20:28: “And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Master and my Elohim.” As referenced in the foregoing discussion on *elohim*, while this term most often refers to Yahweh, it can also denote false deities (both male and female), angels, and mankind. In essence, it refers to an exalted position. Thomas here was not confusing the Son with the Father, but was simply conveying the Son’s high-ranking position, keeping in mind that this was after Yahshua’s resurrection.

In another passage, Peter states, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that Elohim hath made that same Yahshua, whom ye have impaled, both Master and Messiah,” Acts 2:36. The word “Master” is translated “Lord” in the KJV. It comes from the Greek *kurios* and means, “...supreme in authority, i.e. (as noun) controller; by implication, Mr. (as a respectful title),” Strong’s. *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words* defines this term as, “...properly an

adjective, signifying ‘having power’ (kuros) or ‘authority,’ is used as a noun, variously translated in the NT, ‘Lord,’ ‘master,’ ‘Master,’ ‘owner,’ ‘Sir,’ a title of wide significance, occurring in each book of the NT save Titus and the Epistles of John. It is used (a) of an owner, as in Luke 19:33, cf. Matt 20:8; Acts 16:16; Gal 4:1; or of one who has the disposal of anything, as the Sabbath, Matt 12:8; (b) of a master, i.e., one to whom service is due on any ground, Matt 6:24; 24:50; Eph 6:5; (c) of an Emperor or King, Acts 25:26; Rev 17:14; (d) of idols, ironically, 1 Cor 8:5, cf. Isa 26:13; (e) as a title of respect addressed to a father, Matt 21:30, a husband, 1 Peter 3:6, a master, Matt 13:27; Luke 13:8, a ruler, Matt 27:63, an angel, Acts 10:4; Rev 7:14; (f) as a title of courtesy addressed to a stranger, John 12:21; 20:15; Acts 16:30; from the outset of His ministry this was a common form of address to the Lord Jesus, alike by the people, Matt 8:2; John 4:11, and by His disciples, Matt 8:25; Luke 5:8; John 6:68; (g) kurios is the Sept. and NT representative of Heb. [Yahweh] (‘LORD’ in Eng. versions), see Matt 4:7; James 5:11, e. g., of adon, Lord, Matt 22:44, and of Adonay, Lord, 1:22; it also occurs for Elohim, God, 1 Peter 1:25.”

Similar to the word *elohim*, the Greek *kurios* refers to positions of power or authority. This not only includes the Father and Son, but also authority within family and society. As such, there is nothing in this word’s definition that would imply that the Son and Father are one in being. Akin to the previous example, this passage is simply expressing the Son’s elevated position.



Paul’s fourth chapter of Ephesians is also used by advocates of the Oneness teaching: “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Master, one faith, one baptism, One El and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and

in you all” (vv. 4-6).

Do we finally see evidence here for Oneness? No. Paul is conveying six key truths, none of which shows that the Father and Son are the same being. Note:

- There is only one body, which the Son presides over (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23; Col. 1:18, 24);
- There is only one spirit, referring to the Holy Spirit, the power proceeding from our Father Yahweh (1Cor. 12:4);
- One Son, Yahshua is the Messiah and Master;
- One faith, the same faith given and delivered to Abraham (Gal. 3:29);
- One baptism, i.e., into the singular Name of Yahshua the Messiah (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27); and
- One El and Father, only our Heavenly Father is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent (Gen. 21:33; 2Chron. 2:6; Ps. 147:5; Jer. 23:24; Heb. 1:12).

While these passages provide insight into the nature and activities of the Father and Son, they are silent in support of the Oneness teaching. Nowhere in his writings does Paul forthrightly state that the Father and Son are one being. This concept isn't only missing here, but is also counter to his message, as he makes a distinction between our Master Yahshua and His Father Yahweh, the Creator and El of this grand universe.

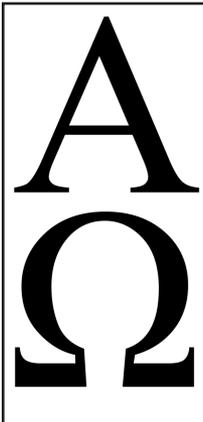
Paul writing to young Timothy states, “For there is one Elohim, and one mediator between Elohim and men, the man Messiah Yahshua” (1Tim. 2:5). Oneness adherents will also use this to support their view. However, Paul shows a distinction between the two beings. If Yahshua the Messiah is the mediator between His Father and man, how is it possible that He is also the Father? Such reasoning is not only unscriptural, but also irrational.

Writing again to Timothy, Paul speaks of a great mystery pertaining to our Father Yahweh. “And without controversy great is the mystery of holiness: Elohim was manifest in the flesh, justified

in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (1Tim. 3:16). Many believe that Paul is confirming here that the Father and Son are the same being. This passage is used by advocates of both the Trinity and Oneness teachings.

“Manifest” is derived from the Greek *phaneroo* and means, “... to render apparent (literally or figuratively),” Strong’s. *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* states, “to make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown, to manifest, whether by words, or deeds, or in any other way.” This word conveys making something known or visible. The Father was made visible in the flesh through His Son, Yahshua the Messiah. Paul confirms this in the first chapter of Colossians: “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible El, the firstborn of every creature” (vv. 13-16).

The phrase “invisible El” refers to the Father. Yahshua, the son of Yahweh, was created in His Father’s image and therefore represented His Father on earth. Does this mean that the Father and Son are the same being? It must be remembered that mankind too was created in Yahweh’s image, Genesis 1:26. If Paul’s statement in Colossians 1:16 proves that the Father and Son are one being, then we also must be one being with the Father, as Scriptures declare that we were created in His image as well! (Gen. 1:27).



The Alpha and Omega

The phrase “Alpha and Omega” is also frequently employed to confirm the oneness of the Father and Son. It appears four times in the book of Revelation and depending on the context, refers to both the Father and the Son. The words “Alpha” and “Omega” are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet, respectively.

Chapter one contains the first two occurrences, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the

ending, saith Yahweh, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty...I was in the Spirit on Yahweh's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last..." (vv. 8, 10-11). From the context, this is describing our Father Yahweh.

The third example is found in chapter 21, "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his Elohim, and he shall be my son" (vv. 6-7). With the reference here to Elohim and the promise of becoming his "sons," this third also refers to the Father.

Chapter 22 contains the last and final instance, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (vv. 12-13). Unlike the previous, this last example likely refers to Yahshua the Messiah. Yahshua will come at the end of the age and reward those who were faithful (Matt. 16:27; 24:30; 25:1-13; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27; Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7). According to Paul in 1Corinthians 15:23-28, the Father cannot come until Yahshua defeats all enemies, including death.

What is the purpose for the phrase, "Alpha and Omega"? This term is likely the result of rabbinic influence. According to *Barnes' Notes*, "Among the Jewish rabbis it was common to use the first and the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet to denote the whole of anything, from beginning to end. Thus, it is said, 'Adam transgressed the whole law, from "Aleph (א) to Taw (ת)."' 'Abraham kept the whole law, from "Aleph (א) to Taw (ת).'"

Speaking about Yahshua, Paul states, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the assembly: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

According to Paul, through Yahshua all things were created and

consist. It's important to recognize that Yahshua was the active, creative agent behind all "thrones," "dominions," "principalities," and "powers." As such, He is the beginning and end of all things within this universe, the visible and invisible. Does this imply though that the Son is the same being as the Father? Of course not! As Yahshua did the will of His Father in the New Testament, the same was true in His preexistence. Yahshua is the manifestation of all that His Father is. All that He does reflects upon His Father. It's for this reason that the phrase "Alpha and Omega" complements the Father, even in reference to the Son.

Contradictory Passages

Numerous passages show a clear distinction between the Father and Son. Possibly the greatest hurdle of those who promote the Oneness doctrine involves Yahshua's death and resurrection. After our Savior was horrifically beaten and tortured on the tree, Scripture indicates that he died. Matthew 27:50 clearly states that He "yielded up the spirit."



As seen earlier, the word "spirit" is from the Greek *pneuma* and refers to "a current of air, i.e. breath..." Strong's. The Hebrew equivalent to *pneuma* is *ruach*. Strong's defines this word as, "wind; by resemblance breath...."

When we die our Spirit returns to Yahweh (Eccl. 12:7), our consciousness ceases to exist (Ps. 146:4; Eccl. 9:10) and our bodies lie dormant in the grave awaiting the resurrection (Dan. 12:2, Matt. 27:52; 1 Thess. 4:13-15). If our spirit or breath returns to Yahweh at death, where then did Yahshua's breath return, if He and the Father were one? Equally perplexing, being that the Son was dead and unconscious in the grave, is who resurrected Him three days later? Peter confirms

that Yahweh resurrected Yahshua, Acts 2:32. If Yahweh and Yahshua are one, this means that Yahweh resurrected Himself from the grave even while dead.

Some attempt to explain these contradictions by claiming that Yahshua never died, but descended to the depths of Hades where he preached to the wicked. The fact is, if He never died we are without a Savior. Hebrews unequivocally states that a complete death was required by our Savior if we are to have life everlasting: “But Messiah being come an high priest of good things to come by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us... And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth” (Heb. 9:11-12, 15-16).

Yahshua confirms His own death in Revelation 1:18, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of the grave and of death.” The word “dead” here comes from the Greek *nekros* and according to the Thayer’s literally refers to “one that has breathed his last, lifeless.” Based on Hebrews and Yahshua’s own testimony, there should be no doubt that our Savior literally died and was in the grave (heart of the earth) for three full days and three full nights, as He prophesied in Matthew 12:40. On a side note, this would make His traditional time in the grave impossible. Based on the biblical record, He was placed in the tomb Wednesday evening and resurrected late on the Sabbath (Saturday before sunset).

In addition, it must be asked, if Yahweh and Yahshua are one, how did the world survive for the three days and three nights while they lay unconscious in the grave? To state that the Father resurrected Himself and that Yahweh was absent for three days and three nights

makes no sense and contradicts the very core of Scripture!

One might also ask who Yahshua cried out to when he stated, "...Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My El, my El, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). Yahshua is calling out here to His Father. If the Father and Son are one, does this mean that He was calling out to Himself?

What about those instances where Yahshua prayed to the Father, both in public and private. If He and the Father were one being, what was the point? Was it for public show or self-affirmation? Certainly neither. Yahshua was not praying to Himself but to His Father in heaven.

Consider two more illustrations. Yahshua in Matthew 22:44 said, "Yahweh said unto my Master, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." Is Yahshua sitting on His own hand? As a final example, Yahshua confirms that only the Father knows the timing of His Coming, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only," Matthew 24:36. If the Father and Son are one being, how is it possible that the Father has information that the son lacks? Was Yahshua simply telling a fib? Of course not; He was confirming the fact that is apparent from cover to cover and that is that He and His Father are not the same being. These passages along with the other examples confirm that the belief in Oneness is not only unfounded scripturally, but escapes reason and logic.

The Word Became Flesh

Even though the Son is distinct and not co-eternal with the Father, Scripture confirms that He existed prior to His birth at Bethlehem. There is no passage of greater importance regarding His preexistence than the first chapter of John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim. The same was in the beginning with Elohim. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth"

(John 1:1-3, 14).

Who represents the “Word” here? In verse 14 the “Word” is identified as the only begotten of the Father. This can refer only to Yahshua the Messiah. Does the “Word” in verse 1 correspond to the “Word” in verse 14? There are those who argue that the word in verse 1 refers to the “plan of Yahweh,” while the word in verse 14 refers to the manifestation of that plan, i.e., Yahshua the Messiah. The problem with this view is context. It’s clear here that there is only one “Word” and that is the Messiah.



This passage could be rendered, “In the beginning was the Messiah, and the Messiah was with Elohim, and the Messiah was Elohim.” Here is evidence that the Messiah was with Yahweh in the beginning. There are some who struggle with John 1:1, which states, “...the Word was Elohim.” Some have interpreted this as John confirming the equivalence of the Father and Son; validating that the Father and Son are either co-equal or co-eternal or perhaps both.

Proper understanding begins with the Greek word for “*elohim*,” i.e., *theos*. This word refers to “a general name of deities or divinities” (Thayer’s). From the Old and New testaments we find that this term along with its Hebrew equivalent, *elohim*, contains a wide application and applies to both the Father and Son. Based on the meaning of *theos*, this passage could be rendered, “...the Messiah was a ‘Mighty One.’” John is not confusing the Father and Son. He is simply confirming that in the beginning the Son was with His Father as a “Mighty One.”

Having established who this “Word” represents, let’s now move

on to the meaning of verse 3. It says there that all things were made by Him. The Word, i.e., Yahshua, was the one who created all things. This includes the atom, one of the smallest units of matter known to man, as well as the vast galaxies in this universe.

To summarize, we find three facts in this passage: (1) The “Word” represents Yahshua the Messiah, (2) Yahshua was with His Father in the beginning and (3) all things were made through the Messiah. To remove the Messiah’s preexistence is to remove His presence with His Father and His pivotal role at creation.

Existed Before

In Yahshua’s eye-opening prayer in John 17:5 we find Yahshua Himself declaring His own preexistence as He prepared for His imminent death: “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”

The key word here is “was.” It is derived from the Greek *einai* meaning, “to exist” (Strong’s). Thayer’s offers a similar definition, “to be, to exist, to happen, to be present.” Based on the Greek, Yahshua is asking His Father to provide Him the same glory that He had before the world existed. The Messiah here offers irrefutable confirmation of his preexistence. He declares that He had glory with His Father, indicating His exalted state, before the world existed. This is the same message found in the first chapter of John.

Similar to the previous example, in John 8:56-58 the Messiah confirms that He existed before Abraham. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto him, You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham? Yahshua said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”

Before we consider verse 58, the critical verse here, we must understand the context of this passage. Though this passage speaks in the present tense, the context clearly refers to the past. In verse 58, Yahshua makes the remarkable statement, “...before Abraham existed, I was.” What was He actually saying here? The meaning is once again revealed in the Greek. The word “was” comes from the

Greek *ginomai*. Strong's defines it as, "to cause to be, i.e. (reflexively) to become (come into being)." Thayer's adds, "to become, that is, to come into existence, to begin to be, or to receive being." The phrase "I am" comes from the same Greek word for "was" in John 17:5, i.e., *einai*. Additionally, *The Complete Word Study New Testament*, under its Lexical Aid, provides this definition: "to be, to exist, have existence or being."

The Messiah confirms here that before Abraham came into being that He Himself existed or was present.

John the Baptist also confirms the Messiah's preexistence, "John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, this was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me" (John 1:15). The word "before" here is the Greek *protos*. Strong's defines this word as, "foremost (in time, place, order or importance)." This statement by John clearly refers to time and not to order of importance. This is evident from John's earlier statement, "He that cometh after me."

Those who know the genealogy might be saying, but wait. John the Baptist's mother, Elisabeth, conceived six months before Mary (Luke 1:26). How then was Yahshua before John? This is explained only through His preexistence. He existed in heaven with His Father prior to being born as a man.

I Came from Above

In addition to these examples, Yahshua also noted in several passages that He came down from heaven. One is John 3:13, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

Yahshua states that He came down from heaven. The phrase "came down" is the Greek *katabaino*, meaning "to descend" (Strong's). Thayer's offers additional detail on the meaning: "the place from which one has come down." Yahshua confirms that He came down or descended from heaven. Based on the Greek, no other interpretation would apply. For this statement to be true our Savior would have had to first exist in heaven prior to His human birth.

An analogous passage can be found in John 6:38, “For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” The phrase “came down” is derived from the same Greek word found in John 3:13, *katabaino*. The Messiah confirms once more that He came down or descended from heaven. For this to be possible, He would have had to preexist. In verse 62 Yahshua went on to say, “What and if you shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” Scripture states that after Yahshua’s death and resurrection that He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:11).

In John 8:23 Yahshua provides proof for His previous existence by drawing a contrast between Himself and mankind. “And he said unto them, You are from beneath; I am from above: you are of this world; I am not of this world.” The Messiah provides witness here to His place of origin. He states that while man was from beneath and of this world, that He Himself was neither. If Yahshua was not from beneath or of this world, from where did He commence? The only clear conclusion is that He had His beginning in heaven. The fact that Yahshua also stated that He was from above further solidifies this fact.

So from multiple passages we find the same message, the Messiah came down from or existed in heaven prior to his human birth. He also confirms that no man has gone to heaven which is corroborated in both Old and New testaments (Gen. 3:19, Job 14:2, Ps. 103: 14-16, 146:4, Eccl. 9:10, 12:7, Dan. 12:2, Acts 2:29-34).

Image of the Invisible El

Paul in Colossians 1:14-17 not only confirms Yahshua’s preexistence, but also explains His role in the Old Testament: “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible El, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

The subject here is clearly Yahshua. In verse 15 Paul states that



Yahshua is the image of the invisible El, referring to the Father. The Messiah in John 6:46 confirmed that no man had seen the Father except for the Son. Scripture also corroborates that the Father cannot be seen and is invisible (1Tim. 1:17, Heb. 11:27).

Paul states here that Yahshua is the image of His Father. Is he referring to Yahshua's past existence with His Father prior to the world or His present existence as a man? From the next few verses we find that he's referring to His past existence, which confirms that He was the image or representation of His Father in the Old Testament.

In verse 15 Paul states that Yahshua is the firstborn of every creature. The word "firstborn" is derived from the Greek word *protokos*. Both Strong's and Thayer's define this word as "firstborn." They offer no other definition. The KJV also translates this word as "first begotten." The meaning of *protokos* is very specific. It forthrightly describes Yahshua as the firstborn of every creature.

To ensure that we have a full understanding of this passage, we must not neglect the word "creature." This word is derived from the Greek *ktisis*. Strong's defines it as, "original formation." Thayer's offers a similar definition, "creation, that is, a thing created; used of individual things, beings, a creature, a creation." Based on the Greek, Paul is validating that Yahshua was the firstborn of every original formation of creation.

He goes on to further explain that not only was Yahshua the firstborn of every creature, but also that through Him all things in the heavens and on earth were created. The word "created" in verse 16

is from the Greek *ktizo*. Strong's defines this word as, "to fabricate" or to "create." As we saw from John 1:3, it was by the Messiah that all things in heaven and on earth were created.

Paul's last point here is important. Paul states that by Him, Yahshua, all things consist, speaking about the creation of the heavens and earth. If Yahshua was not present at creation, how then would all things consist by Him? This would make no sense unless Yahshua was both present and active at creation.

Present in the Beginning

As noted, Yahshua again validates His preexistence in Revelation 3:14, "And unto the angel of the assembly of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of El." This passage states that Yahshua was the "beginning" of Yahweh's creation. This word is derived from the Greek *arche*. Strong's defines this word as, "a commencement, or (concretely) chief" as it pertains to time. Thayer's offers a similar definition: "(1) beginning, origin; (2) the person or thing that commences, the first person or thing in a series, the leader; (3) that by which anything begins to be, the origin, the active cause; or (4) the extremity of a thing; used of the corners of a sail."

As seen from these sources, the Greek *arche* has two definitions: (1) origin, beginning or commencement and (2) chief in importance. While both definitions would apply to Yahshua, the first is much more likely based on Colossians 1:15, where Paul states that the Messiah is "the firstborn of every creature." Yahshua verifies here by His own testimony that He was the beginning, origin, or commencement of Yahweh's creation. Understating this point is paramount. To ignore this truth is to disregard the remarkable contribution Yahshua had as the origin or active cause of Yahweh's creation.

More extraordinary evidence of Yahshua's preexistence is found in Luke 10:17-18: "The seventy-two returned with joy and said, 'Master, even the demons submit to us in your name.' He replied, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven'" (NIV).

Satan was once in heaven, but because of his rebellion was cast out. The Old Testament also speaks of Satan's fall from grace in the

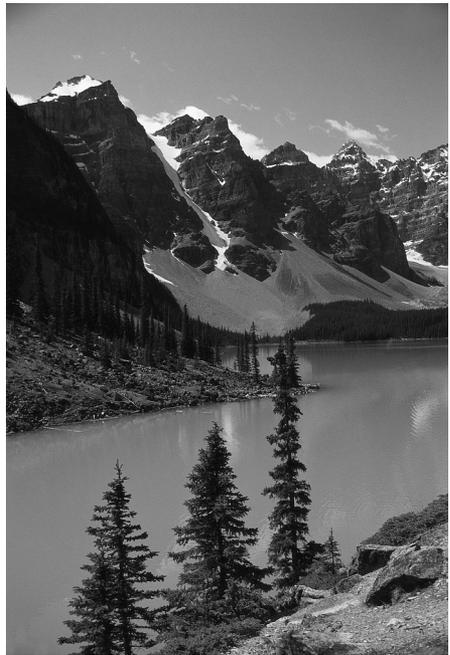
past tense (Gen. 3:14; Isa. 14:12; Ezek. 28:12-15). Yahshua said here that He witnessed this event. If Yahshua did not preexist, how is it possible that He witnessed Satan's fall from heaven? Without being present, this would have been impossible. The only reasonable conclusion is that Yahshua was actually there when Yahweh ousted Satan from heaven, thus confirming Yahshua's existence prior to Bethlehem.

Yahshua the Rock

In 1Corinthians 10 we find Paul confirming Yahshua's presence in the Old Testament. He states, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Messiah" (vv. 1-4).

Yahshua as the "spiritual Rock" had a unique relationship with Israel. He followed, meaning accompanied, Israel through the wilderness. The Old Testament calls Him "the Angel of Yahweh." A clear connection exists between the "spiritual Rock" and the Angel of Yahweh in the Old Testament.

We find a second parallel between Yahshua and the Angel of Yahweh. As Israel symbolically drank of this "spiritual Rock," we find in the New Testament that Yahshua declared that He was the living waters: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Yahshua stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and



drink. He that believes on me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38).

In both Old and New testaments Yahshua symbolized spiritual waters. This further reinforces the connection between the Angel of Yahweh and the Messiah’s presence and activity in the Old Testament.

Solomon Confirms the Savior’s Preexistence

As seen earlier, Solomon in Proverbs 8:22-31 chronicles Yahshua’s preexistence and active role in creation. “Yahweh possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.”

Some will say this passage refers not to Yahshua, but to Yahweh’s wisdom. They will refer to verse 12 to validate this assertion, where Solomon was inspired to write, “I wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.” The challenge with this belief is that the person in verse 22 was “possessed,” literally meaning, “to erect, i.e., create,” Strong’s.

To erect or create something conveys that the thing at one point did not exist. Therefore,



to state that this refers to Yahweh's wisdom would be to claim that Yahweh at one point was without wisdom. A much more likely interpretation is that the preexistent Messiah is meant. This would not only harmonize with Revelation 3:14, but also corroborate with all other New Testament passages referring to the Messiah's presence before Bethlehem.

Before moving on, Proverbs 8:30 offers a key truth. It again states, "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." The phrase "one brought up" comes from the Hebrew *amown*. **Brown Driver and Briggs Hebrew Lexicon** defines this Hebrew word as, "an artificer, an architect, a master workman, a skilled workman." Within the context, this phrase would be better rendered "master workman," as found in most modern translations.

Yahweh possessed (i.e., created) Yahshua before His works of old. This includes before the existence of the earth (v.26) and heavens (v.27). In verse 30, as previously noted, Yahshua was with Yahweh, His Father, as a master workman. This phrase connotes the integral contributions of the preexistent Messiah. As Solomon produced the blueprints and plans of the temple and hired the best workman to complete the construction, we find the same relationship here between Yahweh, the great architect, and Yahshua, His master workman.

Solomon provides another contribution to the Messiah's preexistence in Proverbs 30:4. He writes, "Who has ascended up into heaven, or descended? who has gathered the wind in his fists? who has bound the waters in a garment? who has established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if you can tell?" (Prov. 30:4).

This passage is referring to the creation of the heavens and earth. This is a key point. In closing, Solomon asks, "What is His Name,



and what is His Son's Name?" The question leads to one conclusion: both the Father and Son existed and were present at creation.

Elohim Created

This relationship may also be found in Genesis 1:1, where we read, "In the beginning Elohim created the heaven and the earth." As previously mentioned, the word Elohim is singular, but is often used in the plural, expressing more than one mighty one.

Based on the context of Genesis chapter one, this word undoubtedly refers to more than one mighty one. This can be seen from verse 26, where Scripture states, "Let us make man in our image." Similar language is found in Genesis 3:22; 11:7. The question is, who is the "us" mentioned here? Based on Proverbs 8:22-31, John 1:1-3, and Colossians 1:15-16, the "us" likely refers to the Father and Son, showing evidence once more of both the Father and Son at creation.

As a side note, Genesis 1:1 literally reads, "In the beginning Elohim, Aleph Tau, created . . ." The Aleph and Tau represents the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet and is a sign of the direct object in Hebrew grammar. This may also depict the presence of both the Father and Son at creation. As previously noted, a parallel exists with several passages in Revelation, where both the Father and Son are referred to as the Alpha and Omega.

Angel of Yahweh

Another intriguing parallel concerning the pre-existent Messiah is found in the Angel of Yahweh. Exodus 23:20-21 reveals several similarities between these two figures: "Behold, I send an Angel before you, to keep you in the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him."

Three significant comparisons are found here between the Angel of Yahweh and the New Testament Messiah. They both required obedience (Ex. 23:21 and Matt. 28:20), had authority over sin (Ex. 23:21 and Matt. 9:6), and contained Yahweh's Name (Ex. 23:21 and Matt. 1:21). As noted, this angel is likely the "spiritual Rock" that

Paul referred to in 1 Corinthians 10:4.

No other being corresponds based on the context of these two passages. This angel can be found in other important roles, three of which we will cover now. The first is referred to by Deacon Stephen in the New Testament. In Acts 7:38 Stephen confirms that Moses received the law from an angel: “This is he [Moses], that was in the assembly in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us.”

The word angel here is from the Greek *aggelos* meaning, “a messenger; especially an ‘angel’” (Strong’s). Thayer’s offers a similar definition: “a messenger, an envoy, one who was sent, an angel, a messenger....” In contrast, Yahweh, the Father, the exalted El, is neither an angel nor a messenger. Both are far below His exalted status.

How does this correspond to the Old Testament? “And Yahweh said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven” (Ex. 20:22). How do we reconcile this passage with what Stephen said in Acts? The one who likely gave the commandments to Moses was the Angel of Yahweh, corresponding to the preexistent Messiah (1 Cor. 10:4) and the active agent of creation (John 1:1). In the two remaining examples, this point will become clearer.

In Genesis 22 we find Abraham on the brink of sacrificing his son Isaac, in which he was stopped by a mysterious figure. “And the angel of Yahweh called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith Yahweh, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld your son, your only son” (Gen. 22:15-16).

A passage akin to Genesis 22 is Exodus 3:2, 4: “And the angel of Yahweh appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed... And when Yahweh saw that he turned aside to see, Elohim called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.”

In both of these passages we find one being called the “angel of Yahweh” and “Yahweh.” The narrative clearly shows that this is the same being. From the culmination of evidence, this likely refers to the active Word or preexistent Messiah acting on behalf of His Father.

Before continuing, it’s important to clarify several crucial points. The Word, Angel of Yahweh and the Yahweh who spoke and interacted with mankind was not the Father, but the Son conveying the intents and words of His Father. This is comparable to when Yahshua spoke and acted on behalf of His Father in the New Testament (John 1:18; 4:34; 5:19; 6:38; 7:16; 8:15-19, 28-30; 14:6). As noted earlier, Scripture does not support a duality between the Father and Son. The Father is greater than the Son (John 10:29; 14:28; 1 Cor. 11:3) and “one” only in mind and purpose (John 17:22), not in being.

Yahweh of the Old Testament

We now lack only one remaining piece of this puzzle. In several Old Testament passages we find “Yahweh” appearing and interacting with man. For the reasons stated above and one additional reason, which will now be explained, this cannot be the Father. Scripture expressly states that no man has seen or heard the Father:

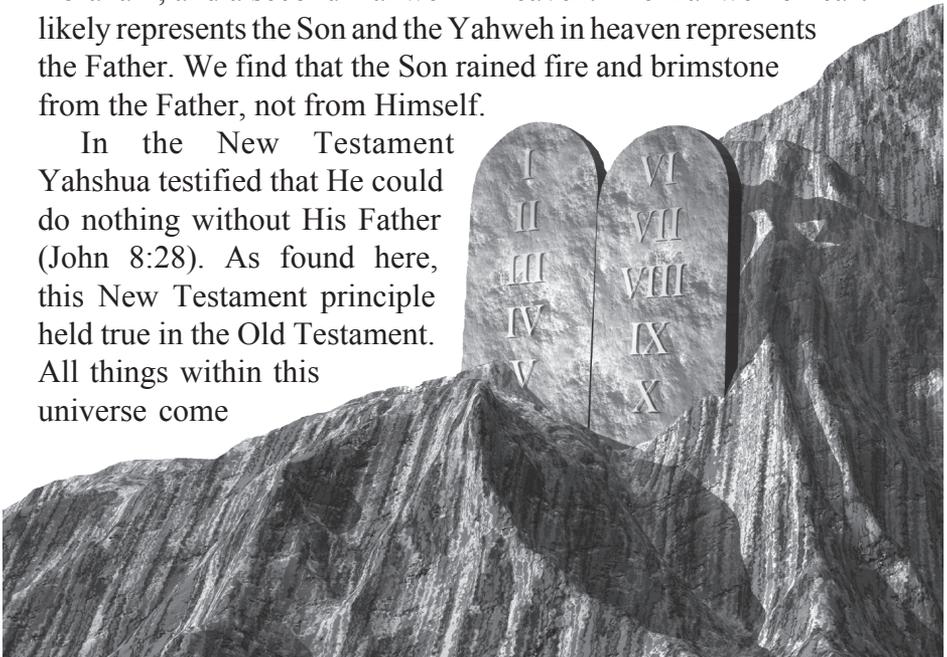
- “No man hath seen Yahweh at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18).
- “And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape” (John 5:37).
- “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting” (1Tim. 6:16).
- “No man hath seen Yahweh at any time. If we love one another, Elohim dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us” (1John 4:12, 20).

Yahshua, Paul, and John all state that no human has seen or heard the Father. Considering this, how can we explain those instances

of when Yahweh appeared before man? For example, how can we explain when Yahweh appeared before Abraham in Genesis 18:1-3: “And Yahweh appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Master, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.”

Genesis 19:1 identifies the two men with Yahweh as angels. The question remains, who was the “Yahweh” who appeared before Abraham? Since Scripture declares that no man has seen the Father, this cannot be the Father. From the weight of evidence, this probably represents the Son, the active Word (Heb. *Debar*, Gk. *Logos*). To extend this mystery further, Genesis 19:24 reveals two beings with the name Yahweh: “Then Yahweh rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from Yahweh out of heaven.” We find here one Yahweh on earth, the same Yahweh who appeared before Abraham, and a second Yahweh in heaven. The Yahweh on earth likely represents the Son and the Yahweh in heaven represents the Father. We find that the Son rained fire and brimstone from the Father, not from Himself.

In the New Testament Yahshua testified that He could do nothing without His Father (John 8:28). As found here, this New Testament principle held true in the Old Testament. All things within this universe come

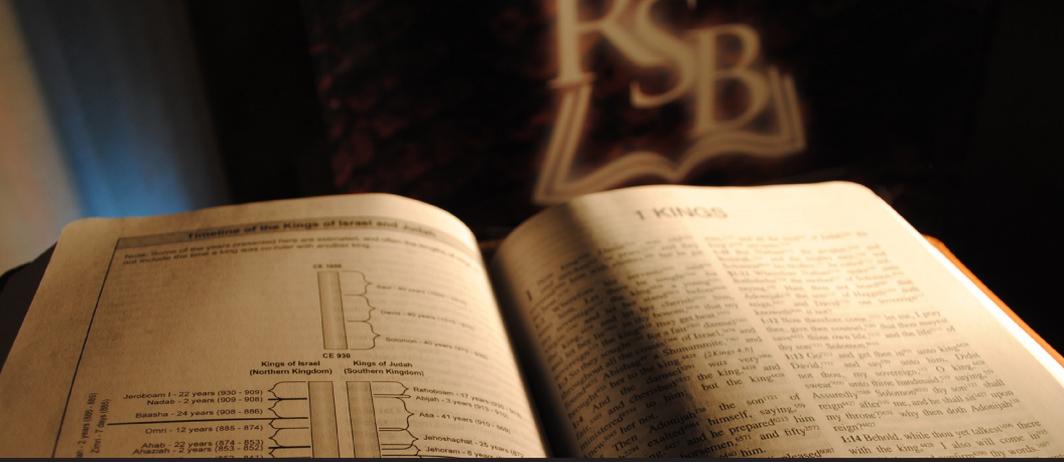


from the Father, including His active Word, the preexistent Messiah. Yahshua's presence before Bethlehem is well documented in both Old and New Testaments. The most important of this evidence is from the Messiah Himself. He declared in several passages that He was with the Father from the beginning (John 1:1), that He descended from heaven (John 3:13), that He existed before Abraham (John 8:56) and that He had glory with the Father before the world was (John 17:5).

In summary, while the identity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has been a long standing debate throughout the history of the Church, Scripture is clear on the following facts:

- The word “Trinity” and its concept is absent from the Old and New testaments.
- The notion of the Trinity is not new, but goes back to the start of civilization.
- The Trinity doctrine was not firmly established until over 300 years after the Messiah.
- The codification of the Trinity was motivated from political pressure.
- The Father is greater and superior to the Son.
- The Holy Spirit represents the power of the Father, not a third of a Trinity.
- The Father and Son are not one in being, but one in mind and goal
- While the Messiah is not eternal, He preexisted as the active Word, i.e., *logos*.

As mankind ponders the nature of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, it's important that we study and confirm the truth behind this crucial subject. This begins by letting go of preconceived thoughts and biases and acknowledging the pages of Scripture as the sole source of authority. Only through a forthright look at the Word can we decipher and break through 2,000 years of man's tradition.

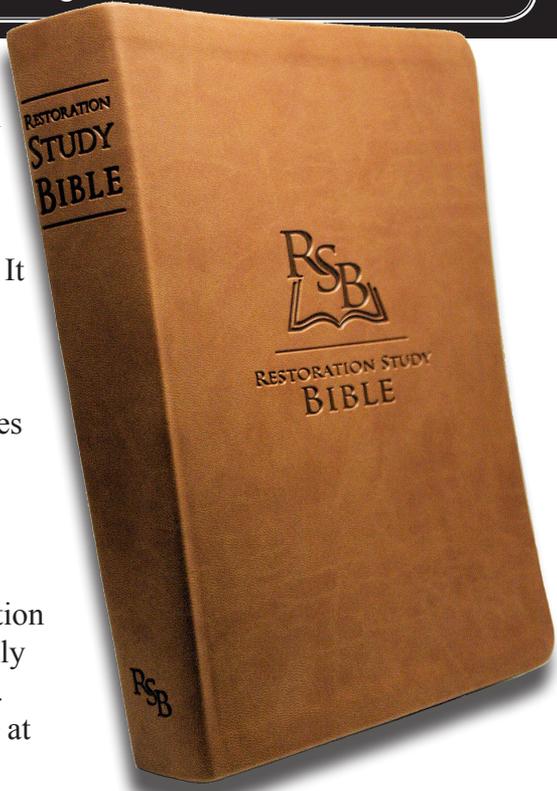


THE RESTORATION STUDY BIBLE

"I highly recommend this Bible to anyone. I can't even explain how much it has helped my study, and my understanding of Yahweh's Word." -CH

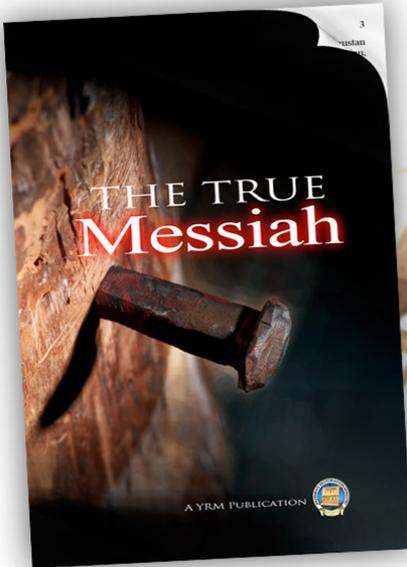
If you want a Bible that answers the hard questions, then the Restoration Study Bible is for you. This attractive and durable resource offers insight and clarity found nowhere else. It is the result of 150 years of in-depth study spanning three generations of scholarship. The Restoration Study Bible examines the source languages behind the English text to reveal original meanings.

You can have your own Restoration Study Bible for a donation of only \$25, plus shipping and handling. Orders may also be made online at yrm.org/bible or by credit card Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Central, by dialing 1-573-896-1000.



Discover the REAL Messiah!

The Savior of mankind is much
different than what you may think!



Write or request online to receive your FREE copy!

Yahweh's Restoration Ministry
PO Box 463
Holts Summit, MO 65043
www.yrm.org