

Should You Believe in the Trinity?

Is It Clearly a Bible Teaching?

IF THE Trinity were true, it should be clearly and consistently presented in the Bible. Why? Because, as the apostles affirmed, the Bible is God's revelation of himself to mankind. And since we need to know God to worship him acceptably, the Bible should be clear in telling us just who he is.

First-century believers accepted the Scriptures as the authentic revelation of God. It was the basis for their beliefs, the final authority. For example, when the apostle Paul preached to people in the city of Beroea, "they received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things were so."—[Acts 17:10, 11](#).

What did prominent men of God at that time use as their authority? [Acts 17:2, 3](#) tells us: "According to Paul's custom . . . he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving by references [from the Scriptures]."

Jesus himself set the example in using the Scriptures as the basis for his teaching, repeatedly saying: "It is written." "He interpreted to them things pertaining to himself in all the Scriptures."—[Matthew 4:4, 7; Luke 24:27](#).

Thus Jesus, Paul, and first-century believers used the Scriptures as the foundation for their teaching. They knew that "all Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—[2 Timothy 3:16, 17](#); see also [1 Corinthians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 1:20, 21](#).

Since the Bible can 'set things straight,' it should clearly reveal information about a matter as fundamental as the Trinity is claimed to be. But do theologians and historians themselves say that it is clearly a Bible teaching?

"Trinity" in the Bible?

A PROTESTANT publication states: "The word Trinity is not found in the Bible . . . It did not find a place formally in the theology of the church till the 4th century." (*The Illustrated Bible Dictionary*) And a Catholic authority says that the Trinity "is not . . . directly and immediately [the] word of God."—*New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

The Catholic Encyclopedia also comments: "In Scripture there is as yet no single term by

which the Three Divine Persons are denoted together. The word $\tauρίας$ [tri'as] (of which the Latin *trinitas* is a translation) is first found in Theophilus of Antioch about A. D. 180. . . . Shortly afterwards it appears in its Latin form of *trinitas* in Tertullian."

However, this is no proof in itself that Tertullian taught the Trinity. The Catholic work *Trinitas—A Theological Encyclopedia of the Holy Trinity*, for example, notes that some of Tertullian's words were later used by others to describe the Trinity. Then it cautions: "But hasty conclusions cannot be drawn from usage, for he does not apply the words to Trinitarian theology."

Testimony of the Hebrew Scriptures

WHILE the word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible, is at least the *idea* of the Trinity taught clearly in it? For instance, what do the Hebrew Scriptures ("Old Testament") reveal?

The Encyclopedia of Religion admits: "Theologians today are in agreement that the Hebrew Bible does not contain a doctrine of the Trinity." And the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* also says: "The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not taught in the O[ld] T[estament]."

Comment [REH1]: Liberal Theologians?

Similarly, in his book *The Triune God*, Jesuit Edmund Fortman admits: "The Old Testament . . . tells us nothing explicitly or by necessary implication of a Triune God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. . . . *There is no evidence that any sacred writer even suspected the existence of a [Trinity] within the Godhead.* . . . Even to see in [the "Old Testament"] suggestions or foreshadowings or 'veiled signs' of the trinity of persons, is to go beyond the words and intent of the sacred writers."—Italics ours.

An examination of the Hebrew Scriptures themselves will bear out these comments. Thus, there is no clear teaching of a Trinity in the first 39 books of the Bible that make up the true canon of the inspired Hebrew Scriptures.

Testimony of the Greek Scriptures

WELL, then, do the Christian Greek Scriptures ("New Testament") speak clearly of a Trinity?

The Encyclopedia of Religion says: "Theologians agree that the New Testament also does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Trinity."

Comment [REH2]: Liberal Theologians?

Jesuit Fortman states: "The New Testament writers . . . give us no formal or formulated doctrine of the Trinity, no explicit teaching that in one God there are three co-equal divine persons. . . . Nowhere do we find any trinitarian doctrine of three distinct subjects of divine life and activity in the same Godhead."

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica observes: "Neither the word Trinity nor the explicit

doctrine appears in the New Testament."

Bernhard Lohse says in *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*: "As far as the New Testament is concerned, one does not find in it an actual doctrine of the Trinity."

The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology similarly states: "The N[ew] T[estament] does not contain the developed doctrine of the Trinity. 'The Bible lacks the express declaration that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are of equal essence' [said Protestant theologian Karl Barth]."

Yale University professor E. Washburn Hopkins affirmed: "To Jesus and Paul the doctrine of the trinity was apparently unknown; . . . they say nothing about it."—*Origin and Evolution of Religion*.

Historian Arthur Weigall notes: "Jesus Christ never mentioned such a phenomenon, and nowhere in the New Testament does the word 'Trinity' appear. The idea was only adopted by the Church three hundred years after the death of our Lord."—*The Paganism in Our Christianity*.

Thus, neither the 39 books of the Hebrew Scriptures nor the canon of 27 inspired books of the Christian Greek Scriptures provide any clear teaching of the Trinity.

Taught by Early Christians?

DID the early Christians teach the Trinity? Note the following comments by historians and theologians:

"Primitive Christianity did not have an explicit doctrine of the Trinity such as was subsequently elaborated in the creeds."—*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*.

"The early Christians, however, did not at first think of applying the [Trinity] idea to their own faith. They paid their devotions to God the Father and to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and they recognised the . . . Holy Spirit; but there was no thought of these three being an actual Trinity, co-equal and united in One."—*The Paganism in Our Christianity*.

"At first the Christian faith was not Trinitarian . . . It was not so in the apostolic and sub-apostolic ages, as reflected in the N[ew] T[estament] and other early Christian writings."—*Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*.

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

What the Ante-Nicene Fathers Taught

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

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

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

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

Tertullian, who died about 230 C.E., taught the supremacy of God. He observed: "The Father is different from the Son (another), as he is greater; as he who begets is different from him who is begotten; he who sends, different from him who is sent." He also said: "There was a time when the Son was not. . . . Before all things, God was alone."

Hippolytus, who died about 235 C.E., said that God is "the one God, the first and the only One, the Maker and Lord of all," who "had nothing co-eval [of equal age] with him . . . But he was One, alone by himself; who, willing it, called into being what had no being before," such as the created prehuman Jesus.

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

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

Thus, the testimony of the Bible and of history makes clear that the Trinity was unknown throughout Biblical times and for several centuries thereafter.

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

Comment [REH3]: "And they said they had understood them, but that the passages adduced brought forward no proof that there is any other God or Lord, or that the Holy Spirit says so, besides the **Maker of all things**. Then I replied, "I shall attempt to persuade you, since you have understood the Scriptures, [of the truth] of what I say, that there is, and that there is said to be, another God and Lord subject to ²¹²⁷₂₁₂₇ Some, "besides;" but probably as above, the **Maker of all things**, who is also called an Angel, because He announces to men whatsoever the **Maker of all things**—above whom there is no other God—wishes to announce to them."—Justin Martyr, **God who appeared to Moses is distinguished from God the Father.**

Comment [REH4]: But the **Son**, eternally co-existing with the **Father**, from of old, yea, from the beginning, always reveals the **Father** to Angels, Archangels, Powers, Virtues, and all to whom He wills that God should be revealed. **Irenaeus, Contra Heresies Book II chapter XXX**

Comment [REH5]: Pointless Quotes

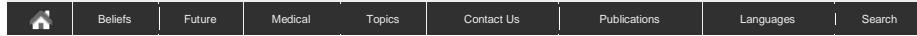
Comment [REH6]: This Word, then, the Christ, the cause of both our being at first (for He was in God) and of our well-being, this very Word has now appeared as man. **He alone being both, both God and man Clement of Alexandria Exhortation Chapter 1**

Comment [REH7]: There are not then either three Fathers, or three Sons, or three Paracletes, but one Father, and one Son, and one Paraclete. Wherefore also the Lord, when He sent forth the apostles to make disciples of all nations, commanded them to "baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," ¹³¹⁶₁₃₁₆ **Matt. xxviii. 19.** not unto one [person] having three names, nor into three [persons] who became incarnate, but into three possessed of equal honour. **—Ignatius, Epistle to the Philippians Chapter II**



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Should You Believe in the Trinity?

How Did the Trinity Doctrine Develop?

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

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

Constantine's Role at Nicaea

FOR many years, there had been much opposition on Biblical grounds to the developing idea that Jesus was God. To try to solve the dispute, Roman emperor Constantine summoned all bishops to Nicaea. About 300, a fraction of the total, actually attended.

Constantine was not a Christian. Supposedly, he converted later in life, but he was not baptized until he lay dying. Regarding him, Henry Chadwick says in *The Early Church*: "Constantine, like his father, worshipped the Unconquered Sun; . . . his conversion should not be interpreted as an inward experience of grace . . . It was a military matter. His comprehension of Christian doctrine was never very clear, but he was sure that victory in battle lay in the gift of the God of the Christians."

What role did this unbaptized emperor play at the Council of Nicaea? The *Encyclopædia Britannica* relates: "Constantine himself presided, actively guiding the discussions, and personally proposed . . . the crucial formula expressing the relation of Christ to God in the creed issued by the council, 'of one substance with the Father' . . . Overawed by the emperor, the bishops, with two exceptions only, signed the creed, many of them much against their inclination."

'Fourth century

Hence, Constantine's role was crucial. After two months of furious religious debate, this pagan politician intervened and decided in favor of those who said that Jesus was God. But why? Certainly not because of any Biblical conviction.

Trinitarianism was a deviation from early Christian teaching.' —The Encyclopedia Americana

"Constantine had basically no understanding whatsoever of the questions that were being asked in Greek theology," says *A Short History of Christian Doctrine*. What he did understand was that religious division was a threat to his empire, and he wanted to solidify his domain.

None of the bishops at Nicaea promoted a Trinity, however. They decided only the nature of Jesus but not the role of the holy spirit. If a Trinity had been a clear Bible truth, should they not have proposed it at that time?

Further Development

AFTER Nicaea, debates on the subject continued for decades. Those who believed that Jesus was not equal to God even came back into favor for a time. But later Emperor Theodosius decided against them. He established the creed of the Council of Nicaea as the standard for his realm and convened the Council of Constantinople in 381 C.E. to clarify the formula.

That council agreed to place the holy spirit on the same level as God and Christ. For the first time, Christendom's Trinity began to come into focus.

Yet, even after the Council of Constantinople, the Trinity did not become a widely accepted creed. Many opposed it and thus brought on themselves violent persecution. It was only in later centuries that the Trinity was formulated into set creeds. *The Encyclopedia Americana* notes: "The full development of Trinitarianism took place in the West, in the Scholasticism of the Middle Ages, when an explanation was undertaken in terms of philosophy and psychology."

The Athanasian Creed

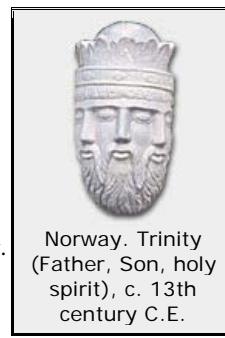
THE Trinity was defined more fully in the Athanasian Creed. Athanasius was a clergyman who supported Constantine at Nicaea. The creed that bears his name declares: "We worship one God in Trinity . . . The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet they are not three gods, but one God."

Well-informed scholars agree, however, that Athanasius did not compose this creed. *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* comments: "The creed was unknown to the Eastern Church until the 12th century. Since the 17th century, scholars have generally agreed that the Athanasian Creed was not written by Athanasius (died 373) but was probably composed in southern France during the 5th century. . .

. The creed's influence seems to have been primarily in southern France and Spain in the 6th

Comment [REH8]: The Trinity was not the subject of the Council, but, rather, the deity of Christ. The disturbance that the Arian Heresy caused was a threat to Constantine's empire.

Comment [REH9]: This was not the first time. See quotes from the Ante-Nicene Fathers above.



and 7th centuries. It was used in the liturgy of the church in Germany in the 9th century and somewhat later in Rome."

So it took centuries from the time of Christ for the Trinity to become widely accepted in Christendom. And in all of this, what guided the decisions? Was it the Word of God, or was it clerical and political considerations? In *Origin and Evolution of Religion*, E. W. Hopkins answers: "The final orthodox definition of the trinity was largely a matter of church politics."

Apostasy Foretold

THIS disreputable history of the Trinity fits in with what Jesus and his apostles foretold would follow their time. They said that there would be an apostasy, a deviation, a falling away from true worship until Christ's return, when true worship would be restored before God's day of destruction of this system of things.

"The Triad of the Great Gods" Many centuries before the time of Christ, there were triads, or trinities, of gods in ancient Babylonia and Assyria. The French "Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology" notes one such triad in that Mesopotamian area: "The universe was divided into three regions each of which became 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."

Comment [REH10]: This parallel does not fit with the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.

Regarding that "day," the apostle Paul said: "It will not come unless the apostasy comes first and the man of lawlessness gets revealed." ([2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7](#)) Later, he foretold: "When I have gone fierce wolves will invade you and will have no mercy on the flock. Even from your own ranks there will be men coming forward with a travesty of the truth on their lips to induce the disciples to follow them." ([Acts 20:29, 30, JB](#)) Other disciples of Jesus also wrote of this apostasy with its 'lawless' clergy class.—See, for example, [2 Peter 2:1](#); [1 John 4:1-3](#); [Jude 3, 4](#).

Comment [REH11]: Any group can say these things about anyone. I can think of a few... Roman Catholicism, Arianism, Sabellianism, Nestorianism, Pelagianism, Gnosticism etc.

Paul also wrote: "The time is sure to come when, far from being content with sound teaching, people will be avid for the latest novelty and collect themselves a whole series of teachers according to their own tastes; and then, instead of listening to the truth, they will turn to myths."—[2 Timothy 4:3, 4, JB](#).

Jesus himself explained what was behind this falling away from true worship. He said that he had sowed good seeds but that the enemy, Satan, would oversow the field with weeds. So along with the first blades of wheat, the weeds appeared also. Thus, a deviation from pure Christianity was to be expected until the harvest, when Christ would set matters right. ([Matthew 13:24-43](#)) *The Encyclopedia Americana* comments: "Fourth century Trinitarianism did not reflect accurately early Christian teaching regarding the nature of God; it was, on the contrary, a deviation from this teaching." Where, then, did this deviation originate?—[1 Timothy 1:6](#).

What Influenced It

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

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

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

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



Italy. Trinity, c. 15th century C.E. (2)

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

That is why, in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, James Hastings wrote: "In Indian religion, e.g., we meet with the trinitarian group of Brahma, Siva, and Visnu; and in Egyptian religion with the trinitarian group of Osiris, Isis, and Horus Nor is it only in historical religions that we find God viewed as a Trinity. One recalls in particular the Neo-Platonic view of the Supreme or Ultimate Reality," which is "triadically represented." What does the Greek philosopher Plato have to do with the Trinity?



India. Triune Hindu godhead, c. 7th century C.E.



France. Trinity, c. 14th century C.E. (1)

Comment [REH12]: Osiris married his sister Isis and had a son named Horus. I don't see the connection.

Platonism

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the book *A Statement of Reasons*, Andrews Norton says of the Trinity: "We can trace the history of this doctrine, and discover its source, not in the Christian revelation, but in the Platonic philosophy . . . The Trinity is not a doctrine of Christ and his Apostles, but a fiction of the school of the later Platonists."

Thus, in the fourth century C.E., the apostasy foretold by Jesus and the apostles came into full bloom. Development of the Trinity was just one evidence of this. The apostate churches also began embracing other pagan ideas, such as hellfire, immortality of the soul, and idolatry. Spiritually speaking, Christendom had entered its foretold dark ages, dominated by a



Germany. Trinity,
20th century C.E.

growing "man of lawlessness" clergy class.—[2 Thessalonians 2:3, 7](#).

Hindu Trinity	The book "The Symbolism of Hindu Gods and Rituals" says regarding a Hindu trinity that existed centuries before Christ: "Siva is one of the gods of the Trinity. He is said to be the god of destruction. The other two gods are Brahma, the god of creation and Vishnu, the god of maintenance. . . . To indicate that these three processes are one and the same the three gods are combined in one form."—Published by A. Parthasarathy, Bombay.
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[Why Did God's Prophets Not Teach It?](#)

WHY, for thousands of years, did none of God's prophets teach his people about the Trinity? At the latest, would Jesus not use his ability as the Great Teacher to make the Trinity clear to his followers? Would God inspire hundreds of pages of Scripture and yet not use any of this instruction to teach the Trinity if it were the "central doctrine" of faith?

Are Christians to believe that centuries after Christ and after having inspired the writing of the Bible, God would back the formulation of a doctrine that was unknown to his servants for thousands of years, one that is an "inscrutable mystery" "beyond the grasp of human reason," one that admittedly had a pagan background and was "largely a matter of church politics"?

The testimony of history is clear: The Trinity teaching is a deviation from the truth, an apostatizing from it.

Picture Credits by number: Church at Tagnon, France (1). Museo Bardini, Florence (2).

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Should You Believe in the Trinity?

[What Does the Bible Say About God and Jesus?](#)

IF PEOPLE were to read the Bible from cover to cover without any preconceived idea of a

Trinity, would they arrive at such a concept on their own? Not at all.

What comes through very clearly to an impartial reader is that God alone is the Almighty, the Creator, separate and distinct from anyone else, and that Jesus, even in his prehuman existence, is also separate and distinct, a created being, subordinate to God.

Comment [REH13]: How do you know this isn't YOUR preconceived ideas?

God Is One, Not Three

THE Bible teaching that God is one is called monotheism. And L. L. Paine, professor of ecclesiastical history, indicates that monotheism in its purest form does not allow for a Trinity: "The Old Testament is strictly monotheistic. God is a single personal being. The idea that a trinity is to be found there . . . is utterly without foundation."

Was there any change from monotheism after Jesus came to the earth? Paine answers: "On this point there is no break between the Old Testament and the New. The monotheistic tradition is continued. Jesus was a Jew, trained by Jewish parents in the Old Testament scriptures. His teaching was Jewish to the core; a new gospel indeed, but not a new theology. . . . And he accepted as his own belief the great text of Jewish monotheism: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God.'"

Those words are found at [Deuteronomy 6:4](#). The Catholic *New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)* here reads: "Listen, Israel: Yahweh our God is the one, the only Yahweh."* In the grammar of that verse, the word "one" has no plural modifiers to suggest that it means anything but one individual.

Comment [REH14]: Trinitarians do not deny the Shema

The Christian apostle Paul did not indicate any change in the nature of God either, even after Jesus came to the earth. He wrote: "God is only one."—[Galatians 3:20](#); see also [1 Corinthians 8:4-6](#).

Thousands of times throughout the Bible, God is spoken of as one person. When he speaks, it is as one undivided individual. The Bible could not be any clearer on this. As God states: "I am Jehovah. That is *my* name; and to no one else shall *I* give *my* own glory." ([Isaiah 42:8](#)) "I am Yahweh your God . . . You shall have no gods except *me*." (Italics ours.)—[Exodus 20:2, 3, JB](#).

Why would all the God-inspired Bible writers speak of God as one person if he were actually three persons? What purpose would that serve, except to mislead people? Surely, if God were composed of three persons, he would have had his Bible writers make it abundantly clear so that there could be no doubt about it. At least the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures who had personal contact with God's own Son would have done so. But they did not.

Comment [REH15]: Huge leap, from saying there is one God and saying one person. Trinitarians Distinguish between being and person.

Instead, what the Bible writers did make abundantly clear is that God is one Person—a unique, unpartitioned Being who has no equal: "I am Jehovah, and there is no one else. With the exception of me there is no God." ([Isaiah 45:5](#)) "You, whose name is Jehovah, you alone

are the Most High over all the earth."—[Psalm 83:18](#).

Not a Plural God

JESUS called God "the only true God." ([John 17:3](#)) Never did he refer to God as a deity of plural persons. That is why nowhere in the Bible is anyone but Jehovah called Almighty. Otherwise, it voids the meaning of the word "almighty." Neither Jesus nor the holy spirit is ever called that, for Jehovah alone is supreme. At [Genesis 17:1](#) he declares: "I am God Almighty." And [Exodus 18:11](#) says: "Jehovah is greater than all the other gods."

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the word *'eloh'ah* (god) has two plural forms, namely, *'elo-him'* (gods) and *'elo-heh'* (gods of). These plural forms generally refer to Jehovah, in which case they are translated in the singular as "God." Do these plural forms indicate a Trinity? No, they do not. In *A Dictionary of the Bible*, William Smith says: "The fanciful idea that [*'elo-him'*] referred to the trinity of persons in the Godhead hardly finds now a supporter among scholars. It is either what grammarians call *the plural of majesty*, or it denotes the *fullness* of divine strength, the *sum of the powers* displayed by God."

The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures says of *'elo-him'*: "It is almost invariably construed with a singular verbal predicate, and takes a singular adjectival attribute." To illustrate this, the title *'elo-him'* appears 35 times by itself in the account of creation, and every time the verb describing what God said and did is singular. ([Genesis 1:1-2:4](#)) Thus, that publication concludes: "[*'Elo-him'*] must rather be explained as an *intensive plural*, denoting *greatness and majesty*."

'Elo-him' means, not "persons," but "gods." So those who argue that this word implies a Trinity make themselves polytheists, worshipers of more than one God. Why? Because it would mean that there were three gods in the Trinity. But nearly all Trinity supporters reject the view that the Trinity is made up of three separate gods.

The Bible also uses the words *'elo-him'* and *'elo-heh'* when referring to a number of false idol gods. ([Exodus 12:12; 20:23](#)) But at other times it may refer to just a single false god, as when the Philistines referred to "Dagon their god [*'elo-heh'*]." ([Judges 16:23, 24](#)) Baal is called "a god [*'elo-him'*]." ([1 Kings 18:27](#)) In addition, the term is used for humans. ([Psalm 82:1, 6](#)) Moses was told that he was to serve as "God" [*'elo-him'*] to Aaron and to Pharaoh.—[Exodus 4:16; 7:1](#).

Obviously, using the titles *'elo-him'* and *'elo-heh'* for false gods, and even humans, did not imply that each was a plurality of gods; neither does applying *'elo-him'* or *'elo-heh'* to Jehovah mean that he is more than one person, especially when we consider the testimony of the rest of the Bible on this subject.

Jesus a Separate Creation

WHILE on earth, Jesus was a human, although a perfect one because it was God who transferred the life-force of Jesus to the womb of Mary. ([Matthew 1:18-25](#)) But that is not how he began. He himself declared that he had "descended from heaven." ([John 3:13](#)) So it was only natural that he would later say to his followers: "What if you should see the Son of man [Jesus] ascend to where he was before?"—[John 6:62](#), *NJB*.

Thus, Jesus had an existence in heaven before coming to the earth. But was it as one of the persons in an almighty, eternal triune Godhead? No, for the Bible plainly states that in his prehuman existence, Jesus was a created spirit being, just as angels were spirit beings created by God. Neither the angels nor Jesus had existed before their creation.

Jesus, in his prehuman existence, was "the first-born of all creation." ([Colossians 1:15](#), *NJB*) He was "the beginning of God's creation." ([Revelation 3:14](#), *RS*, Catholic edition)

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

Notice how closely those references to the origin of Jesus correlate with expressions uttered by the figurative "Wisdom" in the Bible book of Proverbs: "Yahweh created me, first-fruits of his fashioning, before the oldest of his works. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I came to birth; before he had made the earth, the countryside, and the first elements of the world." ([Proverbs 8:12, 22, 25, 26](#), *NJB*) While the term "Wisdom" is used to personify the one whom God created, most scholars agree that it is actually a figure of speech for Jesus as a spirit creature prior to his human existence.

As "Wisdom" in his prehuman existence, Jesus goes on to say that he was "by his [God's] side, a master craftsman." ([Proverbs 8:30](#), *JB*) In harmony with this role as master craftsman, [Colossians 1:16](#) says of Jesus that "through him God created everything in heaven and on earth."—*Today's English Version (TEV)*.

So it was by means of this master worker, his junior partner, as it were, that Almighty God created all other things. The Bible summarizes the matter this way: "For us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things . . . and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things." (Italics ours.)—[1 Corinthians 8:6](#), *RS*, Catholic edition.

It no doubt was to this master craftsman that God said: "Let us make man in our image." ([Genesis 1:26](#)) Some have claimed that the "us" and "our" in this expression indicate a Trinity. But if you were to say, 'Let us make something for ourselves,' no one would normally understand this to imply that several persons are combined as one inside of you. You simply mean that two or more individuals will work together on something. So, too, when God used "us" and "our," he was simply addressing another individual, his first spirit creation, the master craftsman, the prehuman Jesus.

Having been created by God, Jesus is in a secondary position in time, power, and knowledge

Comment [REH16]: A Title for Pre-eminence.

Comment [REH17]: Not the first creature, but the first cause of all things. Can also mean the Ruler of God's creation.

Comment [REH18]: If we see Wisdom synonymous to Christ. Proverbs Chapter 8 will affirm the doctrine of Jesus as the Eternal Begotten Son.

This section pretends to quote the Bible in context but skips over verse 22 as if it was unimportant.

"From eternity I was appointed, from the beginning, from before the world existed." Proverbs 8:22

This verse affirms eternal generation which is the doctrine taught for thousands of years.

Comment [REH19]: God had no junior partner.

"Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: 'I am the LORD, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself'" —Isaiah 44:24

Could God Be Tempted?

AT [MATTHEW 4:1](#), Jesus is spoken of as being "tempted by the Devil." After showing Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world and their glory," Satan said: "All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act of worship to me." ([Matthew 4:8, 9](#)) Satan was trying to cause Jesus to be disloyal to God.

But what test of loyalty would that be if Jesus were God? Could God rebel against himself? No, but angels and humans could rebel against God and did. The temptation of Jesus would make sense only if he was, not God, but a separate individual who had his own free will, one who could have been disloyal had he chosen to be, such as an angel or a human.

On the other hand, it is unimaginable that God could sin and be disloyal to himself. "Perfect is hisactivity . . . A God of faithfulness, . . . righteous and upright is he." ([Deuteronomy 32:4](#)) So if Jesus had been God, he could not have been tempted.—[James 1:13](#).

Not being God, Jesus could have been disloyal. But he remained faithful, saying: "Go away, Satan! For it is written, 'It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.'"—[Matthew 4:10](#).

Comment [REH20]: It would also make sense if Jesus was 100% man and 100% God and Christians have affirms for thousands of years in the doctrine of the hypostatic union.

How Much Was the Ransom?

ONE of the main reasons why Jesus came to earth also has a direct bearing on the Trinity. The Bible states: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all."—[1 Timothy 2:5, 6](#).

Jesus, no more and no less than a perfect human, became a ransom that compensated exactly for what Adam lost—the right to perfect human life on earth. So Jesus could rightly be called "the last Adam" by the apostle Paul, who said in the same context: "Just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive." ([1 Corinthians 15:22, 45](#)) The perfect human life of Jesus was the "corresponding ransom" required by divine justice—no more, no less. A basic principle even of human justice is that the price paid should fit the wrong committed.

If Jesus, however, were part of a Godhead, the ransom price would have been infinitely higher than what God's own Law required. ([Exodus 21:23-25](#); [Leviticus 24:19-21](#)) It was only a perfect human, Adam, who sinned in Eden, not God. So the ransom, to be truly in line with God's justice, had to be strictly an equivalent—a perfect human, "the last Adam." Thus, when God sent Jesus to earth as the ransom, he made Jesus to be what would satisfy justice, not an incarnation, not a god-man, but a perfect man, "lower than angels." ([Hebrews 2:9](#); compare [Psalm 8:5, 6](#).) How could any part of an almighty Godhead—Father, Son, or holy spirit—ever be lower than angels?

Comment [REH21]: It would not have been infinitely high because we have sinned against an infinite being. The ransom of a mere perfect man could have only forgave the sins of one other man.

Comment [REH22]: Jesus needed to be fully man to be able to represent us as Adam did in the garden. However, He also needed to be fully God to be able to pay the penalty for our sins. Only a divine being can bear the full wrath of God for the sins of His people. And the sins committed are against God Himself and God must forgive the sins.

How the "Only-Begotten Son"?

THE Bible calls Jesus the "only-begotten Son" of God. ([John 1:14; 3:16, 18](#); [1 John 4:9](#)) Trinitarians say that since God is eternal, so the Son of God is eternal. But how can a person be a son and at the same time be as old as his father?

Trinitarians claim that in the case of Jesus, "only-begotten" is not the same as the dictionary definition of "begetting," which is "to procreate as the father." (*Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*) They say that in Jesus' case it means "the sense of unoriginated relationship," a sort of only son relationship without the begetting. (*Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*) Does that sound logical to you? Can a man father a son without begetting him?



Jesus said that he had a prehuman existence, having been created by God as the beginning of God's invisible creations

Furthermore, why does the Bible use the very same Greek word for "only-begotten" (as Vine admits without any explanation) to describe the relationship of Isaac to Abraham? [Hebrews 11:17](#) speaks of Isaac as Abraham's "only-begotten son." There can be no question that in Isaac's case, he was only-begotten in the normal sense, not equal in time or position to his father.

The basic Greek word for "only-begotten" used for Jesus and Isaac is *mo-no-ge-nes'*, from *mo'nos*, meaning "only," and *gi'no-mai*, a root word meaning "to generate," "to become (come into being)," states Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance*. Hence, *mo-no-ge-nes'* is defined as: "Only born, only begotten, i.e. an only child."—*A Greek and English Lexicon of the New Testament*, by E. Robinson.

The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by Gerhard Kittel, says: "[*Mo-no-ge-nes'*] means 'of sole descent,' i.e., without brothers or sisters." This book also states that at [John 1:18; 3:16, 18](#); and [1 John 4:9](#), "the relation of Jesus is not just compared to that of an only child to its father. It is the relation of the only-begotten to the Father."

So Jesus, the only-begotten Son, had a beginning to his life. And Almighty God can rightly be called his Begetter, or Father, in the same sense that an earthly father, like Abraham, begets a son. ([Hebrews 11:17](#)) Hence, when the Bible speaks of God as the "Father" of Jesus, it means what it says—that they are two separate individuals. God is the senior. Jesus is the junior—in time, position, power, and knowledge.

When one considers that Jesus was not the only spirit son of God created in heaven, it becomes evident why the term "only-begotten Son" was used in his case. Countless other created spirit beings, angels, are also called "sons of God," in the same sense that Adam was, because their life-force originated with Jehovah God, the Fountain, or Source, of life. ([Job 38:7; Psalm 36:9; Luke 3:38](#)) But these were all created *through* the "only-begotten Son," who was the only one directly begotten by God.—[Colossians 1:15-17](#).

Comment [REH23]: This strawman assumes God had a baby.

Comment [REH24]: μονογενής Monogenes comes from the word Mono (only) and Genes meanings kind or type. So it can be correctly translated one and only or unique.

Was Jesus Considered to Be God?

WHILE Jesus is often called the Son of God in the Bible, nobody in the first century ever thought of him as being God the Son. Even the demons, who "believe there is one God," knew from their experience in the spirit realm that Jesus was not God. So, correctly, they addressed Jesus as the separate "Son of God." (James 2:19; Matthew 8:29) And when Jesus died, the pagan Roman soldiers standing by knew enough to say that what they had heard from his followers must be right, not that Jesus was God, but that "certainly this was God's Son."—Matthew 27:54.

Comment [REH25]: This article has yet to prove this statement.

Hence, the phrase "Son of God" refers to Jesus as a separate created being, not as part of a Trinity. As the Son of God, he could not be God himself, for John 1:18 says: "No one has ever seen God."—RS, Catholic edition.

The disciples viewed Jesus as the "one mediator between God and men," not as God himself. (1 Timothy 2:5) Since by definition a mediator is someone separate from those who need mediation, it would be a contradiction for Jesus to be one entity with either of the parties he is trying to reconcile. That would be a pretending to be something he is not.

Comment [REH26]: The full verse reads "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." While the KJV reads only begotten Son, P75 and P66 Dated around 200 A.D. read μονογενῆς θεός (Monogenes Theos) only God. (only begotten god, if you prefer that translation of monogenes) Later versions read μονογενῆς υἱός (Monogenes huiois) only son.

The Bible is clear and consistent about the relationship of God to Jesus. Jehovah God alone is Almighty. He created the prehuman Jesus directly. Thus, Jesus had a beginning and could never be coequal with God in power or eternity.

* God's name is rendered "Yahweh" in some translations, "Jehovah" in others.

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Comment [REH27]: Please note: There is a grammatical rule in the Greek language called the Granville Sharp's Rule. This rule is applied when two nouns that are describing a person (not proper names) are connected by the word "and" (kai) and the first noun preceded by a definite article (the). For example in 2 Peter 1:11 it says: "...our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." In Greek this definite article is before the word "Lord". Granville Sharp's Rule says that in this case *both* nouns are applied to the same person. Jesus Christ is both Lord and Savior! Earlier in the book of 2 Peter this same construction is used with the replacement of one word. 2 Peter 1:1 says "...our God and Savior Jesus Christ." In Greek this reads exactly the same except you take out the word for Lord and insert the word for God. In this verse both God and Savior are applied to Jesus.

1:1: tou **theou** hemon kai sotaros Iesou Christou

1:11: tou **kuriou** hemon kai sotaros Iesou Christou

A similar construction, but the same rule is to be used in Titus 2:13 which reads: "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ". And then goes on to say (14)"who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." Indeed God has gave himself for us on the cross!