

IS JESUS CHRIST GOD?

[With Appendix on the Doctrine of the Trinity]

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by Timothy Cross

Throughout church history the one dividing issue between Orthodox [mainline] Christianity, and groups often labeled cults [Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, The Way International, etc.], is the deity of Christ. In other words, was/is Jesus Christ God? Did God become a man in the person of Jesus Christ in order to die for the sins of the world that we might have eternal life?—I believe this is precise what the Bible teaches.

Whether you agree with what I’ve just said, I invite you to grab a Bible and see for yourself what the Bible has to say concerning the deity of Christ. Even though 2,000 years of church history supports the deity of Christ, I accept the Bible as my final source of authority.

This is no easy topic, nor is it of little importance. Huge issues are at stake. If Jesus was God in the form of a man, then he, as no other human being in history, is to be listened to, revered, and even worshiped. It would mean that the God who created the galaxies, nebulae, and quasars, who cast billions of stars into the heavens, that God became a man, lived and walked on this earth, and died in submission to his own creation. His death would mean infinitely more than the death of a good man. It would be the supreme sacrifice of all time, a manifestation of unfathomable love. To treat Jesus as a mere man (or even as a *god*) under such circumstances would be *blasphemy*. To fail to adjust one’s life to his teaching would be to miss life itself.

On the other hand, if Jesus were not God, but a lower created being, one might feel gratitude for his life, death, and teachings, but to worship him as God would be a tremendous mistake. He would be no more than an *idol* occupying the place of God. The Bible is clear about idolatry. God says that he will not give his glory to another (Isaiah 42:8; 48:11), that there are no other gods (or Gods) beside himself (Isaiah 45:5, 21, 22; Jeremiah 10:6; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6), and that we are to worship God alone (Deuteronomy 6:13, 14; Matthew 4:10). So, either Jesus is God or he is not. To believe in Him wrongly is a form of either *blasphemy* or *idolatry*.

This discussion can get complicated, depending on what a person has been taught. *Arguments can be made both for and against the deity of Christ*. For example, if one has been taught that God is one person, and that Jesus is a created being, then on first reading, Bible verses can be found to support that view. On the other hand, if one has been taught that God is one supreme being comprised of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and that the Son gave up his position of equality within the godhead to become a man in the person of Jesus, then Scripture passages can be found to support that view. The question is not whether either position has an apparent case to make, but rather, which has the *best* evidence? Which one does Scripture actually teach?

I cannot convince you of anything against your will—nor will I try. If you are interested in arriving at the truth, it is crucial that you maintain an open mind. That is the one thing I cannot give you. The fact is, the truth about God, whatever that is, will affect you forever . . .”—You owe it to yourself to settle this issue once for all.

In order to keep this material to booklet size, I have limited my comments, and in many cases I only give the scripture reference, trusting that you if you question a particular point you will look up the reference for yourself. Personally, I encourage you to use a modern translation of the Bible as they are much easier to understand [e.g., *The New International Version*, *The New American Standard Version*, *Revised Standard Version*, *New King James Version*, etc.] Except for the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ *New World Translation* of the Bible, which significantly alters and tampers with key verses of scripture to make it fit their theology, it doesn’t matter a whole lot which translation of the Bible you use. They all say virtually the same thing. If you question why I encourage you *not* to use the *New World Translation*, read my booklet addressed to Jehovah’s Witnesses [<http://www.4seekers.com>] where I show how key verses have been intentionally mistranslated.—For example, in John 8:58, where Jesus claims to be the great “*I AM*” of the Old Testament (the Hebrew name for God: *Yahweh*, or *Jehovah*.—See Exodus 3:14.), the *New World Translation* translates this emphatic present tense phrase “*I AM*” (*ego eimi* in Greek) as “*I was*” (past tense). What is interesting, is that in verse 24 of the same chapter, and throughout the rest of the gospels, they correctly translate the exact same words, *ego eimi*, as “*I am*.”

WAS JESUS APRE-EXISTENT BEING?

In other words, did Jesus exist before being born on earth? While proving this will not prove that he is God, it will certainly prove that he was more than a mere man, thus leaving only two possibilities: either he was/is an angel or he was/is God.

Does the Bible teach the pre-existence of Christ? Yes. Jesus and John the Baptist were first cousins. John the Baptist was, humanly speaking, 6 months older than Jesus. Yet, scripture quotes John the Baptist as saying, “*This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I for He existed before me.’*” (John 1:15, emphasis mine). The words of John the Baptist, which the apostle John quoted in verse 15, are then explained in verses 29 and 30: “*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ‘This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man (Jesus) who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’*” (emphasis mine).

John the Baptist could not have been talking about Jesus existing in the foreknowledge of God, because God, who is all-knowing, would have also foreknown John.—No. *Jesus existed* before John.

Concerning Christ’s pre-existence, if you are willing to research it, there are many verses which very clearly state that Jesus existed before coming to earth as a man. For example, in John 17:5 Jesus prayed, “*And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*” (emphasis mine) See also John 1:15, 30; 3:13, 31-32; 4:34; 6:42, 46, 51, 58, 62; 13:3; Ephesians 4:10, and II Corinthians 8:9. Scripture is abundantly clear; Jesus existed in Heaven prior to coming to earth (cf., Philippians 2:6,7).

IS JESUS GOD?

I am very aware that some cult leaders have taught that there are only a handful of verses in the New Testament (maybe 5 to 7) which would even remotely teach the deity of Christ. In actuality, as you will see, there are over 500 verses which directly teach the deity of Christ.

One of the strongest arguments for the deity of Christ is that **virtually every major name and attribute of God mentioned in the Old Testament is repeated of Jesus in the New Testament**. Jesus and God the Father coequally shared the same names and titles of deity. (I’ll say more about this later.)

Some ask, “*OK, tell me this, ‘If Jesus is God, how could he resurrect Himself?’*”—Jesus answered that question in John 2:19-21 when he said, “*‘Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.’ . . . But the temple he had spoken of was his body.*” (emphasis mine).—Jesus did have the authority to resurrect himself. He said “*destroy this*

temple (His body) . . . and **"I will raise it again."**

How could Jesus do that? Because Jesus had/has two natures, that of *God* (Philippians 2:6), and that of a *man* (Philippians 2:7). [Cf., Colossians 2:9 and Romans 1:3-4.]

ARE WE TO WORSHIP JESUS?

Ask any member of a non-mainline Christian group [*cult*] if it is OK to *worship* Jesus. They will generally say something like this, "We worship God. We do not worship Jesus!"—Which, of course, is the right answer if Jesus is not God.

Few subjects are spoken of in Scripture with more clarity than the subject of worship. Both the Old and New Testaments emphasize that God alone should receive worship. Even Jesus, himself, told Satan, "For it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" (Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8). No man or angel was ever to receive worship (Matthew 4:10; Acts 10:26; Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9). God will not give his "glory" to another (Isaiah 42:8).

A question I ask is this: "If only God deserves worship, and he will not give his glory to another, then why is Jesus worshiped and given 'glory' in scripture?"

The New Testament uses primarily one word for *worship*, the Greek word *proskuneo*. It is the word Jesus used in telling Satan to worship God alone [(Matthew 4:10). It is used more than any other word in describing worship of God (e.g., John 4:24; Revelation 5:14; 7:11; 11:16: etc.). Yet, time and time again people "worshiped" Jesus (the same Greek word *proskuneo*).

After Jesus healed a man born blind from birth, the person "worshiped" [past tense form of *proskuneo*] Jesus (John 9:38). The same Greek word is used in Matthew 14:33 when the disciples *worshiped* Jesus after seeing him walk on water. The disciples also *worshiped* him after the resurrection (Matthew 28:9, 17). Thus, Jesus received *worship* (*proskuneo*), even from those closest to him, his disciples, who, of all people, should have known his feelings on the matter.

In each of these instances, the same Jesus who had rebuked Satan for tempting Jesus to worship wrongly, did not recoil in horror when the disciples worshiped him. He didn't say, "Only God is to be worshiped!" Instead, he received their worship as his due.

This last point is an important point to grasp. **Jesus never stopped people from worshiping him.** Some have said that just because people worshiped him does not mean he approved of it.—No, he did approve. How do I know? Because in every other place in scripture where people tried to worship an angel or man of God, they were immediately and sternly rebuked, and their worship was redirected to God. (e.g., Revelation 22:8-9). Paul was so horrified when people tried to worship him that he tore his clothes and ran out into the street yelling that he was only a man (Acts 14:10-15). There is not the slightest hint of any of that from Jesus.—Rather, Jesus received his disciples' *worship* and the blind man's *worship*.

Unless such Bible verses were instructional, why else would the writers of scripture include, not one, but many accounts of Jesus being worshiped? Not only did Jesus receive worship from men, but in Hebrews 1:6 the angels of God are told to "worship" (*proskuneo*) Jesus. Certainly, angels would not be told to worship another angel. Only God is worshiped, thus Jesus is God.

IS IT OK TO PRAY TO JESUS?

Please think with me. If the New Testament were to teach that it is alright to pray to Jesus, wouldn't that mean that Jesus is omnipresent, everywhere at once, able to receive people's prayers from all around the world? And, since angels are not omnipresent (everywhere at once), and neither are men, wouldn't that prove that Jesus must be God since only God is omnipresent?

So, the question becomes, "Did Jesus receive prayer?"—The answer is "Yes." In Acts 7:59 as Stephen was being stoned he looked to heaven and "prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'."

In I Corinthians 1:2 Paul instructs believers to pray to Jesus, ". . . together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours." Saints everywhere were praying and calling upon the

name of Jesus. In the Old Testament and Jewish culture, "name" implied presence. (For example, when the Jews went into battle in the "name" of Jehovah it was implied that Jehovah's presence was there.) To call upon the "name" of Jesus was to invoke his presence.

IS JESUS THE CREATOR?

The first verse in the Bible reads, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). God is plainly identified as creator. To have said anything different would have been blasphemy to the Jews. Time after time, God is said to have created the world (Job 33:4; Psalm 95:5-6; 102:25-26; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Isaiah 40:28, etc.).

Did you know that in unmistakable language the New Testament affirms Christ's deity by speaking of him as *Creator*?

"**He** was with God in the beginning. Through **him** all things were made; without **him** nothing was made that has been made. **He** was in the world, and though the world was made through **him**, the world did not recognize **him**." (John 1:2-3, 10; emphasis mine).—The string of connected pronouns makes it clear that the same person is being spoken of the whole time; Jesus. Paul expressed the same thought about Jesus as Creator. Again note the connected pronouns.

"For by **him** all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by **him** and for **him**. **He** is before all things, and in **him** all things hold together. **And he** is the head of the body, the church; **he** is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead." (Colossians 1:16-18, emphasis mine).

The text clearly indicates that Paul was writing about Jesus. He speaks of Jesus through whom "all things were created," who is in the "beginning," "head . . . of the 'church'" and is the "firstborn from the dead." According to Ephesians 5:23; John 1:1; and Colossians 1:18, Jesus was/is all of these things.

The writer of Hebrews underscored the same point: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his **Son**, who he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe." (Hebrews 1:1-2, emphasis mine). Jesus created the universe.—This is consistent with the fact that in Hebrews 1:8, a few verses later, Jesus the "Son" is referred to as "God."

The most common argument is that all of these passages (John, Colossians and Hebrews) speak of God, not Jesus. All I can say is, read the contexts. Look at the connected pronouns. Outline the passages. You cannot adhere to good English (or Greek) and come up with any logical, common sense interpretation other than that Jesus is co-creator.

WHO IS THE ALPHA & THE OMEGA?

The terms Alpha and Omega give a beautiful, awesome description of God. Long before the stars filled the heavens and our universe existed, God was. He is from everlasting to everlasting. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God . . ." God alone deserves the titles Alpha (the first) and Omega (the last)

These names express the eternal nature of God. He is the source and goal of all creation. No created being could ever rightfully claim to be the first and last of all that is. Did you know that both Jesus and God are called the *Alpha and Omega, the first and the last*, in Scripture? Carefully read the following verses.

God As Alpha And Omega

Isaiah 44:6 "I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God." (see also, Isaiah 48:12.)

Revelation 1:8 "**I am the Alpha and the Omega**, says the Lord God." (Emphasis mine. See also Revelation 21:6-7.) So, who is the Alpha and Omega according to these verses?—God. Now, read these next verses:

Jesus As Alpha And Omega

Revelation 2:8 “These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again.”

Revelation 1:17-18 “When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: ‘Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!’”

Revelation 22:12-20 “Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to every one according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End . . . I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony . . .”

If Jesus isn't the eternal God, why is he called the *First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and the Omega*? Can there be two firsts and two lasts, two Alphas and Omegas?—No, not when it comes to God.

COULD JESUS BE AN ANGEL?

About the only scriptural places where it can be argued that Jesus was an angel is found in the Old Testament appearances of the “Angel of the Lord.” Part of the confusion is cleared up once we understand that the word “angel” means “messenger.” It can mean an angelic being; or a person who was acting as a messenger could also be called an *angel*.

In several Old Testament passages the term “Angel of the Lord” and “LORD” (Yahweh) were used interchangeably.

For example, in Genesis 16:7-13 the angel of the Lord told Sarah that he would greatly multiply her descendants (seed). Then Sarah called to the name of the Lord (Yahweh) who spoke to her, “You are the God who sees me . . .”

Other examples where God (or the pre-incarnate Christ) appeared as the “angel of the Lord” can be found in Genesis 22:15-16; 31:11-13; 48:15-16; Exodus 4:2-4 (cf., 3:2); I Chronicles 21:15-19; and Psalm 34:6-7. In each instance the “angel of the Lord” is identified as “God” or “Yahweh.” In such instances God acted as his own messenger; which is what I believe God did in the incarnation.

A question I would like you to consider is this; “**If I can prove beyond reasonable scriptural doubt that Jesus is not an angel, will you then accept the fact that he must be God?**”

I believe that God chose to write himself into his own story, so to speak, and became a man. Though Jesus had all the limitations of being human (Philippians 2:7), he was nonetheless God. As Paul said, “All the fullness of deity dwelt in him” (Colossians 2:9).

Here are some Biblical reasons Jesus could not have been a created angel:

1. He bore the name, “THE Son of God.” Angels are referred to as “sons of God” (e.g., Job 1:6; 38:7). Jesus was always set apart. He is referred to as “the **only** begotten from the Father” (John 1:14). John 1:18 even goes so far as to call Jesus the “**only** begotten God” [If you check the Greek you will see that the word “*theos*,” consistently translated as *God*, is the word used of Jesus in this passage.]

Hebrews 1:5 reads, “For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my Son . . .?’” This is a rhetorical question. The obvious answer is, “None of the angels.” The implication is that Jesus is not an angel, but is in a category by himself. Note too that in Hebrews 1:5 Jesus was *begotten*, not *created*. Angels are *created*, not *begotten* (e.g., Ezekiel 28:13). God does not beget angels.

C. S. Lewis clearly illustrates the meaning of “*begotten*” when he writes:

One of the creeds says that Christ is the Son of God “begotten, not created”; and it adds “begotten by his Father before all worlds.” Will you please get it quite clear that this has nothing to do with the fact that when Christ was born on earth as a man; that man was the son of a virgin? We are not now thinking about the virgin Birth. We are thinking about something that happened before Nature was created at all, before time began, “Before all worlds” Christ is begotten, not created. What does it mean?

We don't use the words begetting or begotten much in modern English, but everyone still knows what they mean. To beget is to become the father of; to create is to make. And the difference is this. When you beget, you beget

something of the same kind as yourself. A man begets human babies, a beaver begets little beavers and a bird begets eggs which turn into little birds. But when you make, you make something of a different kind from yourself. A bird makes a nest, a beaver builds a dam, a man makes a wireless set—or he may make something more like himself than a wireless set: say, a statue. If he is a clever enough carver he may make a statue which is very like a man indeed. But, of course, it is not a real man; it only looks like one. It cannot breathe or think. It is not alive.

Now that is the first thing to get clear. What God begets is God; just as what man begets is man. What God creates is not God; just as what man makes is not man. (emphasis mine; from the book Mere Christianity)

The rest of Hebrews chapter 1 clearly shows that Jesus is not an angel. In fact, if there is one chapter in all of scripture which proves Jesus is not an angel, it is Hebrews, chapter 1. Allow me to take a brief overview of this chapter before moving on to the next point.

a. As previously mentioned, verses 2 and 10 of Hebrews, chapter 1, both refer to Jesus as creator. The use of the connected pronouns in verse 2 and the conjunction “and” (kai in Greek) in verse 10 grammatically make it clear that Jesus is the one being referred to as creator.

b. Hebrews 1:3-4 says that Jesus is “*the reflection of his [God's] glory and the exact representation of his very being, and he sustains all things by the word of his power.*” (That doesn't sound like a mere man to me, or even an angel.)

The angels, while created sinless, are far lower in nature than God. Jesus, you recall, unlike the angels, was in a position of “equality” with God prior to His coming to earth (Philippians 2:6-7). Jesus is not a cheap xerox copy of the original, but God became man (Philippians 2:6-7). Within the bounds of human limitation, to look at Jesus was the same as looking at God (John 14:6-9, Colossians 2:9). They have the same nature (Philippians 2:6).

Hebrews 1:3b-4 records, “After **he** had provided purification for sins, **he** sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So **he** became as **much superior to the angels** as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.” (emphasis mine). Christ is “superior” to “angels,” and his name is superior to theirs.

Question: how could Jesus be superior to angels if he is an angel? For example, could a dog ever be *superior* to a dog? Take Lassie, for example. Could it be said of Lassie, “You have become superior to dogs”? No. Why not? Because Lassie is a dog. She might be a wonderful dog, an above average dog, but she is still a dog. The reason it can be said of Jesus that he is *superior* to the angels is because he is *not* an angel.

It has been argued that because Jesus *inherited* a name better than the angels, it means he did not always have that name, and therefore, could not be God. The answer to this of course is that Jesus had two natures. As man, through the work he did on earth, he could inherit such a name.

c. As previously mentioned, in Hebrews 1:6 the angels are told to “*worship*” the Son (cf., Psalm 2:7, 11-12). In Greek, the word for worship used here is not merely to bow down in obeisance, but is the actual Greek word for worship, the same word Jesus used in Matthew 4:10 when he told Satan to “*worship only God*.” Reason with me. In Matthew 4:10 when Jesus told Satan that only God was to be worshiped, Jesus was speaking these words to a fallen angel, Satan.—Even though Satan is a fallen angel, he is still an angel. If angels are to worship only God, then how could the angels be told to worship Jesus unless he is God?

d. Hebrews 1:8 states, “But about the Son he says, ‘your throne O God is for ever . . .’” [Note: Jesus is clearly called God (theos), not a “god.”] The reference is to the throne of the eternal God. Could an angel occupy the throne of God? Not hardly, but Jesus does (see Revelation 22:1).

e. Hebrews 2:1-7 continues to expound upon the theme that Jesus is superior to the angels. His message is superior (verses 1-3), and though he was made “*lower than angels*” (in coming to earth as a man), he is now exalted to a place higher than the angels where “*all things* (even angels) *are subject to him*” (cf., Ephesians 1:20-23).

2. Jesus has his own angels (e.g., Matthew 24:31). Do angels have angels? In Revelation 22:16 Jesus said it was his own angel who had given the message of Revelation to the apostle John.

3. Are angels omnipresent? Can they be everywhere at the same time? No, but Jesus is omnipresent (John 14:20; Galatians 2:20; II Corinthians 13:5, etc.). He indwells and lives in the hearts of believers everywhere (Galatians 4:6).

4. Are angels or men the object of our faith? No, but Jesus is (Revelation 14:12; Galatians 2:16; Colossians 2:5; Romans 3:22). Angels may serve as an example *for* faith, but they are not the object *of* faith.

5. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit will be given in the name of Jesus (John 14:26). Does God ever promise to give his Holy Spirit in the name of an angel? No.

6. Do angels have the authority to give or send the Spirit of the living God? No, they are servants of God. However, Jesus claimed the authority to send the Spirit (John 15:26; 16:7). In the Trinitarian formula (Matthew 28:19) where it lists the “*Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*,” the Son’s name precedes God the Holy Spirit’s name. Would an angel’s name be listed ahead of God’s name? Jesus’ name was.

7. Could an angel purchase eternal redemption, establish an eternal covenant with the eternal Spirit? Jesus, who is the *same yesterday, today and forever*, did (Hebrews 13:8).

8. Have you noticed in scripture that Jesus does not bear the names or titles of an angel. Jesus, for example is called “*the Son of God*,” not “*one of the sons of God*.” Why? Because that which was conceived in the womb of Mary was of the seed of the Holy Spirit of God, not an angel. Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6 speak of the Christ child whose name means “*Immanuel*” (God with us), not “*angel with us*.” Further, his names are “*Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace*.”

Some have a misunderstanding about the virgin birth. God did not have intercourse (sex) with Mary, nor was Jesus the product of Joseph having sex with Mary. See what Matthew 1:20-25 teaches, “. . . *do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit . . . All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel—which means God with us.’ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no (sexual) union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.*” (parenthesis mine)

9. According to scripture, Jesus is the creator of the angels, so how could he be an angel? In Colossians 1:15,16 it says, “*He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn [has to do with position, not origin; like the firstborn of a Jewish family was primary heir] over all creation. For by him [still talking of Jesus] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities [all designations of angels]; all things were created by him and for him. . . . he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead. [still talking about Jesus]*” This passage is clearly about Jesus, for the string of connected pronouns proves that, and it is he who created all the ranks of angels.

10. If you care to do further Bible study you will find that **virtually every major name and attribute ascribed to Jehovah in the Old Testament is applied to Jesus in the New Testament.** Jesus does not bear the name(s) of angels, but **Jesus does bear the names of God.**

For example, here are some of the names, titles and attributes that Jesus and God the Father coequally share. Under each of these names and titles, many other scriptures could be cited. I have given what I consider to be some of the main verses. Please look up each verse. [NOTE: Even though I disagree profoundly with Mormon theology, it should be noted that, contrary to Mormon teaching which denies the deity of Christ, the *Book Of Mormon* actually teaches the deity of Christ. I have placed references from the *Book Of Mormon* to establish this fact. This should not surprise us as upwards of one-third of the *Book of Mormon* is plagiarized from the *King James Bible*, word for word.]

JESUS AND GOD THE FATHER CO-EQUALLY SHARE THE SAME NAMES AND ATTRIBUTES

1. **Yahweh/Jehovah:** John 8:58 (In the Greek, the words “*I AM*” are present tense, not “*I was*.” The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, translates “*I AM*” in Exodus 3:14 as *ego eimi*. Exodus 3:14, you recall, is where God declares his name to be “*I AM*” (translated *Yahweh*, or the less

accurate pronunciation *Jehovah*). ***Ego eimi* is also translated as “*I am*”** in the following passages where Jesus says, “*I am* the bread of life,” “*I am* the living water,” “*I am* the door of the Sheep,” “Unless you believe *I am* he . . .,” “*I am* he,” etc. See: **Mark 14:62, John 6:35, 48; 8:24; 10:7; 18:5.** [Mosiah 12:33; IINephi 22:2]

2. **God:** Hebrews 1:8, IIPeter 1:1 (In Greek, both God and Savior modify Jesus Christ), John 1:1 [cf. verse 14], Titus 2:13; Acts 20:28. [Mosiah 12:33,34; 7:27; 13:34; 16:15; 17:8; 26:26; Alma 11:38,39; INephi 11:26; 13:41; 19:13; IINephi 1:10; 6:9; 10:3,7; 11:7; 25:29; 26:12]

3. **Alpha and Omega:** Revelation 22:13 (cf. v. 16), [INephi 20:12,13].

4. **First and Last:** Revelation 2:8 [cf. Isaiah 44:6]

5. **Lord:** Acts 10:36; I Corinthians 2:8; Philippians 2:10,11 [INephi 17:14, 30; Mosiah 3:18]

6. **Savior:** Isaiah 43:10 vs. Titus 2:13 [INephi 10:4; 21:26; Mosiah 3:20]

7. **King:** Revelations 19:16 [II Nephi 10:14; 16:5; Alma 5:50]

8. **Judge:** John 5:22 [IINephi 13:13; Mosiah 2:27; 3:10,18]

9. **Holy One:** Acts 3:14 [INephi 20:17; IINephi 1:10; 2:15-18; 9:15; Omni 1:26 (cf. v. 25)]

10. **Light:** John 8:12 [INephi 13:36; 15:15; IINephi 4:35; Jacob 7:25]

11. **Rock:** I Corinthians 10:3-4

12. **Redeemer:** Psalm 50:7, Acts 20:28 [I Nephi 17:30; 21:7,26; 10:5; II Nephi 2:6; 33:6; Mosiah 15:1; 26:26]

13. **Shepherd:** I Peter 5:4 [INephi 13:41; Alma 5:38]

14. **Healer:** Acts 9:34

15. **Creator:** (as noted earlier) [God the Father (INephi 2:12; 17:36; 20:13; II Nephi 2:14; 8:15; 9:40; Jacob 2:5), God the Son (IINephi 9:5; Mosiah 3:8; 4:2 [cf. v. 9]; 26:23) God the Holy Spirit: (Alma 18:26-29).]

16. **Omniscient [all-knowing]:** Matthew 11:27 [I Nephi 9:6; Mosiah 29:19 (cf. 3:8)]

17. **Giver of Life:** I Corinthians 15:45; John 17:2

18. **Forgiver of Sins:** Mark 2:7-11

19. **Omnipresent [everywhere at once]:** Matthew 28:20; Revelation 3:20; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:17—which is something no “man” could do. You can have the very Spirit of Christ living in you (Galatians 4:6).

20. **Omnipotent [all-powerful]:** Matthew 28:18; Mark 1:29-34; John 10:18; Jude 24 [INephi 1:14; 9:6; 17:48; Mosiah 3:5,17, 18, 21; 4:6; 5:15].

21. **Immutable [unchanging]:** Hebrews 13:8 [II Nephi 27:23; Moroni 10:18,19]

22. **Eternal:** Isaiah 9:6 [INephi 11:21; 13:40; IINephi 9:8; 26:12; Mosiah 3:5]

23. **Spoke as God:** Matthew 23:34-37

24. **Was worshiped:** Matthew 28:9,17; Hebrews 1:6 [I Nephi 11:24; 17:55; II Nephi 25:16, 29]

25. **Received Prayers as God:** I Corinthians 1:2, Acts 7:59, 60 [INephi 1:5; II Nephi 32:9; Enos 1:4; IINephi 19:18]

Question: how could an angel, no matter how great, deserve all these titles of deity? They couldn’t. If Jesus is more than a mere man, is a pre-existent heavenly being, and is called by all the major names of God, then who is he?—God!

As Rebecca Pippert in her excellent book, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World*, wrote,

“... *He [Jesus] said ‘I and the Father are one’ (John 10:30). He informed people that knowing him was the same as knowing God (John 8:19), seeing him was the same as seeing God (John 12:45), believing in him was the same as believing in God (John 12:44) and receiving him was the same as receiving God (Mark 9:37). . . . Let us suppose that I made the kind of claims that Jesus did and people began to say, ‘Isn’t Becky terrific?! I mean, the way she forgives sins . . . And her moral ethics are so brilliant and impeccable . . . And what a superb teacher! . . . not to mention her perfect sinless life. There is one little problem. She does seem to be a little confused about her deity. But other than that, she really has it all together!’—No one is a little confused about his own deity and sane.”*

Paraphrasing Peter Kreeft, “*Either we disbelieve his believable character, or we believe his unbelievable claims [to be God].*” The miracles and resurrec-

tion, not to mention the weight of prophecy, prove that Jesus' unbelievable claims to be God are in fact true, scripturally true.

SOME COMMON OBJECTIONS TO THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Most of the objections to the deity of Christ stem from a misunderstanding of Philippians 2:6,7 where Paul states that Jesus first *existed* in a state of "equality" with God the Father, and that Jesus, prior to being born, was in the very "form" or "nature" of God. Thus, Jesus first *existed* in a state of equality with God, then he "lowered" or "humbled" himself, being "made in the likeness of men." The Bible says he assumed a second "form" or "nature." In his humbled state as a man, of course inequalities can be found between he and God the Father. When people argue that Jesus is less or unequal to God the Father they ignore the fact that Jesus first had equality with God before he took the role of a servant. As a man, of course he got tired and had human limitations. However, those were self-imposed limitations. Prior to limiting himself the Bible says he *existed* in glorious equality with God. [By the way, the word for "equality" in Philippians 2:6 is the Greek word "isos," from which we get the word *isosceles* triangle, a triangle with two equal sides.]

1. "No Man Can See God And Live."

Some argue that Jesus could not be God because the Bible says, "no man can see Me [God] and live," "no man has seen God at any time," "whom no man has seen or can see" (referring to God) (Exodus 33:20; John 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 4:12, etc.).

No one could see the totality of God in all His power and splendor and live, that is true. Even the presence of angelic beings caused godly individuals overwhelming fear and awe, almost to the point of death (eg., Daniel 10:5-11).

Yet God has been "seen." When Moses asked to see God, God replied. "No man can see Me and live." But, God went on, He would place Moses in the cleft of the rock and put His hand over him. Then His "glory" would pass by. After His glory passed, God said, "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen" (Exodus 33:23). So Moses saw God, though only to a degree he could handle. There are other instances, too, in which God has been "seen." After Jacob had wrestled with a "man," a physical manifestation of God, Scripture says he had "striven with God" (Genesis 32:28 compare Hosea 12:3-4). Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved" (Genesis 32:30). Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, along with seventy elders of Israel, "saw the God of Israel . . . and they beheld God" (Exodus 24:9-11). Samson's father exclaimed, "we shall surely die, for we have seen God" (Judges 13:22). After a heavenly vision of God, Isaiah said, "I saw the Lord . . . my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:1-3, 5).

So the picture Scripture gives is that human beings cannot see the total glory and power of God and live. Yet, God has been "seen" by some to the degree that their earthly limitations allow them to see him.

2. "If Jesus Is God's Son, How Can He Be God?"

The word *Son* was used of Jesus in at least four ways: Son of Mary, Son of David, Son of Man, and Son of God. Those four terms describe the natural relationship of Jesus to the Father and to humanity. Except for the first one, the Son of Mary, the other three uses of the word, *Son*, are used figuratively in the New Testament, and are *not* to be understood in a literal sense. Let me explain the four usages:

Son Of Mary

According to His human nature, Jesus had one parent, Mary. In this sense, Jesus of Nazareth was literally and physically a "son." The man Jesus had no literal earthly, biological father. He was virgin born. The only real "Father" the man Jesus had was God. The seed implanted in Mary was from God's Holy Spirit (not an angel or some alien from outer space).

Son of David

In this instance, Son of David is figurative because Jesus was not a literal first generation descendant of David (see Matthew 22:42-45). The term does

show that Jesus is a descendant and heir of David. It is clearly the figurative use of the word *son*.

Son of Man

The term son of man is distinctly Jewish and was first used in the Old Testament. The word "man" is plural, referring to *mankind*, not to any one man. The word "son," as used in the phrase *son of man*, is clearly figurative. The term, "Son of Man" links Jesus to all mankind. It shows the humanity of Jesus.

At His trial before the Sanhedrin and the high priest Caiaphas, Jesus identified Himself as the Messianic "Son of Man" referred to in the book of Daniel. Daniel 7:13, 14 reads: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him . . ."

Caiaphas asked Jesus, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" "I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Mark 14:61-62). In saying this, Jesus made a powerful assertion about His coming return with great glory to judge and rule over the earth. In that encounter with Caiaphas it is significant that Jesus accepted simultaneously the titles "Son of Man" and "Son of the Blessed One (God)."

Son of God

The term "Son of God" implies the full deity of Christ [that Jesus is God incarnate], just as the term "Son of Man," as discussed earlier, implied His full humanity.

Son of Man = Fully Man

Son of God = Fully God

If the term *Son of Man* means that Christ is fully man, then the term *Son of God* means that Christ is God.

The New Testament clearly teaches that Jesus, before becoming a man, existed in the "form" of God (Philippians 2:6), and that He took a second "form" (nature) when He became a man (Philippians 2:6-7). Thus, Jesus has two natures: as *God* [*Son of God*] and *man* [*Son of Man*].—See also Romans 1:3, 4.

3. "The Father Is Greater than I"

"Jesus said, '... the Father is greater than I'" (John 14:28). Does this demonstrate that Christ's position is somehow lesser than God?

It is true that in His role as bond-servant while on earth, Jesus occupied a lower rank than the Father. Such a rank, however, does not deny His divine nature. In that same passage, just a few verses earlier, Jesus told Philip, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:8-9). That statement makes clear that Jesus and the Father are one in nature. To have seen one was to have seen the other (compare John 12:44, 45). Therefore, Jesus' words that the Father was greater referred to His temporary position as servant, not to His being.

4. "Jesus Was Called the First-Born of Creation"

Some people get confused over the word *first-born*, thinking it must mean "first-created." That would imply that Jesus was only a created being, not pre-existent, or eternal, or God.

"First-born," however, does not mean "first-created." When Paul stated that Christ was "the firstborn of all creation" (Colossians 1:15), he used the Greek word *prototokos* which meant "heir, first in rank." Had he intended to say *first-created*, he would have used the Greek word for first-created, *protokistos*. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that God "created" Jesus.

5. "No One Except God Is Good"

Aman once approached Jesus and said, "Good Teacher . . ." Jesus interrupted Him: "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone." (Mark

10:17-18). At first glance it may seem that Jesus was denying His divinity. He was not. Rather, He was underscoring that God alone was good. Scripture is clear. Jesus was “*sinless*,” “*holy*,” “*innocent*,” “*righteous*,” “*separate from sinners*,” and “*undefiled*” (Acts 3:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). By all standards of goodness, Jesus was truly “*good*.” Thus, Jesus shared an attribute of God: goodness.

6. “The Doctrine Of Christ’s Deity Didn’t Come About Until 325 A.D. At The Council Of Nicea.”

This objection is easily disproved. The witness of the early Christian church is clear in its support of Christ’s deity. The writings of the church fathers and apologists, accessible in translation today, prove their belief in this paramount doctrine.

Most first century heresies, such as Docetism and Gnosticism, revolved, not around Christ’s deity, but rather around his humanity. They could accept his deity, but they had trouble believing his humanity. John’s first epistle, for example, was written to combat the belief that Jesus had not really “*come in the flesh*” (1 John 4:2,3). The fact that John does not attack the Gnostic’s belief in the deity of Christ is evidence that John was in agreement with them concerning this point.

Further, the church fathers refer to Christ as being “*eternal*,” “*God incarnate*,” “*creator*,” or as possessing other exclusive divine attribute in their writings. Here are a few representative quotes from two of the earliest Christian writers:

• **Polycarp** (A.D. 69-155), bishop of Smyrna, was a disciple of the apostle John, and was burned at the stake when he was eighty-six years old. He wrote: “*Now may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the eternal High Priest Himself, the [Son of] God Jesus Christ, build you up in faith. . .*” He was also quoted as saying that he wanted to imitate the sufferings “*of his God*.”—Go to any university or seminar and look up books written by the early church fathers. It is so apparent that all of the major church fathers believed in the deity of Christ.

• **Ignatius** (died A.D. 110), was head of the church at Antioch, was a contemporary of Polycarp, Clement, and Barnabas, and was martyred in the Colosseum. In his Epistle to the Ephesians, he wrote of Christ as “*Our God, Jesus Christ*.” In another letter Ignatius admonished Polycarp to “*await Him that is above every season, the Eternal, The Invisible, who became visible for our sake . . . who suffered for our sake*.” To the above he added in correspondence to the Smyrneans that “*. . . if they believe not in the blood of Christ, (who is God), judgment awaiteth them also*.”

The following excerpts by Ignatius are from church historian Kirsopp Lake: Ignatius to the Ephesians i.1—“*. . . by the blood of God . . .*” (cf. Acts 20:28) Ignatius to the Ephesians vii.2—“*. . . who is God in man . . .*” Ignatius to the Ephesians xvii.2—“*received knowledge of God, that is, Jesus Christ*.”

The earliest record of a “*Christian*” denying the deity of Christ did not occur until A.D. 190, when a Byzantine leather merchant by the name of Theodotus, referring to his denial of Christ, said, “*I have not denied God but a man . . .*” Then it was not until A.D. 318-320, when a presbyter from Alexandria by the name of Arius denied the deity of Christ, that the question became a major theological issue within the church. **The uproar that issue caused is strong evidence that the church, up to that time, had never seriously questioned the deity of Christ.** Otherwise, Arius’s teaching would have been ignored as commonplace.

The beliefs Christians held at the time of the controversy, including their belief that Christ was God, had been formulated during two and a half centuries of severe persecution. The Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) was convened to resolve the issue ecclesiastically. After three months of painstaking deliberation, the deity of Christ was affirmed by that council. Arius and his two remaining supporters were expelled as heretics.

Some argue that Constantine forced the orthodox view on those at the Council of Nicea, that out of fear the Christians succumbed to his wishes. That is not true. If anything, it was Constantine who was swayed by them. Historical records tell us that, upon seeing the scars and wounds of the believers who had

been tortured for their faith in Christ, Constantine went around kissing those scars. These Christians, many of whom had lost eyes and limbs for their faith, would not have yielded to unholy pressure from Constantine.

The evidence is inescapable. Scripturally and historically, Jesus Christ is God incarnate [God in the flesh]. The question is: What do you plan to do about it?

YOUR RESPONSE

Once you begin to grasp that the fact that Jesus Christ is indeed the second Person of the Trinity, a response is called for on your part; namely worship and the giving over of your life to him. In case you have doubts as to what it means to be a Christian, allow me to share the following spiritual principles/laws. They are simple, straight forward, and scriptural. Again, I urge you to look up the scripture references I give. Eternal issues are at stake because God is offering you an *eternal* gift which can be accepted or rejected. I pray that before this day is over you will say “*yes*” to his offer.

Spiritual Law #1: God is a God of love. He loves you, and has a wonderful plan for your life [I John 4:16; John 3:16; 10:10, Ephesians 2:10]. What God wants for your life is awesome beyond belief [Ephesians 3:14-21].

Spiritual Law #2: So, what went wrong? Why aren’t more people experiencing what God intended? It is because our sin separates us from a holy God [Isaiah 59:2; Romans 6:23]. Sin is active or passive rebellion against God. It is not listening to God, but “*doing our own thing*.” Because God is “*holy*,” totally without sin or wrongdoing, we cannot just bop into God’s presence [Isaiah 6:1-5, I John 1:5]. Just as you wouldn’t be allowed to walk on someone’s expensive white carpet if you had oily, muddy shoes, neither will God tolerate sin in Heaven. If we went to Heaven without a basic change in who we are, we would corrupt and pollute Heaven, just as we have the earth.

We all fall short of God’s standard of perfection. If we lined up in front of the Grand Canyon, and tried to jump across it, some might jump further than others; but the point is, we would all fall short. [Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23]. Because Adam and Eve chose to sin, the Bible teaches that this sin nature got passed on to all mankind; the same way a leopard inherits its spots from its parents [Genesis 3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-21].

According to the Bible, sin is more than murder, stealing, or adultery. From God’s perspective sin is such things as boasting in our own achievements. Sex outside of marriage is sin. Lying, gossip, slander, cheating, cowardice, yielding to fear, not trusting God, coveting what others possess, not acting in faith, being disrespectful, putting worldly success or money before God, unforgiveness, lack of prayer, not keeping our promises, looking lustfully at someone, swearing, not acting in love, and a bunch of other things, are sin [Exodus 20; James 4:16; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8; Romans 1:18-32; 14:23; Matthew 5,6; etc.].

According to the Bible, we all stand guilty before God, no matter whether we have sinned a little or a lot [James 2:10].—It is like the man who said, “*But, Judge, look at all the people I didn’t kill*.”—The point? None of us deserves to go to Heaven. We have all sinned against an eternal God and committed eternal sins.—Stating it bluntly, unless God forgives us, by God’s standard we’re deserving of Hell. As a just and righteous judge, God cannot just sweep our sins under the carpet.

Spiritual Law #3: Christ is the only way to God. He died to pay the penalty for our sin. By his death, Jesus bridged the gap between a holy God and sinful man. Either we go to God by way of Jesus, or we do not get to God [II Thessalonians 1:8-9; John 3:16; Romans 5:8, Acts 20:28; I Timothy 2:5].

The story is told of a young woman who received a phone call from the emergency room of a hospital stating that her dad was deathly ill, that he may have only hours to live. Because she lived a couple hundred miles away, she got in her car and began frantically driving to see her father. As she was going through a small southern town, she looked in her rear view mirror, and there was a police car chasing her. Because she was going so fast, the officer didn’t merely give her a ticket, he arrested her. The next

day she appeared before the local county judge who told her that for going 50 miles per hour above the speed limit, her fine would be \$300 or three days in jail.

She pleaded with the judge. “*Your honor, you don’t understand. I don’t have \$300 with me, and I can’t spend three days in jail. I must go to see my father who is dying.*” The judge said, “*I’m sorry, young lady, but the law says you must pay \$300 or spend three days in jail.*”

She began to weep, and the old judge was moved with compassion. To the surprise of everyone in the court, he stood up, stepped down from the bench, walked over, took off his robe, put on his sports coat, walked around in front of the bench, pulled out his checkbook, wrote a check for \$300, and laid it on the bench. Then he walked back around, took off his sports coat, put back on his robe, and resumed his seat. He said, “*Young lady, the law says you must pay \$300 or spend three days in jail, but I see someone has paid the fine for you. Case dismissed!*”

In essence, that is what God did for us. The Bible says that the penalty for sin is death [Romans 6:23]. When we stood condemned, without hope, God took off his robe of deity, put on a robe of humanity, became a man in the person of Jesus Christ, and died for us. God did for us what we could never do for ourselves [Romans 5:6]. According to scripture, Jesus is both God and man. He has two natures: one human, the other divine [Philippians 2:6,7 and Romans 1:3,4]. If we accept his offer of forgiveness, when we stand before God as Judge, we will be standing before the One who loved us and paid the fine for us: “Case dismissed!”

Spiritual Law #4: Knowing the first three laws is not enough. It takes a response on our part. While we cannot earn salvation, it is nonetheless a *gift* which must be received [Isaiah 64:6; Ephesians 2:8-9]. John 1:12 says, “*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*”—How do we receive the gift of salvation?

First, we are asked to *believe* several wonderful truths: (1) that Jesus loves us, (2) that he died for our sins [past, present and future], and (3) that he arose from the dead [John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 10:9; I Corinthians 15:3-5].

Since it is our sins which have been keeping us from God, we must be willing to turn from our sin [Mark 1:14,15]. The Bible calls this *repentance*, which simply means to *turn around*.—For example, if you are on the wrong bus heading away from God, you need to change buses, and get on board with Christ. Or, putting it another way, if you have been driving your own bus, it means being willing to get out of the driver’s seat, and inviting Jesus to take over as your bus driver. He can turn your life around, and get you going in the right direction.

The tale is told of a man who tightrope walked across Niagara Falls with a 200 pound sack of sand on his back. Upon successfully completing his feat he turned to a spectator and asked, “*Do you believe I could do that again?*” The person said “*Sure!*” The tightrope walker tossed down the sand and said, “*Then climb on my back.*”—Real believing is more than giving mental assent to the claims of Christ. God asks you to “climb on board,” and commit yourself to him. It is more than believing something to be true in your head. It is a commitment of the heart.

If you confess your sins to God, and ask him to forgive you, the Bible promises you will be forgiven. No matter how big, or how awful, your sins are, God is more than willing to forgive you [Isaiah 1:18; I John 1:9]. And, more incredible still is the fact that these sins will *never* be held against you [Romans 4:7,8; 8:1].

Because we are weak and rather powerless when it comes to sin, God places his Holy Spirit in each person who receives Christ in order to help them keep from sinning. In other words, if you allow him, the Holy Spirit will power your bus [Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:7-14, Galatians 2:20; I Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:13]. With God’s Spirit living in and through you, you can also begin to experience God’s peace and joy [John 14:27; Galatians 2:20, 5:22; Romans 7:14-8:11].

And last, but not least, if you receive Christ into your life, you become a child of God, part of God’s family.—Let me share a simple illustration. Would you go to a stranger’s funeral and ask the family of the deceased for a share of the inheritance? You could tell them, “I’m a *good person*, and

I do nice things for others.”—Would that impress them? No. They’d say, “I’m sorry, but the inheritance is for family members only. We don’t even know you.”

Well, the same is true with God. You must be born into God’s family if you expect to *inherit* what is God’s. His inheritance is for his children, for those who *know* him. That is why Jesus said unless a person is *born again*, he or she will never see the Kingdom of Heaven [John 3:3-18]. The moment you *believe* in Christ, you are legally adopted into God’s family. You inherit eternal life, and glory beyond your wildest imagination awaits you [I Corinthians 2:9; 3:21-23; Ephesians 1:3; Romans 8:31,32; John 14:1,2; Revelation 21:1-4].

When you die, how can you be sure you will go to Heaven to be with God? The Bible says, “*And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may KNOW you have eternal life.*” [I John 5:11-13, emphasis mine]—How can you *know* you have eternal life? Does it depend on how you feel, or upon circumstances? No. It depends on God’s promise. God promises that if you *believe* in Christ, and commit your life to him, you can *know* you have eternal life.

Scripture also says that if you ask *anything* according to God’s will, God will hear and answer you [I John 5:14].—So, is it God’s will that you *believe* in Jesus and *receive* him? Yes [II Peter 3:9]. Therefore, if you sincerely pray to God, and invite Jesus into your heart, you can do so with confidence *knowing* that God will hear and answer your prayer. This is where *faith* comes in: believing that what God tells you is true.

I entered into a relationship with Jesus when I was 14 years old. At a youth meeting I invited Jesus Christ to come into my life and forgive me of my sins.—And he did. To my amazement, it worked. God’s peace flooded through me. Old feelings of guilt were gone. As I read the Bible, it finally began to make sense. God became very real to me. I also began seeing God answer specific prayers, which surprised and delighted me no end. While being a Christian has been hard at times, I wouldn’t trade the joy of knowing Christ for anything in the world.

ATIME OFDECISION

Christianity isn’t merely a religion; it is a love-relationship with God. God is the lover of your soul, and he has proposed to you. Will you say, “I do.”

If you have felt the Spirit of God speaking to you, and you have become convinced in your heart and mind that what I have written is true, then you must decide what you will do with Jesus.

No matter how much evidence I give, the final step is still one of faith, even though there is solid evidence upon which to base that faith. For example, I can’t *prove* that George Washington lived, but I can show overwhelming evidence that he did. By *faith*, I believe George Washington lived, and by *faith*, I believe Christianity is true, based on evidence, and the fact that it works. Jesus Christ has changed my life. I am not the person I used to be.

A simple way for you to test the truthfulness of what I’ve said is for you to actively, honestly, seek God on His terms [as best you understand], with a willingness to follow the truth, whatever that is. Not to honestly seek God with all of your heart, is to gamble with your soul. Choosing not to decide is a decision. To do nothing is the same as saying “No.”

To start with, you may want to pray something like this: “*Dear Lord God, if you’re there, and what this booklet says is true about Jesus, then I want to know. Please show me the truth.*”—Praying this prayer will not make you a Christian, but it is an honest first step in turning to God.

Secondly, read.—Read the Bible. Don’t just rely on what you have heard. Study it for yourself. Look up the Bible verses I’ve shown you. *Think* with your mind; *listen* with your heart. Allow God to speak to you.—Read some of the books I have made reference to in this booklet. There are well thought-out answers to virtually any question you can ask.

Some day you will stand before God, either forgiven or unforgiven. Hell

is one of those horrible doctrines most Christians, myself included, don't like to discuss. However, Jesus talked about Hell more than all the other Bible writers put together. Not to choose God, and accept his offer of forgiveness, is to choose a life of eternal separation from Him [Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:11-15; II Thessalonians 1:8-9; Matthew 13:40-43]. God is serious when it comes to sin. God hates and judges sin. If you refuse his forgiveness, and you hang on to your sin, you will die with your sin, like a person refusing to get off the Titanic. If there were any other way, Jesus would not have had to die. There is no other payment for sin acceptable to God other than the death of Jesus on the cross. Scripture says, "*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved*" [Acts 4:12].

This may be a hard decision for you. Much is at stake. If you receive Jesus as Lord, it will cost you. It has cost me. You may be misunderstood. Friends and family members may reject you.—Welcome to the club. Jesus was also misunderstood and rejected. He was willing to die for you. Are you willing to live for him?

No one has a deciding vote in this decision but you. God votes for you. Satan, who is also very real, votes against you. I pray that you will cast your deciding vote before it is too late. As I understand scripture, there are no second chances in another life [Hebrews 9:27]. Jesus stands at the door of your heart knocking. Will you open the door and let him in [Revelation 3:20]?

If you become convinced that what I have said is true, and if you are ready to open the door of your heart to him, then find a quiet place and invite him in. Don't procrastinate. What greater joy could you have than to know your sins are forgiven, that you have been given eternal life, and that you are prepared to meet your Lord. I believe his return is very soon [Zechariah 14:1-9; I John 3:1-3].

When you are ready, may I suggest the following prayer, or one like it: "*Dear Jesus, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for the ways that I have sinned against you. I believe you died on the cross for my sin. As best as I know how, right now, I invite you to come into my life. Please forgive me, and cleanse me from all my sin. Make me the person you want me to be. I need you. I willingly yield my life to you. Thank you for hearing my prayer. Amen.*"

These words are not magical. The important thing is that you mean them. Once you have invited Jesus Christ to be a part of your life, I encourage you to find a loving church where the Bible is both honored and taught. Make public your commitment to Christ by getting baptized [Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 10:47, 48a]. Visit several churches before you pick a church. Pray about it, and listen to your heart. God can lead you. It is sort of like trying on a new pair of shoes. You don't necessarily want to buy the first pair you try on.

Continue to pray, read scripture, and allow God to speak to you. If you're a student in high school, check out such groups as Campus Life, Young Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, K-Life, etc. If you are in college, there are some wonderful college ministries such as Campus Crusade For Christ, the Navigators, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, etc. Groups such as these are a great way to begin to grow and to find support throughout the week. Even if you are not a student, call one of these groups and ask them to suggest some good churches in your area.

The story is told of a native witch doctor who had done much evil in his life, causing much needless suffering through his witchcraft. As a result of the love and work of some Christian missionaries, he yielded his heart to Christ. Later, he called a tribal meeting to share with his village the transformation that had occurred in his life. He said that before he came to know Christ, it was as though there was an evil dog in him that made him do cruel, hateful things. When he repented, and asked Christ into his life, he said it was as though a powerful dog of love and peace came to live in him.

As he spoke, a small lad sitting at his feet grew more and more absorbed with what he was saying. When the lad couldn't take the suspense any longer, he blurted out, "*Did the bad dog leave?*" The former witch doctor paused and said, "*No, son, he still hangs around.*" The boy asked "*How do the two dogs get along?*" The old man replied, "*They fight all the time.*"

The little boy, with great concern in his voice said, "*Well, which one wins?*" The old man, with a smile and a twinkle in his eyes said, "*The one I feed the most!*"—How true.

There are spiritual battles that will go on in your life. Just as God and angels are real, Satan and his demons are also real. The New Testament has much to say about them. Beside the books I've mentioned thus far, there are two books I highly recommend to help you understand, gain, and maintain spiritual victory in your walk with Christ. The two books are: *Victory Over the Darkness* and *The Bondage Breaker* by Dr. Neil Anderson

Another book I highly recommend, which will help you learn of the awesome love God has for you, is *Search For Significance* by Robert McGee.

If possible, I urge you to read such authors as Charles Swindoll, Josh McDowell, and Max Lucado. If you like somewhat heavier philosophical reading, try C.S. Lewis [e.g., *Mere Christianity*, *The Weight Of Glory*, *The Screwtape Letters*], or Peter Kreeft [e.g., *Making Sense Out Of Suffering*, *Heaven The Heart's Deepest Longing*, etc.].

To grow as a new believer, I suggest you contact any of the following Christian organizations for their assistance and literature. You can most likely get their addresses from a library, a Christian bookstore, or you may access them over the internet:

Billy Graham Evangelistic Assoc.: <http://www.graham-assn.org>
Campus Crusade For Christ: <http://www.ccci.org>
Fellowship Of Christian Athletes: <http://www.gospel.com.net/fca>
Freedom In Christ Ministries: <http://www.ficm.org>
Great Commission Ministries: <http://www.greatcommission.org>
Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship: <http://www.ivpress.com>
Josh McDowell Ministries: <http://www.ccci.org/josh>
The Navigators: <http://www.gospelcom.net/navs>
Youth For Christ: <http://www.gospelcom.net/yfc>

Log onto <http://www.gospelcom.net> for addresses of other Christian organizations and resources.—Keep feeding the good side.

C.S. Lewis once remarked, "*Joy is the serious business of Heaven.*" If Heaven is true, as Jesus taught it is, then no sacrifice or cost is too great to please the *One* who loves you. Set your heart and your mind on the reality of Heaven [Colossians 3:1,2; Matthew 6:19-21]. Let it motivate you all the days of your life.

“I know no promise that he [God] will accept a deliberate compromise. For he has, in the last resort, nothing to give us but himself . . . For he claims all, because he is love and must bless. He cannot bless us unless he has us. When we try to keep within us an area that is our own, we try to keep an area of death. Therefore, in love, he claims all. There's no bargaining with him . . .

‘If you have not chosen the Kingdom of God, it will make in the end no difference what you have chosen instead.’ Those are hard words to take. Will it really make no difference whether it was women or patriotism, cocaine or art, whisky or a seat in the Cabinet, money or science? Well, surely no difference that matters. We shall have missed the end for which we are formed, and rejected the only thing that satisfies. Does it matter to a man dying in a desert by which

choice of route he missed the only well?”

—C.S. Lewis [From the book, “*The Weight Of Glory.*”]

APPENDIX: THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

I have chosen to include a condensed overview of the doctrine of the Trinity. While the term “*Trinity*” is never used in scripture, there is overwhelming evidence to support this doctrine. My goal is not to explain the Trinity (I can’t), but rather to show that it is Biblical. This topic could easily be another book/booklet in itself, therefore, I have chosen to follow an outline format with little elaboration. I encourage you to look up the scriptural references for yourself.

Succinctly stated, I define the doctrine of the Trinity (the trinity of God) as follows: The one, eternal, creator God has eternally existed as three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each member of the Godhead bears the name “*God*.” They stand in an I-Thou relationship (i.e., there is love and communication between the members of the Godhead). Each one bears all the attributes of Deity; including personality, feelings, omniscience, eternalness, etc.

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR TRINITY

I. Grammatical:

A. Plural Pronouns Used For God

1. *Elohim* is the Hebrew word for God. It comes from two Hebrew words; *El* (or *Eloah*), which is the word translated “*god*.” “*Im*” is the plural ending. For example, in Genesis 1:1 it says, “In the beginning God (plural) created (singular) the heavens and the earth.”
2. The terms *us* or *our* are sometimes used by God when referring to Himself (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8).
3. In Ecclesiastes 12:1 the word *creator* is actually plural in Hebrew. In Isaiah 54:5 the word *maker* is plural in Hebrew. This is consistent with the concept of the Trinity. **All three members of the Godhead are said to be creator(s).**

Father: Genesis 1:1; Job 54:5; Psalm 95:5-6

Son: John 1:2-3,10; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 1:2,10.

Holy Spirit: Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30.

4. Deuteronomy 6:4 is one of the premiere verses in all of scripture expressing the oneness of God. What is not often realized is how the plurality of God is shown in this verse. The verse reads “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD (Yahweh, singular) is our God (elohim, plural). The LORD (Yahweh, singular) is one (plural).*” [We are used to thinking of the word “*one*” as singular. In this case it is plural; just as man and woman become *one*.]
5. In the New Testament, Matthew 28:19 gives one of the clearest evidences for the doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus said we are to “. . . *baptize in the name (singular) of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit*” (emphasis ours). This verse clearly shows that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit comprise *one* name. If they were not one, the verse would read “*names*.”
6. In numerous places in the Old Testament two Yahweh’s, or two elohim’s, are mentioned showing a plurality within the Godhead: Genesis 19:24; Psalm 45:6-7; Isaiah 44:6; Hosea 1:1-7; Zechariah 1:12-14; 2:8-9.

B. Other Places In Old Testament Where The Trinity Is Indicated: II Samuel 23:2,3; Isaiah 6:3; 48:16-17; 59:20-21; 63:8-16.

C. Other Places In The New Testament Where The Trinity Is Revealed: Matthew 3:16-17; 22:43-45; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 1:35; 3:21,22; John 3:34-36; 14:26; 16:13-15; Acts 2:32,33,38,39; 20:21-23; Romans 15:16,30; I Corinthians 12:4-6; IICorinthians 3:4-6; 13:14 (cf., Numbers 6:24-26); Ephesians 1:3-14 (vv. 3-6= **Father**; vv. 4-12 = **Son**, vv. 13-14 = **Holy Spirit**); Ephesians 2:18-22; 3:14-17; 4:4-6; IIThessalonians 2:13-14; I

Timothy 3:15-16; Hebrews 9:14; 10:7-15; IPeter 1:2.

D. The Interpersonal Relationships Between The Father, Son and Holy Spirit Are Clearly Shown:

1. Between The Father And Son:

- a. **They are one:** John 8:19; 10:28-30; 12:45; 13:20; 14:7-9; II Corinthians 1:21; Colossians 1:15.
- b. **They are distinct:** Psalms 2:7,11-12; 110:1; Daniel 7:13; Matthew 11:27; Luke 3:22; John 3:16-17; 5:17, 23, 26; 14:23; 15:1; 17:5, 18, 21, 23; Hebrews 12:23-24.

2. Between Jesus And The Holy Spirit

- a. **They are one:** John 7:37-19; Acts 16:6-7; Romans 8:9-11; Galatians 4:6 (cf., 3:5,14); IPeter 1:11; IJohn 5:7 (cf., John 14:6); Revelation 19:10.
- b. **They are distinct:** John 14:16-17; 16:7,14; Romans 8:26-27,34; I Corinthians 12:3.

3. The Father And The Holy Spirit

- a. **They are one:** I Corinthians 12:3; Matthew 10:20; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 2:22; Hebrews 10:15-16 (cf. Jeremiah 31:33).
- b. **They are distinct:** Isaiah 48:16; John 14:26; I Corinthians 2:10,11.

D. The Deity Of God The Father And The Son: I have already tried to show that Jesus and Father coequally share the same names and attributes. They each are referred to as eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, worthy of worship, etc.

E. The Deity Of The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity. Contrary to the teachings of some, the Holy Spirit is not an *it*, or some impersonal energy force. As you will see, the Holy Spirit bears the attributes of deity. The Holy Spirit is God’s Spirit.—The Holy Spirit:

1. **Is called God:** IJohn 4:2-3; ICorinthians 2:4-5, 10-16; John 4:24; II Corinthians 3:17; Matthew 10:20, Acts 28:25-28.
2. **Is called Yahweh:** Hebrews 3:7-11 (cf. 4:4); 10:15-16; Numbers 11:29.
3. **Is “Most High”:** Luke 1:35
4. **Speaks:** II Samuel 23:2-3; Mark 13:11; Acts 1:16, 13:2; 20:23; I Corinthians 12:3.
5. **Teaches:** Nehemiah 9:20; Luke 12:12
6. **Is omnipresent:** Psalm 139:7
7. **Is referred to with personal pronouns:** John 16:14; Acts 13:2
8. **Was lied to:** Acts 5:3,4
9. **Performs miracles:** ICorinthians 12:9-10
10. **Is Christ’s Spirit:** Romans 8:9
11. **Commands:** Acts 8:29; 13:2-4
12. **Gives life:** John 6:63 (cf., Psalm 36:9 [Father], John 5:21 [Son]) and II Corinthians 3:6
13. **Can be blasphemed (NOTE: a clear sign of deity!—One does not blaspheme an “it.”):** Mark 3:29
14. **Thinks:** Romans 8:27
15. **Bestows eternal life:** Galatians 6:8
16. **Has emotions:** Romans 14:17; Ephesians 4:30
17. **Is omniscient:** ICorinthians 2:11; 12:8
18. **Is eternal:** Hebrews 9:14
19. **Intercedes:** Romans 8:26

F. The WAY International teaches that God is “Spirit” (*pneuma*), but that when the Bible speaks of the “Holy Spirit” (*pneuma hagios*), it is referring to a gift God gives, and not to God himself? This is not what the Bible teaches. The Spirit and the Holy Spirit are one and the same: God. There are at least 14 places in the Bible where the terms, *Spirit* and *Holy Spirit*, are used interchangeably? Have a look for yourself.

