

# THE TRINITY EXPOSED!

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# INTRODUCTION

I wrote this Study on the Trinity during 1974 – 1976, while I was a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This explains the nature of the presentation and that references are included from the SDA movement.

The misrepresentation of the Trinity by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WTS) and its focus on “Jehovah” God helps the organisation maintain a strong hold on its followers. It also deters ex-followers from moving to other belief systems.

This Study aims to show what a Trinitarian believes and to give some of the reasons. This should help dispel the WTS’s misinformation.

The WTS portrays “God” in terms of *power, superior authority, rulership, and activities*. The Trinitarian defines “God” in terms of *nature and essence*. This is one explanation for the difficulties that followers of the WTS and Trinitarians have when attempting to communicate with one another. Hopefully, this study will at least help Arians and their kin to understand where the Trinitarian is coming from.

This Study also touches on the WTS, showing its misunderstandings and its misuse of sacred and secular writers.

To achieve its ends, deliberately misquotes reference sources, so a study into the doctrine of the nature of God reveals the nature of the WTS. Today, several sites on the Internet provide clear evidence of the WTS’s grossly unethical and immoral actions. The WTS’s actions should be the focus of any Study into the Trinity, using that information to demonstrate how the WTS will do anything to manipulate its followers’ minds.

While I was preparing this document for today’s computer-based medium, I took the opportunity to add scans of material that are generally not readily available.

Note the availability of hyperlinks from the Contents and also to the footnote references.

# 1. CRITERIA

## GOD IS BEYOND UNDERSTANDING

As the nature of God is infinite, and beyond the understanding of finite man, not even all of the words of the wisest man would cause the faintest ripple upon the unfathomable depths of His ways.

No finite mind can fully comprehend the existence, the power, the wisdom, or the works of the Infinite One. Says the sacred writer: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth; and broader than the sea." (Job 11:7-9). The mightiest intellects of earth cannot comprehend God. Men may be ever searching, ever learning, and still there is any infinity beyond.<sup>1</sup>

As we are finite, our minds clouded by the principle of sin, we dare not speculate about the Ways of our Creator. His ways are not ours, nor are our thoughts His.<sup>2</sup> We must tread cautiously, and then only upon that ground which is lit by God. We may tread only thus far, and no farther. We may say, "Thus saith the Lord" and rest content in that. What is revealed is ours, "but the secret things belong unto the Lord, our God."<sup>3</sup>

The revelation of Himself that God has given in His word is for our study. This we may seek to understand. But beyond this we are not to penetrate. The highest intellect may tax itself until it is wearied out in conjectures regarding the nature of God; but the effort will be fruitless. This problem has not been given us to solve. No human mind can comprehend God.<sup>4</sup>

There can be no appeal to the reasoning or comprehensibility of human minds. "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?"<sup>5</sup> asks the Scripture, rhetorically. And it positively asserts "we ought not to think that the Deity is like ... the art and imagination of man."<sup>6</sup> (The TEV has "God's nature" for "Deity").

When Scripture reveals Truth, we dare not question it, but as a child, with simple faith, accept it. God never bids us to reason about His nature. He bids us only to reason with Him about ours.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Patriarchs and Prophets*, E.G. White page 116

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 55:8, 9

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 29 : 29

<sup>4</sup> *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 8, E.G. White page 279

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 40:18

<sup>6</sup> Acts 17:29 (RSV)

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 1:18

False religions are characterised by gods, whether idols or ideas, fashioned according to man's limited ability to imagine or understand. God is thus made in the image of Man, instead of man being made in the Image of God. Human rationality becomes the criterion for determining concepts, as if the Infinite God could be confined, comprehended and explained by finite, sinful creatures!

The most humbling lesson that man has to learn is the nothingness of human wisdom, and the folly of trying, by his own unaided efforts, to find out God.<sup>8</sup>

## WE MUST KNOW GOD

Although our finite minds cannot fully comprehend God, this does not mean that we cannot comprehend God in part, nor that we cannot know Him, or that we cannot experience Him.

With unaided efforts, we cannot find God, but with His guidance, we may. Through the books of Nature<sup>9</sup> and Scripture<sup>10</sup>, rightly interpreted by the indwelling Spirit of God<sup>11</sup>, we may know Him.

Says the inspired Paul, "I know whom I have trusted".<sup>12</sup> The theme of -John's epistle, in which -the word "know" predominates, is given as, "That you will join with us in the fellowship that we have with the Father and with his .Son Jesus Christ."<sup>13</sup>

Jehovah says, "be still, and know that I am God".<sup>14</sup> Jesus declares that to have-eternal life we must know God.<sup>15</sup>

This knowledge of God initially comes through having the attitude of a willing, humble learner with a contrite heart, and it develops through our having that experience which surpasses mental knowledge.

That you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth (of it); (That you may really come) to know practically, through experience for yourselves – the love of Christ, which far surpasses mere knowledge (without experience).<sup>16</sup>

Since it is the role of the church to reveal the wisdom of God to the whole universe<sup>17</sup>, its members must have this living experience to be able to represent His Ways.

As we search for Scripture's revelation of God, we must therefore remain within the bounds allowed by Him, stepping no farther, and ensure that we approach this subject with the right attitude of humility, always willing to remain the learner.

We may go no farther than this, for beyond that is speculation.

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<sup>8</sup> *Review and Herald*, E.G. White April 5, 1906

<sup>9</sup> Psalms 19:1

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 4:4; John 17:17

<sup>11</sup> John 14: 17, 26

<sup>12</sup> 2 Timothy 1:12 (TEV)

<sup>13</sup> 1 John 1:3 (TEV)

<sup>14</sup> Psalms 46:10

<sup>15</sup> John 17:3

<sup>16</sup> Ephesians 3:18, 19 (Amplified). See also Philippians 4:7

<sup>17</sup> Ephesians 3:9, 10



### **CRITERION: THE MEANING OF “PERSONALITY”**

The meaning of “personality” is explained by the following:

Personality is the possession of four component parts – thought, feeling, will and conscience. If anybody lacked one of these he would not be a person. To be without thought would mean being an imbecile; without feeling, a robot; without will, a jelly-fish; and without, conscience, a monster. A person is someone with these four essentials. God is a Person, and when the Bible says that He made man in His own image (Gen. 1:27), it means He made humanity with these four same essentials that constitute His own personality, thus making men, in a limited degree, capable of fellowship with Him.<sup>18</sup>

Since “personality” relates to incorporeal identities, there is no need for a personality to be confined by bodily forms. Thus, as God Is Spirit, He has the attribute of Deity such as omnipresence and is yet a Person. Thus God is everywhere at the same time and exists outside of time, whilst possessing “personality”.

There is the danger of limiting our idea of personality to bodily manifestations. ... Personality and such corporeality are to be clearly distinguished. ... Personality does not require the limitations of humanity.<sup>19</sup>

### **CRITERION: THE MEANING OF “NATURE”**

The following explains the meaning of “nature”:

Men ARE persons; they HAVE a nature, though nature itself is impersonal. Our nature is called human nature. It is common to every man, woman and child that has ever lived in this world.<sup>20</sup>

Sinfulness is not an attribute of human nature; sin is a cancer that attacks human nature.<sup>21</sup>

There are other natures. ... -- angelic nature, demonic nature, animal nature and divine nature. Men are persons with a human nature. The English synonyms for nature are: “essence, being, substance”. ... Persons having the same nature or essence, whether it be divine, human, or angelic, are said to be CONSUBSTANTIAL.<sup>22</sup>

The characteristics that constitute a nature are termed ATTRIBUTES.

An attribute ... is an essential characteristic, feature or quality of a thing, not an accidental or occasional one. ... Attributes can never change without the thing to which they belong changing. If the attributes change then the thing is changed. Take away roundness from a ball and give it squareness instead and it is no more a ball but a cube.<sup>23</sup>

We have already listed those attributes essential to the divine nature. When a person does not possess every one of these attributes, he is not divine, not God.

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<sup>18</sup> *The Person of Christ*, Vol. 1, (The Doctrine), H. Brash Bonsall, page 74

<sup>19</sup> *The Coming of the Comforter*, Le Roy E. Froom, pages 41, 42

<sup>20</sup> *The Person of Christ*, Vol. 1, (The Doctrine), H. Brash Bonsall, page 74

<sup>21</sup> *The Person of Christ*, Vol. 1, (The Doctrine), H. Brash Bonsall, page 74

<sup>22</sup> *The Person of Christ*, Vol. 1, (The Doctrine), H. Brash Bonsall, page 75

<sup>23</sup> *The Person of Christ*, Vol. 1, (The Doctrine), H. Brash Bonsall, pages 75, 76

### **CRITERION: THE MEANING OF “GOD”**

When we say that a Person is God, we mean that His nature is divine, having the attributes essential to Deity. These essential attributes number at least ten.

1. Omniscience (knowing everything)
2. Omnipresence (being everywhere)
3. Omnipotence (being all powerful)
4. Transcendence (being apart from the universe, i.e., everything else that exists, and infinitely superior to it).
5. Unchangeability (or Immutability)
6. Self-existence (or Immortality)
7. Infinity
8. Infinite and absolute Holiness
9. Wisdom, and
10. Love.

These make God to be God.<sup>24</sup>

Having defined our terms of reference, let us now see how they are applied to the doctrine of the Triune Godhead.

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<sup>24</sup> *The Person of Christ*, Vol. 1, (The Doctrine), H. Brash Bonsall, page 75

## 2. THE TRIUNE GODHEAD

In common with all Divine Revelation, the manifestation and appreciation of God is progressive.<sup>1</sup> Scripture assumes His self-existence, and as we read of and as we experience God's behaviour, an image develops that allows us to kindle a faint glimmer of comprehension. Yet in this case we must take care that comprehensibility or the ease of comprehension is not made a test of Faith. A belief is not necessarily true because it "makes sense". And this is especially so when we are dealing with our Source, our Creator, the boundless, infinite God, of whom there is no likeness.<sup>2</sup>

Difficulties multiply because words and images are used to describe the Indescribable and Unimaginable. Also, some of the conceptual imagery in which we think today did not exist among the writers of Scripture and of their immediate intended audience. For example, the modern Greek-derived concept of "Personality", as we apply it to an individual separate being, was not developed even by the completion of the Canon of Scripture.

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Even in Genesis, while God is presented as a unity, there are indications of the complexity developed gradually over the centuries, until its explicit elucidation in the New Testament, termed later by the church as *The Trinity*.

"Elohim" (God), although a plurality of majesty, power and glory, encompasses the complexities of three Personalities within the unity of one God. The "one Lord" of Deut. 6:4 is a complex unity as in "one flesh" (Gen.2:24), "one stick" (Ezek. 37:19); "one heart" (Jer. 32:39); and "one people" (Gen. 11:6).

In the OT the Persons at times act separately (e.g. Isa. 48:16; 63:8 – 10; Mal. 3:1), some texts being applied by NT writers to Christ (e.g. Heb. 1:8, 9; 10:5 –7; Matt. 22:44; Acts 13:33, etc.). More is presented in subsequent chapters.

But even though the New Testament declared this complex unity, the primitive church was so overwhelmed with the realisation that Jesus was indeed the Anointed of God (Christ) and the Lord, in this excitement, cognisance was not taken of questions that later became sources of doctrinal disharmony.

When the excitement and "first love" abated, men began to analyse what it was that they believed.

To ardent Christians of apostolic times the dynamic fact of a crucified, risen, and living Lord ... subordinated the related theological problems to a place of minor importance.

But as with the passing of that generation (see Rev. 2:4; cf. Joshua 24:31), the vision of a living Lord grew dim and pristine purity and devotion waned, men turned increasingly from the practical realities of the gospel to

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Spirit*, E. Bickersteth, pages 13 – 36. Also *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2, H. Brash Bonsall page 115

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 40:18, 25; 46:5

its intriguing theoretical aspects. ... Among the diverse heresies that arose to trouble the church none were more serious than those concerned with the nature and person of Christ. ...

The two principle phases of this protracted debate are generally known as the Trinitarian and Christological controversies. The first was concerned with the status of Christ as God, and the second with the incarnate relationship between His divine and human natures.<sup>3</sup>

Thus the Church took centuries of thought and retrospect to crystallise the New Testament teachings of a Triune Godhead. The final formalisation of the accepted orthodoxy in terms of their (4th century) contemporaries, was forced upon the church by hordes of dissident voices, within and without.

The Apostle's Creed, the simple creed of the Apostolic Church, contained "loose, vague terms and expressions that look two ways and might be construed to mean two different things".<sup>4</sup>

As "all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching the truth, rebuking error, correcting faults, and giving instruction for right living",<sup>5</sup> the "loose, vague terms" of the primitive Creeds had to be clearly and accurately defined in the light of God's Word.

[By the 4th century,] concepts, thoughts, ideas, principles, doctrines or fragments of doctrines ... were flying about thick as snow in an Alpine storm.<sup>6</sup>

To try and clear the air, the first meeting of the worldwide church was held at Nicea in June 325. Several major heresies concerning the nature of Christ had been thrust upon the church prior to this meeting, but the participants had until recently been held in dungeon and arena, tortured for their faith by the rack, fire and the lash. The men meeting at Nicea were "the victorious survivors of the last of a series of ten terrible persecutions, whose ashes were barely cold".<sup>4</sup>

The major heresy prevalent at the time was conceived by an Alexandrian named Arius.

His doctrine, which is called Arianism, was that Christ was not really one with the Father at all, but was created by Him in time, and He in turn created the world. So He was merely the first of all created beings. He was, divine – oh yes, but only in the sense that all men have the divine spark. He is finite. Arius said, "even if He is called God, He is not God truly, but by participation in grace. ... He too is called God in name only". He had a substance or nature similar to the Father, but not the same as He had. "God" was a courtesy title for Christ. He was not and is not God but a demigod. Only God's power kept Him from sinning. ... (Arius) had found breaches in the current simple creeds of the Church big enough to drive a chariot through at a gallop. ... There was therefore only one thing to be done; to erect a sieve with mesh fine enough to keep ... his sort out. This sieve is now called the Nicene Creed."<sup>6</sup>

The Nicene Creed was "indefinite concerning the Spirit"<sup>7</sup> and when controversy arose concerning His deity, the Council of Constantinople (381 AD) was convened to consider the matter, and affirmed His deity.

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<sup>3</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* Vol. 5 pages 911, 912, note on John 1:1

<sup>4</sup> *The Person of Christ*, Vol. 1, H. Brash Bonsall, page 72

<sup>5</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16 (TEV)

<sup>6</sup> *The Person of Christ*, Vol. 1, H. Brash Bonsall, page 73

<sup>7</sup> *The Holy Spirit* C.C. Ryrie, page 113

The question of the Deity of the Holy Spirit was now finally settled, just as the Deity of the Son had been settled over fifty years before. Arianism<sup>8</sup>, whether in relation to the Son or the Spirit, had no spiritual vitality.<sup>9</sup>

Augustine (354 – 430) formulated the church’s concept of the Trinity in his work *De Trinitate*, “which is one .of the profoundest in theological literature”.<sup>10</sup>

In 451 the Council of Chalcedon ... confirmed the decisions of Nicea and Constantinople. The council explicitly stated that the Nicene Creed was sufficient as a proper statement of the doctrine of the Trinity and that the clauses added by the Council of Constantinople in 381 were only intended to clarify, not change the Nicene Creed.<sup>11</sup>

The final question of the relationship of the Spirit to the other Persons of the Godhead was settled by the Synod of Toledo (589) when it was stated that “the Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son”.<sup>12</sup>

The devotional language of the early Church was in fact on the whole in advance of its doctrinal system. Men like Origen still had intellectual difficulties in reference to the relation of the Spirit to the other Persons of the Holy Trinity; but they could never-the-less associate His name in their prayers and praises with those of the Father and the Son. The worship of the Trinity was a fact in the religious life of Christians before it was a dogma of the Church. Dogmatic precision was forced upon the Church by heresy, but the confession and conglorification of the Three Persons arose out of the Christian consciousness, interpreting by its own experience the words of Christ and the Apostles and the primitive rule of faith.<sup>13</sup>

Concerning the schisms and factions besetting the early church,

It is satisfactory to know that in those troubled years, Eastern Christendom was not divided upon any great question connected with the office and work of the Paraclete. Arians who refused to call Him God, with a happy absence of logic recognised His function of sanctifying all the elect people of God. Catholics who differed among themselves on the subject of the Procession of the Spirit were in full agreement as to His presence in the Church and His gracious workings in the Sacraments and on individual souls. A common experience accounts for this harmony, witnessing to the vital unity in all sincere believers which underlies even serious differences of thought or creed.<sup>14</sup>

In general, the doctrine of the Trinity rested until the Reformation (1517). Until then “the church’s attention had been directed only toward the person of the Spirit. In the Reformation,

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<sup>8</sup> The Watchtower Society is semi-Arian

<sup>9</sup> *The Holy Spirit of God*, W.H. Griffith Thomas, page 88

<sup>10</sup> *The Holy Spirit of God*, W.H. Griffith Thomas, page 89. See *The Holy Spirit* C.C. Ryrie, page 114

<sup>11</sup> *The Holy Spirit* C.C. Ryrie, page 115. See also *The Holy Spirit of God*, W.H. Griffith Thomas, pages, 89, 90 and the *Creeds of Christendom*, volume 2, page 62 Philip Schaff

<sup>12</sup> *The Holy Spirit* C.C. Ryrie, page 115

<sup>13</sup> *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, Swete, page 159, cited in *The Holy Spirit of God*, W.H. Griffith Thomas, page 83

<sup>14</sup> *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, Swete, page 273, cited in *The Holy Spirit of God*, W.H. Griffith Thomas, page 90

attention was given to His work”<sup>15</sup>, with particular emphasis on the regeneration of fallen man, and in spiritual illumination.

As with almost every religious movement, the Reformation was “followed by excesses and reactions. ... In the sixteenth century the Socinians declared that it was erroneous to believe that the persons of the Trinity possessed a single essence. In this teaching they echoed the Arlans, but they went beyond them in denying the pre-existence of the Son, defining the Holy Spirit as “a virtue or energy flowing from God to man”.<sup>16</sup>

Obviously the church has been and is being beset by many heresies related to the Trinity, especially the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit (e.g. Pentecostalism, Neoliberalism etc). The above is noted to show the continuous pattern of revolt against Scripture and God’s church, of which revolt the WTS is an example.

### SEMANTICS OF “PERSONALITY”

“As applied to the Godhead, the term ‘person’ does not mean exactly the same as when applied to man. The inadequacy of human language to express divine truth makes it necessary to use words which most nearly convey the desired thought”.<sup>17</sup>

“Personality with us today expresses the fact of a separate individual human being who is rationally self-conscious and distinct from all others. But Personality in God is intended to convey the idea of an inner distinction which exists within the unity of the Divine nature”.<sup>18</sup>

Personality is spiritual, not physical, not corporeal, being the conglomerate of thought, feeling, will and conscience (“intelligence, emotion, volition and action”<sup>19</sup> “understanding, will, affection and appreciation of the moral”<sup>20</sup>; “intellect, emotions or sensibility, and will, ... intelligence, emotions; and a will”<sup>21</sup>. ‘Personality’ thus speaks of *quality* or *property*, rather than a separate being.

The word persona, of which Person is the translation, properly signifies a dramatic part, or character; and was adopted, as Augustine tells us, by the Latins on account of the poverty of their language, which has no word exactly corresponding to the hypostasis of the Greeks, the term used by the latter to denote each of the three Subjects of the Holy Trinity. The meaning of *persona* then must be determined by that of hypostasis. Now this term, as distinguished from essence (ousia – nature), signifies the Divine Being when viewed in connection with a particular “Personal property”.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> *The Holy Spirit*, C.C. Ryrie, page 116

<sup>16</sup> *The Holy Spirit*, C.C. Ryrie, page 117

<sup>17</sup> *The Holy Spirit and His Gifts*, J. Oswald Sanders, page 13 (emphasis supplied)

<sup>18</sup> *The Holy Spirit of God*, W.H. Griffith Thomas, page 127 (emphasis supplied).

<sup>19</sup> *The Holy Spirit and His Gifts*, J. Oswald Sanders, page 14

<sup>20</sup> *A Help to the Study of the Holy Spirit*, W. Biederwolf; page 25

<sup>21</sup> *The Holy Spirit*, C.C. Ryrie, page 11

<sup>22</sup> *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*, page 125, cited in *The Holy Spirit of God*, W.H. Griffith Thomas, page 127 (emphasis supplied)

## PERSONALITY AND GOD

As applied to man, the term *person* implies the existence of a separate self-conscious human being, distinct from all others. When used of the Godhead, however, it carries no such significance. There is no idea of three separate Beings. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are three Persons, but not three separate, distinct Beings. Each is distinct from the other, but none is separate from the other in the stratum existence.<sup>17</sup>

This term (*persona*) ... signifies the Divine Being when viewed in connection with a particular 'Personal property', that is, the property which compels us to make a distinction between the Persons: which in the First Person is paternity, in the Second filiation, and in the Third, procession.<sup>22</sup>

Thus Personality, in relation to the Godhead, speaks of a dramatic part, or character. We come to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. Each has a particular role, while Each self-possesses, unoriginated, underived, and undivided Deity.

The term *person* ... is intended to express the idea of an inner distinction which exists within the unity of the Divine Nature. The Holy Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Son, yet shares the same inseparable life.<sup>19</sup>

The personal distinction in Godhead is a distinction within, and of, unity: not a distinction which qualifies unity, or usurps the place of it, or destroys it.<sup>23</sup>

All human personality is imperfect. God alone has perfect personality, so any definition of true personality must start from a study of God's characteristics not ours. ... It is a false assumption to suppose that perfect personality exists in any human being.<sup>24</sup>

That last quote is most vital. Difficult though these concepts are to grasp, they are demanded by Scripture, for each member of the Godhead has separately ascribed the features of personality, yet self-possesses the all-pervasive infinity of the Divine Nature. Thus there is but only one God. The "one YHWH" in Deut 6:4 is a complex unity, just as the "oneness" of a man and his wife is a complex unity, imperfect though that illustration might be.

As there are Three Persons in the Godhead it means that there are three separate centres of consciousness each with separate feeling, thought, will and conscience, yet so attuned that they think, feel and will as one.<sup>25</sup>

## JESUS: ONE PERSON, TWO NATURES

When the Lord (Jesus) was born *He remained one Divine Person, but became possessed of two natures*, a divine and a human. The divine nature had inherent in it the ten or more wonderful attributes mentioned. ... The attributes of His human nature were quite different. ... He took into union with His divine nature and its attributes our human nature and its attributes. ...

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<sup>23</sup> *Atonement and Personality*, Moberly, page 155, cited in *The Holy Spirit of God*, W.H. Thomas, page 127

<sup>24</sup> *The Holy Spirit*, C.C. Ryrie, page 15. See also *The Holy Spirit of God*, W.H. Thomas, page 127

<sup>25</sup> *The Person of Christ*, Vol. 1, H. Brash Bonsall, page 74

Christ's human nature, considered in itself, was impersonal, just as man's is. Christ united with Himself and His divine nature our human nature. He did not unite Himself with a human person. *There were thus two natures after the Incarnation – one divine and one human – but only one Person.*

...

The Lord, though one Person and that a divine Person, has *two* natures, a divine and a human, each having its own distinctive set (community) of attributes. There is no thought of mingling them as one heretic tried to do, for that would produce a hybrid thing which is neither divine nor human, for in changing the attributes the reality whose they are is changed, and this cannot be. Christ cannot change any of His divine attributes or He would cease to be God. If He could have changed, He never would have been God in the first place, for one of the attributes of deity is unchangeability. He cannot alter or tone down or change in any way the attributes of manhood, for in that case He would no longer be a true man.<sup>26</sup>

The attributes of divine nature and of human nature are opposed. If the attributes of the respective natures mingled in Christ, He would have ceased, to be God, which is not possible, for an attribute of God is Immutability, and He would not have been true man and thus no Substitute, nor our Representative High Priest.

(Jesus) had to become like his brothers in every way, in order to be their faithful and merciful high priest in his service to God, so that the people's sins would be forgiven.<sup>27</sup>

Christ the divine One did not assume a human personality at the incarnation. He took a human nature, not a human individuality. Nature has to do with a matrix, a complex of attributes from which a personality or individuality are formed by decisions over the developing years. But Christ as the pre-existent Person could not take another person upon Himself or there would be four persons in the Trinity. But He the divine person added to His divine nature the attributes of a human nature – and this human nature attained to personality only within the personality of the divine Logos. ... The human personality only developed as it was overshadowed by the divine One and it became not a separate personality but rather one with the personality already existing.<sup>28</sup>

Was the human nature of the Son of Mary changed into the divine nature of the Son of God? No; the two natures were mysteriously blended in one person – the man Christ Jesus. In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. When Christ was crucified, it was His human nature that died. Deity did not sink and die; that would have been impossible.<sup>29</sup>

The concept of "ONE PERSON - TWO NATURES" is expressed as: "He clothed His divinity with humanity" in the following:

(Jesus) voluntarily assumed human nature. It was His own act, and by His own consent. He clothed His divinity with humanity. ... He was God while upon earth, but He divested Himself of the form of God, and in its

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<sup>26</sup> *The Person of Christ*, Vol. 1, H. Brash Bonsall, pages 77 – 78

<sup>27</sup> Hebrews 2:17

<sup>28</sup> *Report on Manuscript on the Subject of the Nature of Christ*, pages 4 – 5, D. Ford (emphasis supplied)

<sup>29</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* Vol. 5, page 1113, E.G. White comments (emphasis supplied)



stead took the form and fashion of a man. ... For our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. He laid aside His glory and His majesty. He was God, but the glories of the form of God He for a while relinquished. ...

He bore the sins of the world and endured the penalty which rolled like a mountain upon His divine soul. He yielded up His life a sacrifice, that man should not eternally die.<sup>30</sup>

In the present discussion, the significant aspect to be demonstrated from Scripture is that Jesus is truly God, hence unoriginated, possessing Eternal Life; unborrowed. This is demonstrated in subsequent chapters.

### **JESUS, THE SUFFERING SERVANT**

Although He ever possesses the very nature of God<sup>31</sup>, Jesus denied Himself the privileges and prerogatives of that position, took the nature of a servant<sup>32</sup>, and walked the humble path of obedience<sup>33</sup>.

Because of this, His temptations were infinitely greater than ours, inasmuch as Satan continuously teased Him to use His divine power, instead of being utterly dependent upon the Father.

“If you are God’s Son” Satan tempted, “order these stones to turn into bread<sup>34</sup> In other words, “prove that you are God by working a divine miracle to feed your starving body”.

But Jesus remained faithful to His charge, and experienced the limitations of human nature, subjugated His divine prerogatives, and subjected himself unto the Father.

Thus we find that Jesus

1. Suffers weariness<sup>35</sup>
2. Hungers and thirsts<sup>36</sup>
3. Has limitation of knowledge<sup>37</sup>
4. Is subject-to time
5. Is subject to change<sup>38</sup>
6. Was limited in location while on earth
7. Prayed to the Father<sup>39</sup>
8. Is subordinate to the Father<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *The Review and Herald*, July 5, 1887, E.G..White

<sup>31</sup> Philippians 2:6

<sup>32</sup> Philippians 2:7

<sup>33</sup> Philippians 2:8

<sup>34</sup> Matthew 4:3 (TEV)

<sup>35</sup> John 4:6; Mark 4:38

<sup>36</sup> Matthew 4:2; John 19:28

<sup>37</sup> Matthew 24:36

<sup>38</sup> Luke 2:52

<sup>39</sup> Luke 6:12; 22:39 – 46

This subordination does not indicate inferiority in nature, only in function: It does not indicate a permanent relationship but rather one that continues for the salvation of man and until that has been achieved. Man's salvation is a byproduct of the greater issue, that of justifying God's name before the universe.

These human attributes Jesus took upon His divine nature so that He may be able to succour them that are tempted and be a faithful and just High Priest before the Father.

In His divine nature, these human attributes do not occur.

For instance, Jesus is outside of time<sup>41</sup>, is unchangeable<sup>42</sup>, and is not limited in location<sup>43</sup>.

We can only say, "that is what Scripture says", and venture no further.

Other questions begging answers relate to the dominance of the divine and human natures within the divine personality. Perhaps, one day Jesus will tell us the answers to these and other stimulating questions

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT: PERSONAL, DIVINE**

Insofar as our present discourse is concerned, we shall be interested in showing:

1. The Holy Spirit is a Person. This being shown by His having the qualities of Personality – thought, feeling, will and conscience.
2. The Holy Spirit is truly Divine, the True God. This being shown by His self-possession of the attributes of Deity.

These two considerations are the topics for a subsequent chapter.

### **RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE GODHEAD**

The distinctions within the Godhead, forced upon us by the explicit and implicit statements of Scripture, relate to "dramatic part, character, Personal property".<sup>22</sup>

These internal relationships cannot be described adequately within the confines of human terminology or conceptuality, but are (inadequately) described by the terms Filiation (or Generation) and Procession. They refer to ETERNAL realities, not to events within time or chronological events.

The eternal relationship of the Son to the Father is termed *generation*. It is the work of the Father only, while *procession* of the Spirit involves both Father and Son. Logically (but in no way chronologically), generation of the Son precedes procession of the Spirit. It is fully recognized that both terms are inadequate, but no one has been able to improve on them. What single words could ever express the eternal relationships of the Trinity? Certainly the terms imply no inferiority of one person to any of the others. Neither do the words *First* and *Second* and *Third* when used of the persons of the Godhead imply any chronological order. Generation and procession are attempts to denote *eternal* relationships involving distinctions between equal persons.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> 1 Cor. 15:28; 3:23; 11:3; John 5:19, 20, 21; 14:24; etc.

<sup>41</sup> Micah 5:2; Heb. 7:3

<sup>42</sup> Heb. 1: 10 – 12

<sup>43</sup> Matt. 18:20; 28:19, 20

<sup>44</sup> *The Holy Spirit*, C.C. Ryrie, page 21

## GENERATION (FILIIATION)

The expression *Son of God* describes, at the one time, Jesus' "relationship to God unique in its intimacy"<sup>45</sup> (thus His deity), and His subordinate function selflessly taken for the vindication of God's name and the eradication of the blight of sin from God's Creation.

This Sonship did not begin at any point within time, but in eternity, before time.

Neither the Incarnation, the baptism, the transfiguration nor the resurrection marks the beginning of Christ's sonship or constitutes Him, Son of God. These are but recognition or manifestation of a pre-existing Sonship, inseparable from His Godhead.

By the resurrection from the dead He is not made to be but is declared to be the Son of God. (Rom. 1:4)<sup>46</sup>

(Jesus) was not born in time, but in *eternity*, and so there never was a time when He was not. This is what is meant by the phrase "The Eternal Generation of the Son".<sup>45</sup>

Scripture reveals that Christ is the Son antecedent to Incarnation. It also reveals that He is eternal. "Eternal Generation" (*gennesis achronos*) combines these truths in thought that the Begetting is not an event in time, however remote, but a fact irrespective of time. The Christ did not *become*, but necessarily and eternally *is* the Son. He, a person, possesses every attribute of pure Godhead. This necessitates an eternally absolute being; in this respect He is 'not after' the Father".<sup>47</sup>

The Filiation Titles (Son of Man, Son of God), whether in the Bible or in the Creeds, are not explained by these. They are simply given, with guidelines delineating boundaries outside which our explorations may not venture.

These boundaries are:

- (a) That Jesus Christ is Eternal (there never was a time when the Father existed separately from the Son or from Spirit)
- (b) That nevertheless - His relationship to the First Person of the Trinity is that of a Son to a Father. ... Human fatherhood helps us understand dimly the relationship of the Son to His Fatherhood.<sup>48</sup>

It cannot be emphasised too strongly that Filiation (or Generation) must not be explained beyond these bounds clearly set out by Scripture. If it is difficult for us to understand, then it is we who are faulty, due in part to our sinfulness, our finite comprehensibility and to the infinite realm that belongs only to God.

Jesus' Sonship is not explained, merely told to us. It could mean one or more of several things:

- (1) mere likeness. ...
- (2) sameness of nature. ...
- (3) derivation of essence or

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<sup>45</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2, Brash Bonsall page 160

<sup>46</sup> *Systematic Theology*, A. H. Strong, page 340, cited in *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2, Brash Bonsall page 161

<sup>47</sup> *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, Handley-Moule, page 59, cited in *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2, Brash Bonsall page 161

<sup>48</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2, Brash Bonsall page 163

(4) something else altogether beyond our understanding.<sup>49</sup>

### PROCESSION

The relation of the Spirit to the other persons of the Trinity is usually expressed by the term *procession*. ... The procession of the Spirit means that in His being and eternity He is related to the Father and to the Son in that He proceeded from them. ...

The major proof text is John 15:26. The present tense in the verse (*proceedeth*) is understood to refer to the eternality of the Spirit's procession. That He proceeds from the Son as well is supported by such texts as Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:9; John 16:7.<sup>50</sup>

### SUMMARY

We have therefore gone to some lengths in this chapter to honestly and forthrightly present what the Trinitarian believes, not what the WTS says he believes. The following provides a succinct summary of what has been presented thus far:

The true meaning of Trinitarian doctrine, therefore, is not separate spheres of Divine operation in connection with each Person, but the united and inclusive operations of three Persons in one God. While each Person is (as the pronouns would suggest) self-conscious and self-determining, yet they themselves are never separated from one another. There are three centres of self-consciousness in the one self-consciousness of God. The full statement of truth is "FROM and UNTO the Father, THROUGH the Son, BY the Spirit. The transcendence in the Deity is expressed by the Father; the expression of the Deity is represented by the Son; while the truth of the immanence of the Deity for man's moral and spiritual life is that for which the Holy Spirit stands".<sup>51</sup>

### AND THE WATCHTOWER SOCIETY

As it does in so many other areas, when the Watchtower Society (WTS) attacks the doctrine of the Triune Godhead, it first builds a straw imitation of the truth, then pulls its own straw man to pieces, without really considering the reality it wishes to deny.

The WTS does not attack the doctrine of the Triune Godhead on what it really is and teaches. Instead, it misrepresents terms (such as *Person* and *God*), and then bases its criticisms on the basis of human rationale and comprehensibility, reasoning on the finite plane instead of the infinite.

#### **“The Word’ Who is he? According to John”**

For example, we see misuse of terms in the following from the WTS:

The Trinity and God must be interchangeable terms. ... How could one Person be three?<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Systematic Theology*, Hodge, Vol. 1, page 468 ff cited *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2, Brash Bonsall page 162

<sup>50</sup> *The Holy Spirit* C.C. Ryrie, pages 20, 21

<sup>51</sup> *The Holy Spirit of God*, W.H. Griffith Thomas, page 138

<sup>52</sup> *The Word’ Who is he? According to John*, pages 6, 7

The WTS's fallacious reasoning follows:

Since we cannot scientifically calculate that 1 God (the Father) + 1 God (the Son) + 1 God (the Holy Ghost) = 1 God, then we must calculate that  $\frac{1}{3}$  God (the Father) +  $\frac{1}{3}$  God (the Son) +  $\frac{1}{3}$  God (the Holy Ghost) =  $\frac{3}{3}$  God, or 1 God.<sup>52</sup>

As if man's mathematics can be applied to the Infinite! Infinity plus infinity plus infinity equals infinity.

$$\infty + \infty + \infty = \infty$$

It should also be understood that one-third of infinity is still infinity.

$$\frac{1}{3} (\infty) = \infty$$

It is most doubtful that the ancients employed mathematics that included the concept of fractions, such as  $\frac{1}{3}$ .

They used calculations that employed an abacus hence, for example, the reason for letters being used by the Romans to represent numbers. And the ancients had no symbol to represent nothing (zero).

When the WTS says that other religions as well as Christianity have a trinity (e.g. Hinduism with its Brahma, Siva and Vishna) "it will usually be found they (i.e.: these other religions) refer to a modal trinity; i.e. a trinity of three FORMS not three PERSONS, is not a trinity at all".<sup>53</sup>

The WTS fails to recognise the meaning of TRINITY, that it is monotheistic, not polytheistic.

Of the three great monotheistic religions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, only the last is trinitarian.<sup>53</sup>

In the final analysis, the WTS's own semi-Arian concepts – which are just as much a product of 4<sup>th</sup> century CE discussion – must be justified, but they fail theologically and experientially.

Arianism, ancient and modern, fails simply because it is not a "living faith".<sup>54</sup>

Thank God for His wonderful living truth.

The WTS's blatant dishonesty in its handling of this subject (among others) is shown in its mischief with the statements and sentiments of authorities.

### **"The Two Babylons"**

The WTS cites this book (written by Rev. Hislop) to try and demonstrate a pagan origin for the doctrine of the Triune Godhead.<sup>55</sup>

Hislop is quoted by the WTS as saying "The recognition of the trinity was universal in all the nations of the world". (Hislop, page 18)

What Hislop really wrote is:

While overlaid with idolatry, the: recognition of a Trinity was universal in all the ancient nations of the world, proving how deeply rooted in the human race was the primeval doctrine on this subject, which comes out so distinctly in Genesis.

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<sup>53</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2, Brash Bonsall page 110

<sup>54</sup> *The Holy Spirit of God*, W.H. Griffith Thomas, page 88

<sup>55</sup> See, for example, the WTS's book, *Make Sure of All Things*

Hislop is contrasting the heathen misconceptions of the Trinity with the true conceptual teaching given in Genesis. Further, the WTS misquotes him as saying “the trinity” whereas he says “a trinity”.

His sentiments are clearly enunciated later in his book:

They all admitted A trinity; but did they worship THE Triune Jehovah, the King Eternal, immortal and invisible. (Hislop, page 90).

**“New Catholic Encyclopedia”**

On page 22 of *The Truth that leads to Eternal Life*, the WTS cites the 1967 edition of the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume XIV, page 306, with the comment:

(The Encyclopedia) admits that the doctrine must be dated from about three hundred and fifty years after the death of Jesus Christ. So the early Christians ... did not believe that God is a Trinity.

However, the *Encyclopedia* says on the page cited by the WTS:

The revelation of the truth of the triune life of God was first made in the NT.

Readings from the early Church Fathers (for example, The Doctrina, Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Melitus; etc;) show that the doctrine of the Triune Godhead was believed as early as the end of the First Century. The formalisation of the belief into tenets took time, being enforced largely by the pressures of heretics such as Arius. (For reference quotes, see *The Apostolic Fathers. An American Translation*, E.J. Goodspeed, Independent Press Ltd., London, 1950).

## 3. JESUS, GOD

It is one matter to have the Nature of Christ described by commentaries such as the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, and by the Council of Chalcedon, but it is another matter to know the Scriptural basis for our beliefs. In fact, any belief, no matter how clearly it is defined by a Creed, or how often it may be repeated, unless it finds its origin in the Word of God, it is heresy. Neither the age of a belief, its wide acceptance or acceptability, nor its constant repetition is proof of its correctness.

### SCOPE OF ENQUIRY

In this discussion we shall see that Jesus Christ is Very God, uncreated and consubstantial with (having the very same Nature as) the Father. The proofs are given in this chapter, in the following sequence:

- a. Jesus is God (pages 17 to 31),
- b. having the very nature of God (pages 32 to 36).
- c. Since Jesus is “the true God” (pages 36 to 39) and
- d. is “Our Great God” (pages 39 and 40),
- e. Jesus demands and accepts our highest praise and adoration (pages 40 to 44).

### 3A. JESUS IS GOD

#### ***A range of witnesses concurs***

Not only does Jesus call Himself God, but so also do the inspired prophets, the angels, and even the Father Himself. Since Scripture allows for only the True God<sup>1</sup>, in contrast to the false so-called “gods” of the unenlightened heathens<sup>2</sup>, each of these testimonies certifies that Jesus is God in the fullest meaning of the word.

#### **Jesus’ Witness**

The gospel of John was written to counter the false philosophies concerning Christ that were current towards the close of the First Century. It was probably the last New Testament book written. John states the reason for his Gospel:

These (signs) are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.<sup>3</sup>

These signs – miracles – are thus part of Jesus’ witness that He is the Son of God. They are:

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremiah 10:10; John 17:3

<sup>2</sup> Psalms 96:5; 1 Cor. 8:5, 6; Galatians 4:8

<sup>3</sup> John 20:31

1. The Turning of the Water into Wine at Cana in Galilee (2:1-11)
2. The Healing of the Nobleman's Son in Cana of Galilee (4:43 – 54)
3. The Healing of the Impotent Man in Jerusalem (5:1 – 13)
4. The Feeding of the Five Thousand at Bethsaida Julias in Galilee (6:1 – 14)
5. The Walking on the Water in Galilee (6:15 – 21)
6. The Healing of the Man Born Blind in Jerusalem (9:1 – 7)
7. The Raising of Lazarus in Bethany (11:1 – 46)

Most of these miracles are followed by a discourse or conversation of our Lord asserting His deity.<sup>4</sup>

John's gospel opens with the assertion that Jesus is God<sup>5</sup> and proves it through these miracles and discourses until it reaches the climactic exclamation of the Jewish monotheist Thomas, who cries out to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!"<sup>6</sup> The text clearly states that Thomas was expressing these words towards Jesus, and as a monotheist could have meant nothing less than "my True God".

Then from Jesus' own lips we hear His commendation of Thomas' adoration. Then Jesus goes further, blessing those who have the same belief of Him, but who have not seen Him personally.

Thomas said to (Jesus), "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."<sup>7</sup>

We also find words of highest commendation from our Lord when Peter confesses "thou art the ... Son of the Living God"<sup>8</sup>. This belief, states Jesus, is the foundation stone of the church, preventing the onslaughts of Satan having any effect.<sup>9</sup>

#### Meaning of the Term, *Son of God*

To the Jews of Christ's time, the expression "Son of God" had a meaning different from what it may have today. The true meaning cannot be obtained from the Hellenistic (non-Jewish) concepts, for not only are they obviously contrary to the fundamental concepts of Scripture.

The NT as a whole provides evidence that Sonship titles were in use at a very early period (e.g. 1 Th. 1:10), and it is highly improbable that the Church in the first twenty years of its history, when it was still largely Jewish, would have borrowed either its ideas or its terminology from the heathen world.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol 2. H. Brash Bonsall page 56

<sup>5</sup> John 1:1

<sup>6</sup> John 20:28

<sup>7</sup> John 20:28 – 29 (NIV)

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 16:16

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 16:18

<sup>10</sup> *Dictionary of the Bible* (second edition 1963) James Hastings, revised by F. Grant and H. Rowley, article *Christology*, page 139



The OT uses the expression “son(s) of God” when referring to angels<sup>11</sup>, Israel<sup>12</sup>, the righteous<sup>13</sup>, the King of Israel<sup>14</sup>, and the Messiah<sup>15</sup>.

In Semitic usage, “sonship” is ... loosely employed to denote moral rather than physical or metaphysical relationship. ... A “son of God” is a man, or even a people, who reflect the character of God.<sup>16</sup>

Used of Jesus, however, the expression “son of God” expresses “a unique relationship with the Father, in which none other might share”<sup>17</sup>.

Believers may share in the divine nature<sup>18</sup> and become sons of God<sup>19</sup>; but this is a totally different relationship from Christ’s. Jesus is the only begotten<sup>20</sup>, the monogenes (Greek), which means the unique, the “only one of a kind” son of God<sup>20</sup>. He did not become the son, He was declared; or brought forward as being the Son, and this was achieved at the resurrection.<sup>21</sup> This day of the Son’s begetting<sup>22</sup> is the day when events manifestly declared that He was the Son.

Thus sonship declares a “moral relationship”, in which Jesus is unique, He has an intimate relationship with God that no one else may enjoy.

To enjoy this intimate contact demands that Jesus is God, or else His contact is not intimate, as the expression “only begotten Son” clearly demands. Only an Infinite God may have intimate contact-with the Infinite God<sup>23</sup>, otherwise the contact is not perfect. Only the Infinite God could exist in the consuming relationship of an all-powerful source of Infinite Energy. Only God may know the Father to the same degree as the Infinite Father knows Him<sup>24</sup>.

Thus in His witness to His deity, Jesus has claimed to be the Son of God, has accepted Thomas’ worship as God (yet He says that only God may be worshipped!)<sup>25</sup>, has declared Himself to be expressly like the Father<sup>26</sup>, has claimed the divine privileges, such as the forgiveness of sins<sup>27</sup>, and demands that all men should give Him the very same honour that is due to the Father<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Job 1:6; 38:7

<sup>12</sup> Exodus 4:22; Hosea 11:1; etc.

<sup>13</sup> Exodus 4:22; Hosea 11:1

<sup>14</sup> 2 Samuel 7:14; Psalms 89:26

<sup>15</sup> Psalms 2:7

<sup>16</sup> *Dictionary of the Bible*, J. Hastings, page .139

<sup>17</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol 2, Brash Bonsall

<sup>18</sup> 2 Peter 1:4

<sup>19</sup> John 1:12

<sup>20</sup> John 1:18; 3:16, 18

<sup>21</sup> Romans.1:4; Acts 13:33

<sup>22</sup> Psalms 2:7

<sup>23</sup> John 1:18

<sup>24</sup> John 10:15

<sup>25</sup> Matthew 4:10; 22:37; Mark 12:29, 30; Luke 10:27

<sup>26</sup> John 14:10, 11

<sup>27</sup> Mark 2:5 – 10

<sup>28</sup> John 5:23

So complete is this union between Father and Son, access to the Father is only possible through Jesus<sup>29</sup>. Jesus is so infinite that there is no access to the Infinite Father but through Him.

Who else but the Infinite God could effectively present the simultaneous petitions of a multitude of pleading sinners satisfactory to the requirements of an Infinite Father<sup>30</sup> and yet be personally present at each gathering on earth where His Name is praised, regardless of the location<sup>31</sup>?

Three instances recorded in the Gospels plainly teach the contemporary understanding of the expression, “Son of God”:

**1. John 5:17 – 18, 19 – 30**

Immediately before the incidents recorded in these verses, Jesus had healed a man on the Sabbath, arousing the Jews’ ire. In His answer to them, Jesus says that God is His Father, which causes the Jews to be more determined to kill Him.

For not only had he broken the Sabbath law, but he said that God was his own Father; and in this way had made himself equal with God.”<sup>32</sup>

This is an inspired commentary on the meaning of Jesus to be the *Son of God*; it means to be *equal* with God.

The expression means even more than this, for in the subsequent discourse we read that being the Son of God also means subjection to Him, and obedience to His will to fulfill His mission.

Subordination in office does not indicate inferiority in nature. It simply shows the role willingly taken by Christ when the Godhead prepared for the eventuality of sin, should it arise.

Similarly, when Christ ceases His mediation at the end of history, He lays down His office at the feet of the Father, and delivers the work, complete and perfect. He is subjecting Himself to the Father, allowing the Godhead to be “all in all”<sup>33</sup>. But this does not indicate inferiority in nature, only a subjective role willingly taken to achieve the goal, the vindication of God’s nature.

**2. John 10:30 – 36**

This passage opens with Jesus’ assertion, “The Father and I are one” and closes with “I am the Son of God”. The context demands that these expressions describe the same relationships, therefore to be “the Son of God” is to be in completeness with God.

The Jews understood the significance of Jesus’ statement, and as they considered Him to be no more than a mere man, took up stones to kill Him, saying,

You insult God! You are only a man, but you are trying to make yourself God<sup>34</sup>.

The lack of the article (ho) with God (theos) in this text does not mean that “the God”, i.e. Jehovah, is not intended. Inarticulate nouns (anarthrous construction) may or may not be definite, this being determined by the context. In this instance we have the parallel occasion

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<sup>29</sup> John 14:6

<sup>30</sup> Matthew 10:32; 2 Timothy 2:12 (b)

<sup>31</sup> Matthew 18:20; 28:20

<sup>32</sup> John 5:18 (TEV)

<sup>33</sup> 1 Cor. 15:28

<sup>34</sup> John 10:33 (TEV)

recorded in chapter 5, verses 17 – 18, in which theos (God) is articular, i.e. it is “ho theos” in that text. Also, the law regarding blasphemy demands that the God, Jehovah, be insulted to warrant stoning.

Jesus’ reference in this passage to the Law (actually Psalms 82:6) that God called some human judges “gods” does not denigrate Jesus’ own unique position. They were only like Jesus in the sense that they had a message from God (John 10:35, 36). No one would dare suggest that Jesus is only a “god” in the sense of those humans, because He had been chosen and sent by God. Those “(gods) shall die ... and fall”<sup>35</sup> but Jesus is immortal and without sin.

He was trying to evoke the realisation that here was One Who was sent by God, and as he was the Son of God, and was One with Him, they should find faint images of His Person in the Law they so steadfastly proclaimed.

When Jesus confronted the Rich Ruler with, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone”<sup>36</sup> He was not denying the man’s remark, but was endeavouring to arouse in that man’s mind the fact that as Jesus was good, no one ever being able to convict Him of sin<sup>37</sup>, then the Ruler’s remark was true. Thus he should realise the significance of his statement, that as Jesus is good, and that as only God is good, then Jesus is God. Unfortunately, Jesus’ comment fell upon deaf ears.

### **3. Before the Sanhedrin (Matt. 26:63 – 65; Mark 14:61 – 63, Luke 22:67 – 71).**

This is the third incident that illustrates the meaning of “Son of God”.

From the High Priest’s question and Jesus affirmation show that “Messiah” and “Son of God” refer to the same Person:

The High Priest spoke to (Jesus): “In the name of the living God, I now put you on oath: tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” Jesus answered him: “So you say.”<sup>38</sup> (“Thou hast said”, KJV)

“Thou hast said” of Matt. 26:64 is a Jewish method of affirmation. See Matt. 26:25 and also John 18:37<sup>39</sup>

From the remainder of Jesus’ answer we see that these titles are also related to the expression “Son of Man” and “the right side of the Almighty”, with its attendant position of power and authority:

“I am”, answered Jesus, “and you will all see the Son of Man seated at the right side of the Almighty, and coming with the clouds of heaven!”<sup>40</sup>

If we take the words at their face value they imply:

- (a) That both the High Priest and the entire Sanhedrin attributed to the term Messiah the concept of divine Sonship.
- (b) That Son of God, Son of Man and Messiah - all refer to the same person, although each may stress different aspects of that Person.
- (c) That Christ here claims to be the Son of God, Son of Man and Messiah.

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<sup>35</sup> Psalms 82:7 (AV)

<sup>36</sup> Luke 18:19 (TEV)

<sup>37</sup> John 8:46, etc., Hebrews 4.15

<sup>38</sup> Matthew 26:63, 64 (TEV)

<sup>39</sup> *Light from the Greek New Testament* Boyce Blackwelder, page 122

<sup>40</sup> Mark 14:62 (TEV)

(footnote) The terms Messiah and Son of God are not synonymous, the latter being far higher. ... Hebrew parallelism often introduces a new and higher element in the second line (cp. John 5:18; 10:33).<sup>41</sup>

The older theologians thought of the titles of “Son of God” and “Son of Man” as denoting the twin titles of the deity and humanity of Christ respectively. This is now seen to be not quite the case. When Christ used the title of the Son of man He proclaimed His deity no less than when He used the other.<sup>42</sup>

Summarising thus far. We hear from Jesus ‘ lips that He is God, and that He also proclaims His deity with the names Son of God, Son of Man, and Messiah (Christ); Son of God, when applied to Christ, and by Him of Himself “implies His consciousness of standing in a relationship to God unique in its intimacy”<sup>43</sup> and also indicates subordination.

Subordination indicates a difference in function between that of the Father and of the Son, but does not indicate a difference in Nature (substance)<sup>44</sup>

To achieve His mission, Christ laid aside His divine immunity and prerogative, but not His divine nature; as we have said before, an essential attribute of the divine nature is immutability, and hence Christ could not have altered His Nature one whit when He stepped down from glory, or else He did not have the divine nature in the first instance.

#### ***Jesus is The Lord***

The Greek word for “Lord” is KURIOS. It may rightly be used of one person by another as a token of respect, such as a slave to his master, and it is used 18 times in this sense in the NT<sup>45</sup>. In those instances, however, divine worship is not intended. To call a man *lord* does not confound his worship of God as Lord.

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus was rarely referred to as Lord in its worshipful intent by His disciples. Their concepts of the Messiah were clouded by political overtones, and truer concepts did not flood in until Pentecost had greatly illuminated their minds.

(The title, Lord) does not occur frequently in the Synoptic gospels ... but in the rest of the NT “Lord” has become a regular title of Jesus. ... The inference is that ‘Lord’ is a post-resurrection title.

The phrase Marana tha (Our Lord come!) in 1 Cor. 16:22 proves that the title was in use in the original Aramaic-speaking communities”.<sup>46</sup>

The expression *Lord* thus came into use very early in the church’s history.

If the disciples’ concepts of Christ had been more correct, they would have realised that Jesus, although taking the role of a Servant in washing their feet, was nevertheless Lord in the highest meaning of the word:

“You call me Teacher and Lord”, He told them, “and it is right that you do so, because I am. I am your Lord and Teacher”.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol. 1 Brash Bonsall, page 157

<sup>42</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2 Brash Bonsall, page 135

<sup>43</sup> *Hastings Bible Dictionary* page 143

<sup>44</sup> *Hastings Bible Dictionary* page 147

<sup>45</sup> *The Trinity* E.H. Bickersteth pages 74 –75

<sup>46</sup> *Hastings Bible Dictionary* page 143

<sup>47</sup> John 13:13 (TEV)

The scene is the Upper Room; the occasion is the Last Supper. Peter has called Jesus, Lord. But Jesus wishes to elevate Peter's mind farther. Whilst stooping to the lowest level, He was still truly Lord. Not the respectful meaning of the expression, for this would not be the true antithesis of His action as Servant, either here, on His knees washing their feet, or shortly, when sharing the fate of a common criminal.

Although apparently the lowest and defeated, He was truly the Greatest, and Victorious. He is Lord in the fullest meaning.

Later, the Jewish monotheist, Thomas, catches the vision and worshipfully exclaims, "My Lord!" and receives Jesus' approbation. "My Lord and my God!"

Here is Thomas, steeped in the knowledge that he has but one Lord<sup>48</sup>, Jehovah, worshipping Jesus as his True Lord, receiving the Lord's blessing. What greater blessings are ours, who have not yet set eyes upon Him, yet worship Him as Lord.

The very original, post-resurrection church immediately accepted this concept of Christ as Lord.

(Its acceptance) occurred long before Christian theology was subjected to pagan influences when the Church hardly extended beyond the boundaries of Judea.<sup>49</sup>

Thus we should not turn to the Hellenistic world for its concepts of Lord for our understanding of the term. In fact Paul rebukes their ideas in 1 Cor. 8:6.

Consequently, we must understand the Jewish Christian concept of KURIOS in the light of their understanding of the term.

Because of their traditional reluctance to pronounce the awful name of God, as represented by the tetragram YHWH, and (incorrectly) anglicised as Jehovah, Yahwe, etc., the Jews substituted alternative expressions, including Adonai ("Lord") and The Name.<sup>50</sup>

When the Greek-speaking Jews produced their translation of the Hebrew scriptures, known as the Septuagint, they uniformly used the Greek equivalent of Lord (KURIOS) whenever the tetragram appeared, even in Exodus 6:3.<sup>51</sup>

Thus KURIOS in its worshipful intent came to be the accepted substitute for the tetragram. By the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, the Septuagint was accepted Scripture, and to call Jesus *Lord* meant calling Him God in the highest sense.

The earliest available writings of the NT do not use the expression YHWH for God, but they follow the example of the Septuagint and consistently used KURIOS (Lord) where the original Hebrew meant YHWH. Thus was done for at least two reasons:

1. Theirs was primarily a Greek document, prepared for Greek-speaking Jews (and Gentiles), for whom the Hebraic expression was meaningless.
2. The Hebrew scriptures in common use, the Septuagint, consistently used KURIOS to denote the God of Israel where YHWH had appeared in the original.

The Book of Revelation bears out these conclusions. The tetragram is an expansion of the verb "to be", indicating among other things the eternity and self-existence of the True God. In the Revelation, because the meaning of the tetragram was no longer understood, and because it was a term not used by other NT writers and hence not explained by them, the Revelator,

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<sup>48</sup> Deut. 6:4; 1 Cor. 8:6

<sup>49</sup> *Hastings Bible Dictionary* page 143

<sup>50</sup> *The Names of God* Nathan Stone, page 16

<sup>51</sup> *The Trinity* E.H. Bickersteth page 74

wherever the eternal self-existence of YHWH is intended, had to spell out the meaning of the tetragram with “Who was, is, and is coming”<sup>52</sup>.

This expression is used at least four times in the Revelation, to indicate this facet of the tetragram, a term that was already unfamiliar to its readers, especially in the meanings it encompassed.

We have already noted that KURIOS is intended as a token of respect between humans, and is used in the NT 18 times in this manner. The greatest bulk of its 737 appearances, however, refers to the worshipful attitude due to God.

Christ uses it 54 times in His discourses and parables to represent or typify the Father or Himself.

(In the remaining 665 cases), the vast remainder, it is applied indiscriminately to the Eternal Father or to the Son. ... Seeing that the name is applied ... indiscriminately ... in many places, the difficulty is very great of knowing whether the Eternal Father or the Lord Jesus Christ be ... ascribe(d) divine worship.<sup>53</sup>

This Indiscriminate usage of Lord shows the identical relationship Each bears to each Christian.

In fact, we find that the term is used far more naturally of Jesus than of the Father.

Wherever in the New Testament the word Lord (Greek, Kurios) is used, unless specifically stated otherwise, it will be found to refer to the Son rather than to the Father.<sup>54</sup>

### ***Other Self-Appellations***

The Book of Revelation, the last book in Scripture, is truly the Revelation of Jesus Christ. In it He reveals Himself as Head of the Church, the Slain Lamb; the Victorious Conqueror, the Guide and Protector. In it He also reveals Himself as being the True God, deserving the highest praise of all the universe<sup>55</sup>, as He sits on the throne that is both His and the Father’s.<sup>56</sup>

As we have seen, the Revelator uses the expression “the One Who Is, and Who was, and Who is coming” as an amplification of the tetragram, YHWH, “I am The Being”, or “I am He who is” (Exodus 3:14, Septuagint).

“The writer of the Revelation frequently adopts titles which the Greek translators (the Septuagint) used to express the character of the God of Israel.<sup>57</sup>

Thus when we hear from Jesus’ own lips that He is “the First and the Last”,<sup>58</sup> the unique title of the God of Israel, YHWH<sup>59</sup>, we realise the claim He makes (cf. also Rev. 2:23 with Jeremiah 11:20; 17:10)

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<sup>52</sup> Rev. 1:8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5

<sup>53</sup> *The Trinity* E.H. Bickersteth page 74

<sup>54</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol 1 Brash Bonsall page 115

<sup>55</sup> Rev. 5:11 –14; cf 4:11

<sup>56</sup> Rev. 3:21; 4:6

<sup>57</sup> *Light from the Greek New Testament* Boyce Blackwelder, page 126

<sup>58</sup> Rev. 2:8

<sup>59</sup> Isaiah 44:6

Evidence within Revelation as commented on by Jesus shows that He witnesses to His deity. Revelation opens with the Father declaring Himself to be “the Alpha and the Omega”<sup>60</sup> (first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) and closes with Jesus’ declaration that He indeed is also “the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end”.<sup>61</sup> What blasphemy it would be for any created being to make such a claim!

Were created beings “the Alpha and Omega” what point would there be for God to claim this as being a special characteristic? Why should He even bother to make such a revelation? By it He claims a uniqueness, one that IS shared by the Father and the Son.

“(Those) who had won the victory over the beast ... (sang) the Song of Moses ... (and) of the Lamb: ... “Great and marvelous are thy deeds, O Lord God, sovereign over all; just and true are thy ways, thou king of the ages. Who shall not revere thee, Lord, and do homage to thy name? For thou alone art holy.”<sup>62</sup>

Here is the hymn of the redeemed singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, thus obviously singing it to the Father; and the climax of their praise rings out: “For thou alone art holy”.

We hear the same attributes ascribed to the “sovereign Lord” by those “who had been slaughtered for God’s word and for the testimony they bore”.<sup>63</sup> “How long sovereign Lord, holy and true.”<sup>64</sup>

This is the basis also for their testimony, God is “holy”, God is “true”. If this were not a unique characteristic, there is no point in their testimony, nor in their victory. But, Lord God, “thou alone art holy”.

What claim then does Jesus make in His plea that is intended to arouse sinners and lead them to this victory, when He bases His pleas on His own qualities of being “holy and true”<sup>65</sup>, “faithful and true”<sup>66</sup>?

The very qualities initiating their victory is Christ’s claims to being “holy and true”, and the qualities ringing forth at their victory is that God is uniquely “holy and true”. Through their victory, the redeemed are able to see that Jesus possesses the qualities that are unique to the Eternal God.

There is no intimation that Jesus’ qualities are derived, but they are His own. What should be our response when we recognise Jesus’ claims that He and the father are in perfect, absolute, infinite communion and harmony, “One”?

What else could Jesus be but God, for He obviously claims to be.

### ***Jesus is God: The Prophets’ Witness***

A multitude of Messianic prophecies, either in word or in type, exists throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Each highlights particular facets of the Promised One, and each finds its greatest satisfaction in the historic Jesus of Nazareth.

Some of these prophecies implicitly require the divinity of the Messiah, others are more explicit. Some speak of the humanity of the Christ, of His suffering and His death.

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<sup>60</sup> Rev. 1:8

<sup>61</sup> Rev. 22:13 (NEB)

<sup>62</sup> Rev. 15:3 – 4 (NEB)

<sup>63</sup> Rev. 6:6 (NEB)

<sup>64</sup> Rev. 6:10 (NEB)

<sup>65</sup> Rev. 3:7

<sup>66</sup> Rev. 3:14

As Jesus Himself says, David, who expected the Messiah to be of his seed,<sup>67</sup> calls the Promised One his Lord,<sup>68</sup> thus demanding the pre-existence of the Incarnate<sup>69</sup> and superiority over David, even deity. David, who wrote the second Psalm,<sup>70</sup> recognised that the Messiah was to be known as the Son of God<sup>71</sup>, hence recognising His divinity.

Although these examples implicitly require the divinity of the Messiah, others are more explicit, of which the following are examples.

#### Isaiah

From this great man of God, we read two prophecies. The first is:

The Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman (mg. virgin) shall conceive and bear a son, and shall I call his name Immanuel (mg. God is with us).<sup>72</sup>

This prophecy, given by YHWH<sup>73</sup>, specifically calls the Promised Son, “God is with us”, Immanuel. Admittedly, this prophecy found fulfillment in the immediate time of its utterance, but just as the fulfillment as it is in the Lord Jesus Christ is infinitely greater than the primary fulfillment, so also is the Greater Son infinitely greater than the human son given in Ahaz’ time. Truly, in Jesus, “God is with us”, not through divine favour per medium of a created person but through His infinite grace, in the Person of His own Self.

The second example is a corollary of the first:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given ... and his name will be called ... Mighty God.<sup>74</sup>

The Hebrew expression translated “Mighty God” is *eel gibboor*, an expression used of YHWH a few verses later.<sup>75</sup> *Eel* in Isaiah usually indicates YHWH, and when it does not,<sup>76</sup> then it is describing an idol made by men’s hands. Isaiah had no intention of meaning that Messiah was to be a man-made idol. Messiah was to be the *eel* of Israel, the Mighty God, YHWH.

*Eel gibboor* is a traditional OT designation of YHWH.<sup>77</sup> The only difference with these other appearances is that *gadool* (great) is included as well as the definite article. Isaiah 10:21, which definitely refers to YHWH, does not have the definite article, in common with Isa. 9:6.

#### Micah

Of the Promised One, we read in Micah that He is the One “whose origin is from early times, from the days of time indefinite”<sup>78</sup>. What more can one ask for a clear statement that Christ was eternally pre-existent, which is an essential attribute of deity?

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<sup>67</sup> Psalms 132:11

<sup>68</sup> Psalms 110:1

<sup>69</sup> Matt 22:41 – 46

<sup>70</sup> Acts 4:25

<sup>71</sup> Psalms 2:7

<sup>72</sup> Isaiah 7:14 (RSV)

<sup>73</sup> Isaiah 7: 10 – 11

<sup>74</sup> Isaiah 9:6 (RSV)

<sup>75</sup> Isaiah 10:21 (cf. verse 20, which shows YHWH is referred to)

<sup>76</sup> 44:10,15,17; 45:20; 46:6

<sup>77</sup> Deut. 10:17; Jer. 32:18; Neh. 9:32



Another example of a prophet explicitly referring to the deity of Jesus is Daniel, who refers to “the Son of Man”<sup>79</sup>, which Christ uses at His trial before the Sanhedrin<sup>40</sup>, in His assertion of His deity. We could also refer to John the Baptist who, apart from his description of Jesus’ infinite worth as Judge<sup>80</sup> and Sin-Bearer<sup>81</sup>, “explicitly states that he was making ready a path for Jehovah Himself”<sup>82</sup>. What more proof does one need?

### ***Jesus is God: The Angels’ Witness***

The theme of the book of Hebrews is “superiority”. The foundation of the new covenant is based upon better promises, with a better High Priest managing a better covenant, pleading in a better sanctuary.

The first chapter of Hebrews clearly shows the multifaceted superiority of Jesus to all that has gone before, and it also shows the superiority of Jesus to the angels, for we are told that God said “Let all God’s angels worship him”<sup>83</sup>.

In the Revelation, the veil between heaven and earth is drawn aside, and we see that this worship is of the highest worth, it is the praise that is due unto God. In ch. 4:11 we see “our Lord and God” praised by all heaven with “glory and honour and power”<sup>84</sup>, whilst in ch. 5:12 the Lamb is likewise worshipped by all heaven with “power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing”<sup>84</sup>, and the voices swell to a glorious crescendo as “every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea and all therein join together, singing their praise and adoration jointly to the Father and to the Lamb, “ ‘blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!’ And the four living creatures said, ‘Amen:’ and the elders fell down and worshipped.”<sup>84</sup>

This is not partial praise, nor is it a praise that is given differently to the Father and to the Lamb; each is worshipped identically and then they are worshipped as a union. What created being could be in such a position? Only the God who is our Lamb, divine yet human, can honestly share in the praise, worship and adoration given to the Father and still have it expressed to Him individually.

This is the kind of worship the angels give. No wonder their voices filled that still night and their glory covered the countryside as they announced the coming of their Blessed Lord to this earth.

What joy must have been theirs as they contemplated this mind-staggering event, the visit to Earth by “‘Emmanuel’ (which means, *God with us*).”<sup>85</sup>

What must have been in Joseph’s mind when he awoke from that dream, in which the angel announced that the blessed Son was truly God among men?

What clear testimony we have of Jesus’ divinity from the witness of the angels.

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<sup>78</sup> Micah 5:2 (NWT)

<sup>79</sup> Daniel 7:13

<sup>80</sup> Matt. 3:12

<sup>81</sup> John 1:36

<sup>82</sup> Matt. 3:3 (cf. Isaiah 40:3)

<sup>83</sup> Heb. 1:6 (NWT, RSV)

<sup>84</sup> RSV

<sup>85</sup> Matthew 1:23 (RSV)

### The Angel of the Lord

The Scriptures often refer to the appearance of a ‘special angel, variously referred to as “The Angel”<sup>86</sup>, “The Angel of the Lord”<sup>87</sup>, “The Angel of His Presence”<sup>88</sup> and so on. This angel is clearly distinguished from ordinary angels that appeared before men.<sup>89</sup>

The semi-Arian, polytheistic<sup>90</sup> WTS recognises that the leader of the Angels, the Archangel Michael<sup>91</sup>, which means “who is like God?” is the pre-existent Christ, and that he is the Angel of the Lord, “the angel who led the Israelites through the wilderness (Ex. 23:20, 21, 23; 32:34; 33:2)”<sup>92</sup>.

Of this Angel, we read that he has the very nature of YHWH (Ex. 20:2), for he has His name<sup>93</sup>. In this context the terms ‘nature’ and ‘name’ are synonymous, thus we see the divine nature of this Angel.

The angel of the LORD appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. ... And he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.<sup>94</sup>

In this incident “the Angel”, “LORD (YHWH)”, and “God” are used separately and interchangeably of the same Person:

“The angel of the LORD appeared. ... The LORD saw. ... God called.”<sup>95</sup>

Abraham, speaking to the angel before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, was speaking to YHWH, personally.<sup>96</sup>

Lest confusion arise at the use of YHWH by the Angel, Who is the pre-existent Christ, let it be understood that both the Father and the Son used this name, as well as other names. The context of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah includes the following verse, which refers to

- (a) the YHWH Who had spoken to Abraham and
- (b) the YHWH Who is Ruler of heaven.

The LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.<sup>97</sup>

Hagar, speaking to the Angel of the LORD<sup>98</sup>, was speaking to the LORD<sup>99</sup>, whom she called “a God of seeing”, for He had told her to call her son *Ishmael*, which means “God hears”.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Gen. 48:16

<sup>87</sup> Gen. 16:7ff; 22:11ff; Exodus 32:14; 19

<sup>88</sup> Isaiah. 63:9

<sup>89</sup> 1 Kings 19:5; 2 Samuel 24:16

<sup>90</sup> They have one *Almighty God* and also *Mighty Gods*, such as Christ

<sup>91</sup> Daniel 10:13, 20, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7, 10, 12

<sup>92</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* (1971) page 1152

<sup>93</sup> Exodus 23:21

<sup>94</sup> Exodus 3:3, 6

<sup>95</sup> Exodus 3:2, 4

<sup>96</sup> Gen. chapter 18

<sup>97</sup> Gen. 19:24 (RSV)

<sup>98</sup> Gen. 16:7, 9, 10, 11

Jacob, who wrestled with the Angel<sup>101</sup>, was able to say that in this, he had encountered God “face to face”<sup>102</sup>. The angel testifies that He is God, for He changed Jacob’s name to *Israel*, “He who strives with God”<sup>103</sup>, for Jacob had striven all night with Him. The inspired prophet confirms that the Angel striving with Jacob is God, YHWH:

(Jacob) strove with the angel. ...  
He met God at Bethel,  
and there God spoke with him –  
the LORD (YHWH) the God of hosts  
the LORD (YHWH) is his name.<sup>104</sup>

We must not conclude that the Angel of the LORD is the Father because He uses the name YHWH and because He is the Angel, God, and YHWH at the same time. We have indicated that both Persons use this Name, a fact that is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

The following text indicates that the Father and the Son are separate Persons. The scene is Moriah, with Abraham about to offer his only son, Isaac:

The angel of the LORD called. ... “By myself I have sworn”, says the LORD.<sup>105</sup>

Here the Angel (the Son) is the Messenger (angelos, Gk., means messenger) for the LORD, the Father.

This separation of persons is clearly shown in the following statement from Abraham:

The LORD, the God of heaven, (YHWH the Father) ... He will send his angel before you.<sup>106</sup>

**Summarising**, the archangel Michael, who is the pre-existent Christ, is the archangel, the Angel of the Lord who led Israel<sup>107</sup>. This Angel is the God of the Patriarchs, the YHWH of the Hebrews.

He is to be distinguished in person from the Father but is identical in nature with Him.

Let us worship Jesus with the angels, manifestly our great YHWH.

### ***Jesus is God: The Father’s Witness***

#### **The unique, intimate relationship**

As we have seen, as a Biblical concept, the expression ‘*Son*’, describes a moral relationship, and ‘*Son of God*’ describes “a man, or even a people, who reflect the character of God”, and when related to Christ, “implies His consciousness of standing in a relationship to God unique in its intimacy”.

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<sup>99</sup> Gen. 16:13

<sup>100</sup> Gen. 16:11 (RSV mg.)

<sup>101</sup> Gen. 48:16; Hosea 12:4

<sup>102</sup> Gen. 32:30

<sup>103</sup> Gen. 32:28 (RSV mg.)

<sup>104</sup> Hosea 12:4, 5 (RSV)

<sup>105</sup> Gen. 22:15, 16 (RSV)

<sup>106</sup> Gen. 24:7 (RSV)

<sup>107</sup> 1 Cor. 10:4

It indicates function and position, rather than a physical relationship. The communion experienced by a human father and his son contains only the faintest shadows of the meanings encompassed by the experience of the divine Father and Son.

So intimate is their union that only Persons with the Divine Nature can experience it fully, and can survive in the consuming energy of that experience.

The Jews of Christ's time realised this, and set about to stone Christ for apparently being blasphemous when He claimed to be God by calling Himself the 'Son of God'.

Not only do we have the claim of Jesus that He is the unique Son, but the Father Himself expressly states this as a fact.

At the baptism by John and at the Transfiguration the Father publicly declared:

“Thou art my Son, my Beloved (or *Thou art my only Son*)”<sup>108</sup>

“This is my Son, my Beloved” (or *This is my only Son*)”<sup>109</sup>

Thus we have the Father's testimony to the unique intimate relationship between Himself and Jesus. Could one less than God experience such a complete and intimate union?

Creatures could not survive such a relationship, as is illustrated in the Sanctuary of the Mosaic economy. The presence of God was revealed in the Shekinah glory as it resided in the Most Holy. To survive the experience, the ministering Priests had the intervention of the veil, and on the Day of Atonement the High Priests not only had to be absolutely spiritually clean, but He also had the protection of smoke and the continuous intercession of the people.

When the divine Logos became the Incarnate Jesus, divinity was veiled by human form and by human nature; otherwise HIS hearers could not have survived the-glory.

Jesus is completely, intimately with the Father, knowing and experiencing Him to the utmost degree, for He knows the Father just as the Father knows Him – and how intimate and complete is the Infinite 'Father's knowledge! Yet Jesus is able to survive the experience. None less than God can do this.

Jesus claimed to be in this unique relationship and the Father personally confirms it:

“My Son, the beloved”<sup>110</sup>

### Joint Rulers

The Lamb and the Almighty share one throne, which shows that they have identical authority.

Throne figuratively signifies a seat of ruling authority, or the kingly authority and sovereignty itself, ... a position of honour.<sup>111</sup>

Realising that the Biblical meaning of “Kingdom” in the expressions “Kingdom of God” and “Kingdom of Heaven” refer to the *kingship* (authority) of God and not to any spatial concept, it is significant that the Kingdom (Kingship) is unitedly Christ's and the Father's, for the inspired Paul speaks of “the Kingdom of Christ and of God”<sup>112</sup>, and he is speaking here of both present and future aspects of this Kingship.

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<sup>108</sup> Mark 1:11 (NEB) and margin

<sup>109</sup> Mark 9:7 (NEB) and margin

<sup>110</sup> RSV (margin)

<sup>111</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* page 1596, article: *Throne*

<sup>112</sup> Ephesians 5:5 (TEV)

When the angels worship before the throne, each Person receives identical adoration. Since God's throne is not a literal seat<sup>111</sup>, the expression symbolising His authority, we clearly see that each Person has identical status.

Of course, the condescension of the Son, and the subordinate role accepted by Him for the salvation of sinners makes this issue rather more complex, which is really beyond the scope of our immediate enquiry.

Scripture shows both subordination in office by the Son, and it also shows equality in status.

The reasons for their coexistence should be clear. As to the issues that presently concern us here, we need only recognise that this situation exists because of Jesus' function. The fact that He shares the same degree of authority, which is symbolised by the expression "throne", we can state with confidence that Jesus is King to the very same degree as is the Father.

In speaking of Jesus' divine authority, the Father said:

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever", (or "God is thy throne for ever and ever")<sup>113</sup>

Whether the first rendition or the second is preferred, the conclusion is the same. Jesus' throne, or authority, is divine and it is eternal; His authority is of divine status and of divine quality.

What a statement for God to make of Jesus! Jesus' authority is the same as the Father's.

#### Worship of Jesus is commanded

When God said, "Let all the angels of God worship (Jesus)"<sup>83</sup>, He was not speaking of mere respect, for even the angels of Satan fear Christ. No, this speaks of a special recognition, for it is a command made to God's angels.

As we have seen, this recognition, condoned and even commanded by the Father, is of the highest order. It is absolutely identical to that worship which is due to the Father and given to Him. It is praise, worship, and adoration of the highest meaning. And God says that it is due unto Jesus also.

Later in this chapter we shall see that Jesus accepted this worship on other occasions. This instance of the Father commanding the angels to worship Jesus, to then read of their adoration and to then realise Father accepts their worship as signifying identical authority and fullness speaks more volumes than would the multiplicity of words.

Thus draws to a close this first Section, in which we saw that Jesus, prophets, angels, and the Father witness to the fact that Jesus is God.

Let us ensure that this does not remain a lifeless doctrine, but grows as a living realisation, affecting our life in its every aspect.

### **3B. JESUS HAS GOD'S NATURE**

We have seen the many-sided witness that Jesus is called God. Now we shall see that He possesses the nature of God, and hence the essential divine attributes of Deity. Not only is Jesus called God, but He is God in reality, in His inner Person.

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<sup>113</sup> Hebrews 1:8 (NEB) and margin

***Jesus possesses the attributes of deity – the divine nature***

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. Omniscience               | John 2:25; 6:61, 64, 70 – 71; 7:15                                 |
| 2. Omnipresence              | Matt. 18:20; 28:20; John 17:23; 1 Cor. 1:2                         |
| 3. Omnipotence               | Matt 28:18; Ps 24:8 (cf. verse 7 with 1 Cor. 2:8)                  |
| 4. Eternal                   | Isa. 9:6; Micah 5:2; Heb.13:8; Heb. 1:12; John 8:58;<br>Prov. 8:22 |
| 5. Immutable                 | Heb. 1:12 (cf. Ps. 102:25ff); Heb 13:8                             |
| 6. Immortal (Self-existent)  | John 5:21, 25, 26; 6:33, 51, 53; 1 John 1:1; 5:10 – 12, 20         |
| 7. Just (Holy) Righteous One | Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; Zech.9:9                                   |
| 8. Love                      | Eph. 5:2; Rom. 8:39; John 15:13                                    |
| 9. Wisdom                    | Rev. 5:12  |
| 10. Infinite                 | Combine (4) and (5) above  |
| 11. Transcendent – Creator   | Col. 1:16; John 1:3 (cf. Isa. 44:24)                               |

Although these attributes are listed individually, in reality they form a complex composite, in which any number may also be united, in any sequence.

**Morphe**

Even the most uninterested gardener experiences revulsion at the sight of a caterpillar as it voraciously devours an otherwise attractive leaf, or as it distorts itself while inching along its pathway. Almost invariably the response is to destroy it, either directly under foot, or indirectly with a pesticide.

However, the opposite response is experienced when the dainty butterfly wends its ecstatic way. The eye is delighted, the heart uplifted when the sunshine captures the fluttering wings, its errant flight bespeaking joie de vivre.

Of course the butterfly is a caterpillar that has been transformed. This process of changing, in which the inner substance and the outer appearance are completely changed, is called *metamorphosis*. This word comes to us from two Greek words, *meta* meaning “change” or “different”, and *morphe* meaning “nature”. Thus the change from caterpillar is “a change in nature”, “Metamorphosis”.

“Morphe” refers to inner substance as well as to outward appearance. This contrasts with the Greek *schema*, which refers to outward appearance only. Thus Paul says:

Do not conform outwardly (*suschematizo*) to the standards of this world, but let God transform you inwardly (*meta-morpho-o*) by a complete change of your mind.”<sup>114</sup>

The true Christian’s behaviour results from an inner state, which occurs because God transforms the believer’s inner nature.

That same glory, coming from the Lord who is the Spirit, transforms us (meta-morpho-omai) into his very likeness, in an ever greater degree of glory.<sup>115</sup>

Having defined the attributes of the divine nature of God, and having determined the depth of significance of “morphe”, we read of Jesus that He “always had the very nature (morphe) of God”.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Romans 12:2 (TEV)

<sup>115</sup> 2 Cor. 3:18 (TEV)

A created being cannot have the very “morphe” of God, .for some of the essential attributes of Deity cannot be created. For example, omnipresence not only means spatial omnipresence (being everywhere) but it also means temporal omnipresence (being in every time at the same time). Therefore it means being in every place and in every time. It is not possible for a created being to possess omnipresence for he could not be truly in every time if there was a time in which he did not exist.

A further credential of the divine nature is immutability. A created being could not be immutable, for in his creation he has already undergone change. Before his creation he would not have been transcendent, nor could he have possessed any of the other divine attributes.

No, begone with such false philosophising! Jesus “always had the very *morphe* of God”! And never has this ever changed, either in the timeless eternities behind or ahead, for “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever”.<sup>117</sup>

At the Last Supper, Jesus symbolised what He did as “Lord and Master” in becoming the Suffering Servant. To wash His disciples’ feet, thereby symbolising His humility, Jesus laid aside His robes. In this act He indicated His laying aside of His privileges and prerogatives, to girt Himself as a slave, thus indicating the depths to which He stooped for us.

When Jesus laid aside His robe He did not pass it on to another, and it always remained within His reach. Jesus’ greatest temptation was to use His Divinity, to use His own power, instead of relying upon the Father’s, through His human nature.

With the task accomplished, Jesus took back His robe, signifying His position, role, and exercise of authority following the cessation of His earthly ministry.

Thus Jesus’ divine nature during His earthly ministry is shadowed because, among other things, in His function as man’s true representative He had to draw power only from the same Source as is available to man.

As He possessed the divine nature, He possessed it during His earthly ministry, for immutability is an attribute of true deity. However, it is heavily veiled, shining through only occasionally. For example, we read that Jesus is omnipresent (Matthew 18:20, Mark 2:5 – 7, Luke 7:48) and that He has divine prerogatives (“your sins are forgiven”). Yet He always gives glory to the Father: “I thank you Father, that you listen to me. I know that you always listen to me.”<sup>118</sup> What condescension!

One occasion where Jesus’ divine nature was more fully revealed is upon the Mount of Transfiguration. The Greek for *transfiguration* is “meta morphoo” and it was here that Jesus’ divine morphe was allowed to shine, with the result that “His face became as bright as the sun, and His clothes as white as light.”<sup>119</sup> Let us glimpse this vision!

#### John 1:1

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Thus opens the gospel of John, as rendered by the Authorised Version (KJV). In this opening, the Evangelist sets the theme, the reason of his gospel. After presenting his proofs, he finishes with the statement that he has shown that Jesus is “the Son of God”, the title which we have seen – including evidences from John’s gospel – that describes Jesus’ unique intimacy with the Father, and equality to Him, God in reality.

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<sup>116</sup> Philippians 2:6 (TEV)

<sup>117</sup> Hebrews 13:8 (TEV)

<sup>118</sup> John 11:41 – 42 (TEV)

<sup>119</sup> Matt. 17:2 (TEV)

John's opening statement and summary complement one another, finding their climax in the exultant cry of realisation by the Jewish monotheist Thomas when he cries out to Jesus, "my Lord and my God!" for which he received Jesus' highest commendation.

To further understand the import of John's opening sentence we need to know a little of Greek grammar. It concerns the use of the article, which in English is "*the*" and in Greek is "*ho*" or one of its declensions, depending upon the sense, gender, and so on of the noun.

The Greeks looked at a noun from two points of view: (1) identity (2) quality.<sup>120</sup>

"When the article is used (in Greek), the object is unquestionably definite."<sup>121</sup> This form is known as the *articul ar form* because the article is being used.

When the article is not used, this is called the *inarticulate* form or *anarthrous* construction. This form is used when indicating quality, although it is still possible for the noun to be definite when the inarticulate form is used.

The use of the article denotes identity, while the anarthrous construction emphasizes character or quality. "Sometimes with a noun which the context proves to be definite the article is not used" (Dana and Mantey, p. 149)<sup>122</sup>

A word may be definite without the article, for there are several ways of making a thing definite. Certain words, like scripture, sun, moon, sea, earth, heaven, are so distinctive that they may be definite without the article. Proper names, because they already denote a definite individual, do not require the article. Terms like Lord, God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, are definite, although these expressions for Deity may also have the article.<sup>121</sup>

### **"In the Beginning"**

This is anarthrous in the Greek, "(which) characterizes Christ as pre-existent, thus defining the nature of his person" (Dana and Mantey, p. 150). The nonuse of the article makes it clear that the Logos, Jesus Christ, is of the character and essence of Deity.<sup>123</sup>

Moses begins the Genesis with similar language, but John, instead of moving along human history goes backwards into eternity, and declares that when God created the spiritual material, temporal and ethereal realms, the Logos already was

### **"Was"**

John uses "was" three times in his opening sentence.

The Greek is *en*, which is the imperfect tense of the verb *eimi*, "to be", in contrast with *egeneto*, "became", which he uses of Jesus' incarnation in verse 14.

At the creation, which included space, time, and matter, the Logos already "was".

The Logos did not come into existence "in the beginning". At the point at which all things began, He already was. The Word is before time, He is coexistent and coeternal with God the Father.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> *Problems in Bible Translation* General Conference of SDA, page 50

<sup>121</sup> *Light from the Greek New Testament* Boyce Blackwelder, page 141

<sup>122</sup> *Light from the Greek New Testament* Boyce Blackwelder, page 146

<sup>123</sup> *Light from the Greek New Testament* Boyce Blackwelder, page 147

<sup>124</sup> *Light from the Greek New Testament* Boyce Blackwelder, page 42



### “The Word Was With God”

Normally, the Greek word for “with” is *meta* (a compound verb with syn or a preposition as en may also be used).

In this text, John uses pros.

If we wanted to describe a horseman riding towards a city or a man going home to his friends, we should use this term.<sup>125</sup>

(Pros) has the force of cease less reciprocal action or endless interaction or active cooperation in two-way flow of ideas, feelings, thought and planning between the Son and the Father which has gone on from eternity.<sup>126</sup>

Again John uses “was” – “The Word was with God.” He did not come to be with God, but His reciprocating activity with God already “was”. When God existed in the timeless avenues of eternity, the Logos “was”, and was active with Him.

“Was” emphasizes the ‘fact of no origin for God of for the Logos.’<sup>127</sup>

### “And the Word was God”

This, like the opening of the sentence, is anarthrous, thus emphasising the essential nature or quality of the Logos. Although the construction is anarthrous, there is no question that the noun is definite. The true God mentioned in the previous clause is obviously meant.

Subsequent inarticulate usage of *God* (Theos) in the context is unquestionably definite<sup>128</sup>, in which the true God is obviously meant.

Thus John is saying here that the Logos is divine, of the same divinity as the God (the Father) with Whom He has been actively associated for eternities past.

The Greek has the article with “Word” but not with “God”. If “God” also had the article, the effect of the statement would be to make God and the Word identical. That is not true, and the purpose of the writer was to distinguish between the two. He had already declared that the Word was. PROS TON THEON, “actively associated with God” (the force of PROS with the accusative indicating motion or activity).

The force of THEOS without the article is to emphasize quality or nature, and the expression is equivalent to saying that the Word was divine.<sup>129</sup>

And may we humbly add the reminder that the inarticulate THEOS is still definite, thus indicating that the Word has the same divine nature (consubstantial) as the true God, the Father.

Thus modern translations render:

He was with God, and he was the same as God.<sup>130</sup>

The Word dwelt with God, and what God was, the Word was.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2 Brash Bonsall page 65

<sup>126</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2 Brash Bonsall, page 66

<sup>127</sup> *Light from the Greek New Testament* Boyce Blackwelder, page 42

<sup>128</sup> Verses 6, 12, 13 and also verse 18 (not in the Prologue)

<sup>129</sup> *Problems in Bible Translation* General Conference of SDA, page 50

<sup>130</sup> TEV

<sup>131</sup> NEB

### Summary on the inarticulate noun *theos*

Although ... the word “God” lacks the definite article, it is still definite. The statement cannot be translated “the Word was a God”, as if the Word were one God among many gods. In Greek the absence of the article often emphasizes quality expressed by, or inherent in a word. Accordingly, John means that the Word partook of the essence of Deity, that He was divine in the ultimate and absolute sense. Thus in one terse declaration John denies that the Word was either a God, one among many, or the God, as if He alone were God.<sup>132</sup>

## 3C. JESUS, THE TRUE GOD

Scripture unequivocally teaches that there is only one True God. The gentiles may have their *elohim* (gods) but Israel’s is the only True Elohim.

Hear, O Israel: “(YHWH) our God (*Elohim*, plural) is one (*ached*, plural, denoting complex unity) God. ... Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you”.<sup>133</sup>

In common with other Divine Revelations, the teaching of the complex unity within one Godhead was progressively revealed and gradually comprehended. It was only brought forcibly to the fore with the Incarnation of the Second Person and the separate simultaneous appearance of Each, as at Jesus’ baptism.

Finally, when the Canon of Scripture was all but complete, John explicitly declared Jesus to be the True God in name and in nature:

Whoever has the Son has (eternal) life. ... Our lives are in the true God – in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and this is eternal life.<sup>134</sup>

The following renditions are presented, not as doctrinal proof for they are “one-man” translations (one is a paraphrase), but for interest and confirmation.

Now we are in God because we are in Jesus Christ his Son, who is the only true God; and he is eternal life. (*Living Bible*, Kenneth Taylor).

We are in union with the True One through His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life” (C. B. Williams).

### ***The True God***

We have already noted the method of progressive, gradual revelation adopted in Scripture.

In the Bible God tends to reveal truth to us as to children (Isa. 28:9, 10). He first shows us the general outlines in a sort of panorama view and only later unfolds the details. Revelation proceeds from the general to the particular, and what looks at first sight like a simple unity is found later to be compound unity. ...

When approaching a distant continent one first sees an outline on the horizon, then individual mountains appear, then valleys, bays, creeks, cities, houses and people. Early on, however, between the mountains appear certain curious shadows which later prove to be valleys. Just so

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<sup>132</sup> *SDA Bible Commentary* on John 1:1, Vol. 7 pages 897, 898

<sup>133</sup> Deut. 6:4, 14

<sup>134</sup> 1 John 5:10 – 12, 20 (TEV)

in the first revelation of a doctrine usually appear indications – slight clues maybe – of deeper distinctions.<sup>135</sup>

One can also see this gradually deepening revelation at the individual level, in which a child's concepts of say God are less mature and less complex than an adult's. Likewise, this change occurs with a person freshly converted to Christ who then wishes to know more of the Lord to Whom he has surrendered.

From our vantage point in time, being able to view doctrine that has been more fully revealed than to persons living at the times of the Scriptures, and having the intimate illumination of the indwelling Spirit to a degree not previously available, we can see and acknowledge that a complex unity exists in the one True God. It is possible for us to accept that more than one Person may have the attributes essential to the Divine Nature, and that these Persons, being in such complete infinite union, together and individually constitute the one True God.

Each of these Persons has all of the qualities of Godhood. There is only one quality of True Godhead. All other claims are false.

Even though we might not fully grasp the concepts (which should not be surprising, for how could a limited finite mind comprehend and enclose the Infinite Mind?), when Scripture clearly teaches this complex unity and assigns the uniqueness of God to several Persons, namely three, we can only say that we can glimpse the concept, find that it is in harmony with Scripture, even solving seeming anomalies, and rest content in that. Speculation regarding God's nature borders on blasphemy; rationalisation is blasphemy; but trust and child-like faith are gifts from God. Let us exercise these.

**Monotheism:** (Greek *Monos* = one). The belief there is but one God. Christianity, Judaism and Islam are the three universal religions and all are monotheistic. ... From the earliest chapter to the last the Bible is monotheistic.

God says, "I am he, before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I am the Lord; and beside me there is no Saviour. There is none who can deliver from my hand; I work and who shall hinder it?" (Isa. 43:10, 11, 13).

"I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any." (Isa. 44:6, 8).

"Though there be that are called 'gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many) but to us there is put one God, the Father, of, whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Cor. 8:5, 6).<sup>136</sup>

Of course, Paul is not denying Jesus' deity here, for just as the Father is also Lord when He is called God, so is Jesus God, even YHWH, because He is the true Lord, the one Lord, Kurios (YHWH).

Not that Jesus is merely an exponent of truth, or that He has had truth revealed especially to Him. No! He IS Truth. All Truth emanates from Him, finding its source in Him. All other truth is either a shadow, type or reflection of Him, for it is He Who is Truth itself. Such a position demands that He is the God, the Truth, the True God.

He is "holy and true", He tells us; He possesses, intrinsically, the essential qualities encompassed by the name YHWH – holy, righteous, self-existent, Being.

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<sup>135</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2 Brash Bonsall, page 115. See *The Holy Spirit* Bickersteth pages 13 – 36

<sup>136</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2 Brash Bonsall, page 103

### ***Jesus is Eternal Life***

Let us hear, with bated breath, Jesus' personal plea as He looked up to heaven In Gesthemane. Carefully, the words are 'chosen before they rise to be accepted by the Father:

"This is eternal life: to know thee who alone art truly God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."<sup>137</sup>

To "know" God, to have Him as our personal Friend, our closest companion. When we are in union with the True God we have eternal life.

(Eternal Life) does not mean mere continuation of existence ... it is the quality that makes life worth living.<sup>138</sup>

(Eternal life) is something other than mere endless existence... (It) is a particular quality of life which emanates from God, rather than a mere extension of existence. For man, it is the reception and enjoyment of the essential life of God Himself through Christ ... It is a gracious participation in the very life of God. ... "It is sharing in the life of God in Christ". (A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*).<sup>139</sup>

No wonder we are presently experiencing eternal life as we fellowship with Christ! In our communion, we are sharing in the essential life of God, which is termed. "Eternal Life".

The apostle John uses the expression "Eternal Life" as a name for Jesus.

We write to you about the Word of life ... and tell you about the eternal life which was with the Father and was made known to us.<sup>140</sup>

So truly is Jesus the very life of God, He is called "the Word of Life", "the eternal life".

The Lord Himself declared, "I am ... the Life."<sup>141</sup> He does not merely KNOW about life, nor merely HAS life, but He IS Life. Essential, Self-Existent Life. We may only partake in Eternal Life, the Life of God, by sharing in Jesus' Life, and we may lose this experience if we cease fellowshiping with Him. But Jesus' possession is His own by right because He is "the true God".

It has always been His throughout the limitless expanse of eternity. He is "the Word of Life, which has existed from the very beginning"<sup>142</sup>. Our previous comments about the word "Beginning" (Greek, *arche*) in respect of John 1:1 apply here also. The sentiment and the words are identical in the openings of both of these writings by John.

One can also see the relationship between John 1:1 and his first Letter in these two statements:

"The Word was with (pros) God" and "The eternal life, which was with the: Father."<sup>143</sup>

The eternal active association of the Word and God is paralleled by the eternal active interchange in the Persons with identical natures, "the Eternal Life" and the Father.

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<sup>137</sup> John 17:3 (NEB)

<sup>138</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol. 2 Brash Bonsall, page 127

<sup>139</sup> *Life in the Son* Robert. Shank, pages 21, 22

<sup>140</sup> 1 John 1:1, 2 (TEV)

<sup>141</sup> John 14:6

<sup>142</sup> 1 John 1:1 (TEV)

<sup>143</sup> 1 John 1:2

Jesus is unchangeable<sup>144</sup> and in the covenant within the Godhead it was decided that Jesus would maintain His self-possession of Eternal Life, although as Man, He would subjugate His divine privileges and prerogatives to the Father, drawing spiritual sustenance from the same Divine Source as is available to mankind.

When we partake of Jesus' life we are experiencing the life of the Eternal One. Just as Eternal Fire describes the divine Source of the Fire, as well as the divine consequences, Eternal Life describes the Essential Deity of the Source.

Jesus is Eternal Life. He is the essential life of God, the true, the eternal one. When we commune with Him we are sharing in the divine life of God.

The gift of God is eternal life through His Son Jesus Christ.<sup>145</sup>

Whosoever does not have Jesus is perishing and is unable to see the kingdom (rulership) of God, for he is already dead though he is breathing.

Whosoever believeth in (Jesus) should not perish but have everlasting life.<sup>146</sup>

This may be our experience now! Let us covenant together to share in Jesus' life, Who is "the true God and eternal life"<sup>147</sup>

### 3D. JESUS, OUR GREAT GOD

About 175 years ago, Granville Sharp formulated the following principle of Greek grammar, which time and intensive study have verified as true:

When two nouns of the same case are connected by "and" (Greek, *kai*), and the article "the" (Greek, *ho*) or any of its cases precedes the first noun but is not repeated before the second noun or participle, then the second noun (or participle) always relates to the same person that is described by the first noun (or participle). In other words, it gives a further description of the first named person. For example,

"Pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11) refer to the same persons but indicate different functions. In other words, pastors are also teachers.<sup>148</sup>

Thus we read in Scripture of

The glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.<sup>149</sup>

This same sentiment is repeated later in the same letter:

God our Saviour. . . . Jesus Christ our Saviour.<sup>150</sup>

And the apostle Peter also uses it:

Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Hebrews 8:13

<sup>145</sup> Romans 6:23

<sup>146</sup> John 3:16

<sup>147</sup> 1 John 5:20 (NIV)

<sup>148</sup> *Light from the Greek New Testament* Boyce Blackwelder, page 146

<sup>149</sup> Titus 2:13

<sup>150</sup> Titus 3:4, 5

<sup>151</sup> 2 Peter 1:1 (mg)

As Scripture knows of only one glorious appearing by one Person, not separate returns of the Father and the Son, it further confirms our interpretation that Jesus is “our Great God and Saviour.

### 3E. JESUS, THE WORSHIPED

Worship is the due respect, praise and honour shown to a person. It may be given by one man to another, such as to Esau<sup>152</sup>, Joseph<sup>153</sup> or to the King<sup>154</sup>. It is also due unto God.<sup>155</sup>

The difference between the worship given to a man and that given unto God is a matter of degree,

“inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house.”<sup>156</sup>

The worship due unto God is reverential, as He possesses the divine attributes. It is this kind of worship that is God’s and His alone. It may never be rendered to anyone else.

Jesus, quoting Deut. 6:13 to Satan, makes the original injunction even more prohibitive by adding the word “only”:

It is written, Thou shalt Worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.<sup>157</sup>

In each of the three occasions that reverential worship to a created being is recorded in the New Testament, the recipient forbids the act. In the first recorded instance, Peter explains to Cornelius, “Stand up; I myself also, am a man”<sup>158</sup> and the angel refuses John’s worship both times with the explanation, “I am thy fellowservant, worship God.”<sup>159</sup>

The Greek word for “worship” is *proskuneo*. This is the word used in the record of Jesus’ answer to Satan when He declares that worship is due only to God. This same Greek word is also used when lesser degrees of worship is intended, and permitted. For example, by the unmerciful servant to the King in Matt. 18:26 and of the worship of the church of Philadelphia in Rev. 3:9 (unless 1 Cor. 14:25 qualifies that statement).

The degree of worship rendered is determined by the mental state of the supplicant. For example, when Herod declared that he wished to worship Jesus, it was intended (probably stated facetiously, but nevertheless the point still stands) as worship of the King of the Jews, and not reverential worship due as God of Israel.

A second example is found in the trial of Jesus, in which He was worshiped in mockery.<sup>160</sup> It was worship, but not respectful, true worship, recognising His deity.

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<sup>152</sup> Gen. 33:3

<sup>153</sup> Gen. 42:6

<sup>154</sup> 2 Samuel 24:20

<sup>155</sup> Gen. 24:52; Psalms 95:6

<sup>156</sup> Heb. 3:3

<sup>157</sup> Matt. 4:10

<sup>158</sup> Acts 10:25

<sup>159</sup> Rev. 19:10; 22:9

<sup>160</sup> Mark 15:19

Therefore, when we consider the worship offered to Jesus we must determine whether or not true reverential worship due unto God is intended.

As Jesus never refused worship of Himself, in fact even commending it, we can rightly conclude that whatever the respect intended by the giver, it was acceptable to God and accepted by Jesus.

### ***Old Testament Worship of Jesus***

Prayer is the life flow of worship. It is the pouring forth from the innermost parts of a person as he communicates with his God. Worship in any form demands communication. True reverential worship demands internal and external submission. Prayer is the crystallisation of the innermost reverential worship; one cannot exist without the other.

Abraham had the blessed privilege of directly communicating with the pre-incarnate Jesus on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>161</sup>

Jacob, in wrestling with the Son<sup>162</sup> asked for His blessing before letting him go, and it was the Son to Whom he prayed when asking for blessing upon his sons ere he died:

The God which fed me all my life long. ... The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the, lads.<sup>163</sup>

Moses worshiped Jesus in His pre-incarnate form as The Angel when He appeared in the burning bush.

These instances can be repeated numerous times, such as with Joshua<sup>164</sup>, Gideon<sup>165</sup>, Manoah<sup>166</sup>, and Ezekiel<sup>167</sup> but these are sufficient to show the direct worship in prayer are given to Christ in HIS pre-existent state.

### ***New Testament Worship of Jesus***

Of the sixty NT occurrences of *proskuneo* (worship), fifteen instances refer to Jesus Christ. Two of these instances are of worship that is not the reverential awe due unto God. The first is where the possessed worshiped Jesus<sup>168</sup> and therefore is of a frightened nature, not lovingly or willingly given. The second is where the worship is a deliberate mockery at His trial<sup>169</sup>

Of the remaining occurrences, we must determine the nature of the worship by the circumstances or by the supplicant's accompanying statements.

The nature of their gifts and of their journey marks the worship by the Magi<sup>170</sup> as being more than a sign of respect to a babe. In itself, the gift of gold showed His regal status as Supreme King, and frankincense depicted the, sweet purity of His life.

The leper, in his worship of Jesus, sought Divine aid:

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<sup>161</sup> Gen. 18:23 – 33

<sup>162</sup> Hosea 12:3, 4

<sup>163</sup> Gen. 48:15, 16

<sup>164</sup> Josh. 5:13, 14

<sup>165</sup> Judges 6:12, 14, 22, 23

<sup>166</sup> Judges 13:17, 20

<sup>167</sup> Ezekiel 1:26

<sup>168</sup> Mark 5:6

<sup>169</sup> Mark 15:19

<sup>170</sup> Matt. 2:2, 8, 11

Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.<sup>171</sup>

It was as “Lord” that he regarded Jesus in his worship; not a common Lord, but the divine Lord, able to cleanse the soul as well as the body.

In his worship, the ruler pleaded for Jesus’ divine interference:

My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.<sup>172</sup>

When they were similarly worshiped, the disciples rebuked the petitioners, and when they performed similar miracles, these were performed in the name of and by the power of Jesus Christ.<sup>173</sup>

After quelling the storm, Jesus was reverentially worshipped by the disciples as “the Son of God”<sup>174</sup>, which to Jewish monotheists at that time meant that Jesus was truly God. And Jesus accepted such worship.

The degree of worship to Jesus by the angels, as commanded by the Father<sup>175</sup>, is the ultimate in adoration; being identical to that given unto the Father<sup>176</sup>

The honour due to God, which is the very highest<sup>177</sup>, as this is simply another expression for “worship”, that degree of honour is the very same degree that is to be given to Jesus<sup>178</sup>.

The degree of trust of and belief in God is the very same degree that we must have in Jesus.<sup>179</sup>

When Jesus explicitly told the man that He was the “Son of Man”<sup>180</sup>. Many ancient MSS have “Son of God”, but the meaning is synonymous here, being in the context of John’s overall aim to show Christ’s deity and in the light of the immediate conflict whether Jesus was from Satan or from God<sup>181</sup>. Jesus explicitly revealed His deity to this man, for “Son of Man” and “Son of God” reveal His divine nature, or essence.

The man then called Him “Lord”, Kurios, the word used consistently in the Septuagint for the tetragram YHWH, and worshipped Him.

Jesus ... said “Do you believe in the Son of man?” He answered, ‘And who is he, sir (this expression, “sir” does not indicate that the subsequent worship was of one to a human superior, for it was given to Jesus as his “Lord”, the divine Son), that I may believe in him?’ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who speaks to you.” He said, “Lord, I believe”; and he worshipped him.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Matt. 8:2

<sup>172</sup> Matt. 9:18

<sup>173</sup> Acts 3:12

<sup>174</sup> Matt. 14:33

<sup>175</sup> Heb. 1:6

<sup>176</sup> Rev. 4, 5

<sup>177</sup> Rev. 4:9, 11; 5:12, 13; 7:12; 21:24, 26; 19:1

<sup>178</sup> John 5:23; Heb. 2:7

<sup>179</sup> John 16:1

<sup>180</sup> John 9:37

<sup>181</sup> John 9:16 – 18, 24 – 25, 27 – 34

<sup>182</sup> John 9:35 – 38 (RSV)



These instances are repeated throughout the Gospels, in which worship of Jesus, either explicitly accompanies recognition of His deity, or else borders so closely on it that were there the possibility of reverential worship being blasphemously ascribed to Him, then He would have removed the possibility of a dangerous error, should it have existed.

We also find several distinct indications of prayer being directed to Jesus Himself.

The angelic chorus “Glory to God in the highest” given at the beginning of Jesus’ earthly sojourn is repeated by the multitude near its end:

“Hosannah to the Son of David! ... Hosannah in the highest”<sup>183</sup> which Jesus not only accepted, but declared that the stones would call out if those voices were stilled<sup>184</sup>.

An instance of very early prayer to Jesus is at the stoning of Stephen.

As they were stoning Stephen, he prayed “Lord Jesus receive my spirit”<sup>185</sup>

Not only did Stephen pray directly to Jesus, but he asked for Jesus to receive his spirit, which Scripture declares to mean that Jesus is God, for it is God (YHWH) Who receives the spirit<sup>186</sup>. This is not prayer to the Father, or prayer to the Father through Christ, it is prayer to Christ, worshipping Him as God.

When Paul prayed, he reversed the order of Father and Jesus in his addresses. Their unity within the Godhead is thus clearly shown, and also shows that Jesus may be called upon in our prayer to heaven.

The expression “call upon” in religious veneration indicates prayer and supplication. To “call upon” the Father is prayer to God.<sup>187</sup>

Thus we read:

Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord (YHWH, Joel 2:32) shall be saved.<sup>188</sup>

The Lord (YHWH) is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth.<sup>189</sup>

And of Jesus we read identical due reverence and prayer.<sup>190</sup>

Call on the Lord from a pure heart<sup>191</sup>

Wash away your sins, calling on his name.<sup>192</sup>

We read that Jesus hears the simultaneous petitions of the whole multitude of believers and is able to satisfy the longing call emanating from every aching breast:

All those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Matt. 21:9

<sup>184</sup> Luke 19:40

<sup>185</sup> Acts 7:59 (RSV)

<sup>186</sup> Ecclesiastes 12:7 (Ps. 31:5)

<sup>187</sup> 1 Peter 1:17; cf Ps. 145:18

<sup>188</sup> Acts 2:26 (RSV)

<sup>189</sup> Psalms 145:18 (RSV)

<sup>190</sup> For example, Acts 2:21; 9:14, 21; Romans 9:12

<sup>191</sup> 2 Timothy 2:22 (RSV)

<sup>192</sup> Acts 22:16

They are bringing before him matters of the most stupendous magnitude; they are pouring into his ear the deepest secrets of the human heart. ... He hears all. He comprehends all. He answers all. The worshippers are ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. ... If a single cry of distress were disregarded, or a single note of praise unheard, that act of homage would be vain and futile, an offering to the idle air, an appeal to an incompetent Deity. But no prayer is lost. There is no confusion. ... (He) Himself has invited us to come, and ALL IN EVERY PLACE WHO CALL UPON HIS NAME are daily proving the truth of his Divine proclamation "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28).<sup>194</sup>

Could any less than God successfully deal with unnumbered simultaneous petitions? Let us therefore pray to Jesus, in fullest confidence together with all the saints in every place.

To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen<sup>195</sup>

### ***The Christian church and "the Name"***

In Acts "the Name" is almost invariably that of Jesus. Men were baptised in this name (Acts 2:38; 8:16, etc.) Men were healed in this name (Acts 3:6,16; 41:10,30, etc.). Even "some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists" knew that the name of Jesus was used in exorcism (Acts 19:13 ff.). Salvation is associated with His name (Acts 10:43; 22:16), and with this name only (Acts 4:12). Men receive forgiveness "through his name" (Acts 10:43). So it is that men "call upon" this name (Acts 2:21; 9:14, 21). Men might in the name (Acts 4:17f) speak boldly in it (Acts 9:27, 29), teach in it (Acts 4:18, 5:28), or preach concerning it (Acts 8:12). Paul was to "carry" the name before Gentiles and kings and children of Israel (Acts 9:15), and to suffer for it (Acts 9:16). Apostles rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41). Barnabas and Paul "have hazarded their lives for the name of our lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 15:26). Paul declared himself ready to die for the name (Acts 21:13). Contrariwise, the persecutions of the church in which he had once engaged could be described as doing things "opposing the name" (Acts 26:9). Small wonder that the name of Jesus "was extolled" (Acts 19:17), and that believers could speak of "the honorable name" by which they were called (Jas. 2:7). When they became known as "Christians" (Acts 11:26) they were associated with this name. The bearer of such a name was clearly regarded as no less than divine.

Nothing more graphically illustrates the high place accorded to Jesus than the fact that prayer was offered to him ... (Acts 1:24; 8:24; 10:14...7:59,60). Men address their prayers to God. Those who prayed to Jesus obviously had a very high regard of His Person.

Perhaps we should see the high point of all this in the way in which Old Testament passages which refer to Jehovah are applied to Jesus. This is done in Acts 2:21, where Joel 2:32 is used of Him. We see it again in 1 Peter 3:15, which should be taken as RV, "sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord", and is clearly an application of Isaiah 8:13, "Sanctify the Lord of host himself". In similar fashion 1 Peter 2:3 may well be an application of

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<sup>193</sup> 1 Cor. 1:2 (RSV)

<sup>194</sup> *The Trinity* E. Bickersteth, page 62

<sup>195</sup> Rev. 1:6 (RSV). See also 2 Peter 3:18

the words of Psalm 34:8. This is a phenomenon common in the New Testament and when we consider how jealously the position of Jehovah was safe-guarded by those who worshipped Him, we are able to see something of the high place they accorded Christ.<sup>196</sup>

### ***Instructions to Christians***

#### **Keep holding fast Jesus' Name**

“All who everywhere are calling upon the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.” 1 Cor. 1:2

“This is (God’s) commandment, that we have faith in the name of his Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John 3:23

“You have borne up for my name’s sake” Rev. 2:3

“You keep on holding fast my name” Rev. 2:13

#### **Do all in the Name and glorify the Name**

“Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus”.Col. 3:17

“That the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you.” 2 Thess. 1:12

## **SUMMARY**

The evidence presented is not exhaustive. The topic deserves and demands our whole life-long study, dedication and devotion.

Nevertheless, what has been presented is sufficient to show, as we said in the Introduction to this Chapter that:

Jesus is God

Having the very nature of God;

As He is “the true God”,

He demands and accepts our highest worship and adoration.

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<sup>196</sup> *The Lord from Heaven* Leon Morris, pages 656

## 4. JEHOVAH

The glory of God is beyond description and beyond our comprehension. He who willed the universe visible and invisible into existence sustains it by the pure utterances of His word. He is the Source of energy for countless suns, Guides a myriad stars, and is the self-existent Source of life for all, physical and spiritual.

Because of His consuming glory, man would be destroyed in His unveiled presence.

Our God is a devouring fire<sup>1</sup>

Dwelling in unapproachable light. No man has ever seen or ever can see him.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus confirms these statements:

You never heard (the Father's) voice, or saw his form.<sup>3</sup>

I do not mean that anyone has seen the Father. He who has come from God (that is, Jesus) has seen the Father, and he alone.<sup>4</sup>

The contexts of Jesus' statements show He is speaking of physically seeing and hearing God, not of spiritual sight and hearing; for Jesus says that he who has "heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father."<sup>5</sup> Thus people may have heard the Father in the spiritual sense, but even so, they have not seen Him in the physical sense.

Jesus could exist in the glory of the Father because He is "the effulgence of God's splendour and the stamp of God's very being, and sustains the universe by his word of power."<sup>6</sup>

So truly is this so, that "anyone who has seen (Jesus) has seen the Father."<sup>7</sup>

As the Father has not been heard or seen, Who is the YHWH (Jehovah) of the Hebrew Scriptures? Who is the God seen by Jacob<sup>8</sup>, whose Presence caused Isaiah to feel undone?<sup>9</sup> Who is the Jehovah Whom Moses conversed with for decades?<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hebrews 12:29 (NEB)

<sup>2</sup> 1 Timothy 6:16 (NEB)

<sup>3</sup> John 5:37

<sup>4</sup> John 6:46 - compare 1 John 4:12 and Exodus 33:20 with Rev. 1:16 (b)

<sup>5</sup> John 6:45, 46 (RSV)

<sup>6</sup> Hebrews 1:3 (NEB)

<sup>7</sup> John 14:9

<sup>8</sup> Genesis 32:30

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 6:5

<sup>10</sup> Exodus 24:9 – 11; 20:1 – 17; 24:12 – 18; 34:20 – 23; 19:17 – 20, Deut. 4:12

Scripture clearly teaches that this Jehovah was the Second Person of the Triune Godhead, known as Jesus Christ since His Incarnation. It was Jesus the Mediator Who gave the Law on Sinai.<sup>11</sup>

### **JEHOVAH'S UNIQUE POSITION**

Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, Jehovah presents Himself as unique, deserving our sole and highest praise.

We find, for example,

His glory is uniquely His, belonging to no one else (Isa. 42:8)

He is the only (true) God (Isa. 37:16)

He is the only Saviour (Isa. 43:3, 11; Hosea 1:7)

He Is the Holy One of Israel (Isa. 43:3)

He is the only Master (Malachi 1:6) and Lord (Deut 6:4; Zech. 14:9; Neh. 9:6)

He is the Lord of Glory (Psalms 24:7 – 10)

He is the unchanging One (Malachi 3:6)

He is the One from everlasting (Psalms 90:2)

He is the Creator (Isaiah 40:28)

He is the One Who pours out the Spirit (Joel 2:28)

This list could be made longer, but it clearly indicates the uniqueness of Jehovah. No one else has His glory, and as the only God, Saviour, Lord and Master, demands our sole worship.<sup>12</sup>

### **JESUS IN JEHOVAH'S UNIQUE POSITION**

The uniqueness of Jehovah is Jesus Christ's. It is not His by consent, but is His by divine right. We have already seen that Jesus is the Almighty, True God, possessing the essential attributes of deity, which include immortality (self-existence) and immutability (unchangeable). Thus we should not be surprised that the unique claims made by Jehovah are Christ's.

As Jesus said, "I and my Father are one" ... he put forth the claim that He and the Father were of one substance, possessing the same attributes.<sup>13</sup>

The uniqueness of Jehovah as shown by the previous list of Scriptural references belongs to Jesus Christ (compare the following list with the references given previously):

Jehovah's unique glory is Christ's (John 17:5)

It was Jesus' glory that Isaiah saw (John 12:41)

Jesus is the true God (1 John 5:20)

He is the only Saviour (compare "God our Saviour", "Christ Jesus our Saviour", "our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ", Titus 1:3, 4; 2:13 NEB)

He is the Holy One (Acts 3:14)

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<sup>11</sup> Gal. 3:19; Heb. 12:24 – 26; John 14:15; 1 John 5:3 ("Jehovah is the name given to Christ": *The Signs of the Times* May 3, 1899, page 2, E.G. White)

<sup>12</sup> Exodus 20:5

<sup>13</sup> *The Signs of the Times* Nov. 27, 1892, page 54, E.G. White

He is the Master (Matt. 23:8, 10) and Lord (1 Cor. 8:6). See also John 13:13

Jesus is from everlasting (Micah 5:2, "When all things began Christ already was" John 1:1 NEB).

He pours out the Spirit (John 14:7)

He is the unchanging One (Heb. 13:8)

He is the Creator (Rev. 3:14; John 1:1, 2, etc.)

When Jehovah said "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced"<sup>14</sup>, He was speaking of the time when the Roman soldiers would look at Him as He hung on the cross.<sup>15</sup>

The Baptist prepares the way for Jehovah<sup>16</sup>, who is Jesus<sup>17</sup>.

Jehovah Who is above all<sup>18</sup>, is Jesus who came from above<sup>19</sup>.

Jehovah the Creator, using His own hands<sup>20</sup>, doing it alone<sup>21</sup>, is Jesus<sup>22</sup>, Who is before all things<sup>23</sup>.

The inspired writer explicitly states that Jehovah, the stone of stumbling<sup>24</sup> is Jesus Christ<sup>25</sup>.

Every knee shall bow to Jehovah<sup>26</sup>, Who is Christ<sup>27</sup>, the First and the Last<sup>28</sup>.

The God Who gives the Son<sup>29</sup> is Jesus<sup>30</sup>. Jehovah Who bruises the Lamb<sup>31</sup> is Jesus, Who lays His life down of Himself<sup>32</sup> and takes it up by Himself<sup>33</sup>.

Therefore God Who forgives<sup>34</sup> is Jesus<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> Zechariah 12:1, 10

<sup>15</sup> John 19:37

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 40:3

<sup>17</sup> John 1:23, 29. Compare Malachi 3:1 with Luke 7:27

<sup>18</sup> Psalms 97:9

<sup>19</sup> John 3:31

<sup>20</sup> Isaiah 46:11, 12

<sup>21</sup> Isaiah 44:24

<sup>22</sup> Hebrews 1:1 – 3, 8 – 12

<sup>23</sup> Colossians 1:15 – 17

<sup>24</sup> Isaiah 8:13, 14

<sup>25</sup> 1 Peter 2:6, 8

<sup>26</sup> Isaiah 45:21 – 23, Romans 14:10, 11

<sup>27</sup> Philippians 2:10, 11

<sup>28</sup> Jehovah - Isaiah 44:6: 41:45 Rev, 1:8. Jesus - Rev. 1:11, 17, 18, 2:8; 21:6

<sup>29</sup> John 3:6

<sup>30</sup> Ephesians 5:25

<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 53:10

<sup>32</sup> John 10:17, 18

<sup>33</sup> John 2:19

<sup>34</sup> Ephesians 4:32

<sup>35</sup> Colossians 3:13

Jehovah of hosts Who swallows death<sup>36</sup> is Jesus<sup>37</sup>.

We serve Jehovah<sup>38</sup>, Jesus<sup>39</sup>, for the Judge Who is Jehovah<sup>40</sup> is none other than Jesus<sup>41</sup>.

When Jesus returns in His own wrath<sup>42</sup>, which is God's<sup>43</sup>, He brings His rewards with Him<sup>44</sup>, for they are Jehovah's rewards<sup>45</sup>.

Throughout the eternal future, God shall be all in all<sup>46</sup>, just as Jesus already is<sup>47</sup>, with glory and power, both of the Son<sup>48</sup> and of the Father<sup>49</sup>, for ever and ever<sup>50</sup>.

Jehovah shall be the Light<sup>51</sup>, for He is Jesus<sup>52</sup>.

Jehovah shall be the fountain of water<sup>53</sup>, which symbolises life, for He is Jesus<sup>54</sup>.

All creation shall worship Him to the very same degree as they worship the Father<sup>55</sup>. In fact this is already our privilege, for not only did Jesus accept worship (*proskenuoo*) whilst on earth<sup>56</sup>, but we also find the apostle Paul changing the priority of the Father and Son in his prayers<sup>57</sup>.

If we do not have the Son, we do not have the Father<sup>58</sup>, so let us make certain that we abide in Him Who, with the Father, constitutes our One God. ("One" in Deut. 6:4 describes a composite unit, such as is loosely reflected in "one flesh" when husband and wife are united yet remain separate persons. See Genesis 2:24; 11:6; Jeremiah 32:39; Ezekiel 37:19).

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<sup>36</sup> Isaiah 25:8

<sup>37</sup> 2 Timothy 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:54

<sup>38</sup> Deut. 10:20

<sup>39</sup> Colossians 3:24

<sup>40</sup> Eccl. 12:14

<sup>41</sup> 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim 4:1 (Compare 1 Chronicles 28:9; Jeremiah 11:20; 17:10; 1 Sam. 16:7 with Rev. 2:23, John 2:24, 25)

<sup>42</sup> Rev. 6:16

<sup>43</sup> Romans 2:5

<sup>44</sup> Rev. 22:12

<sup>45</sup> Psalms 62:11,12; Isaiah 40:10

<sup>46</sup> 1 Cor. 15:28

<sup>47</sup> Colossians 3:11

<sup>48</sup> Rev. 1:5, 6

<sup>49</sup> 1 Peter 5:10, 11

<sup>50</sup> The Father - Gal. 1:4, 5; The Son - 2 Peter 3:18

<sup>51</sup> Zechariah 2:5; Isaiah 60:19

<sup>52</sup> Rev. 21:23

<sup>53</sup> Jeremiah 17:13

<sup>54</sup> John 4:14; 7:37

<sup>55</sup> Rev. 5:8 – 14; John 5:23

<sup>56</sup> See our discussion on this topic in the chapter, "Jesus, God"

<sup>57</sup> 1 Thess. 3:11; 2 Thess. 2:16, 17

<sup>58</sup> 1 John 2:23, 24; John 5:23; 14:7

Because Jesus did as He was bidden by the Father<sup>59</sup>, this does not mean that He only reflects Jehovah's uniqueness. Such an assumption presumes that the Father is the only One Who is called Jehovah, and that *Jehovah* is the only name used by and of the only God.

### **MEANING OF THE WORD, "NAME"**

Apart from its common application "name" also refers to Character, Reputation and Nature, such as when we say, "He has made a good name for himself"; "For his name's sake"; and so on.

In Hebrew thought, a name may also indicate appearance (Adam, Esau) or role (Jesus, Methuselah), as well as our currently accepted applications, such as nature (Peter). The name may even be changed during one's life (Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter, Saul to Paul).

God is infinity and to explain that facet of HIS infinite nature, which is especially pertinent to a local incident or situation, He uses an appropriate name, or combination of names.

A name in the Old Testament was often an indication of a person's character or of some peculiar quality. But what one name could be adequate to God's greatness? ... If the Heaven of heavens cannot contain God, how can a name describe Him? ... We can hardly understand or appreciate Moses himself unless we see him in his many-sided character of learned man and shepherd, leader and legislator, soldier and statesman, impulsive, yet meekest of men. We can know David, too, not only as shepherd, warrior, and King, but also as a prophet, a poet and musician.

Even so, the Old Testament contains a number of names and compound names for God which reveal Him in some aspect of His character and dealing with mankind.<sup>60</sup>

We can confirm this by seeing under which circumstances God chose to be known by one name in preference to the others, and this is a fruitful study. For example, Elohim (God, plural) signifies "supreme power, sovereignty and glory"<sup>61</sup>; El Shaddai (God Almighty) "speaks to us of the inexhaustible stores of His bounty"<sup>62</sup>; Adonai (Lord) reveals the loving Master-slave relationship that exists between God and His people.

When these names are inadequate, compound names such as "Adonai Elohim" are used. But it is the name Jehovah that primarily interests us at the moment.

### **MEANING OF "JEHOVAH"**

Because of the Hebraic tradition of not uttering the word represented by the tetragrammaton, YHWH, saying "Adonai" or "The Name" whenever YHWH was encountered, we cannot be positive as to the original Hebrew pronunciation. "Jehovah" is the outcome of the misunderstanding of a Masoretic tradition, and "Yahwe" and "Yahwah" are probably more acceptable.

(The tetragram) is derived from the Hebrew verb *havah*, 'to be', or, 'being' ... When we read the name Jehovah, or LORD in capital letters in our Bible we think in terms of being or existence and life, and we must

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<sup>59</sup> John 5:19

<sup>60</sup> *Names of God* (Moody Press), Nathan J. Stone, pages 6, 7

<sup>61</sup> *Names of God* (Moody Press), Nathan J. Stone, page 13

<sup>62</sup> *Names of God* (Moody Press), Nathan J. Stone, page 33



think of Jehovah as the Being who is absolutely self-existent, the One who in Himself possesses essential life, permanent existence.<sup>63</sup>

The First Epistle of John opens with the assertion that Jesus is the Eternal Life, and closes on the same thought, that Jesus is “the true God, and eternal life”<sup>64</sup>. A Person Who is the True God and is Essential, Self-Existent Life, can be no one else but Jehovah, the True God, the Self-Existent Source of Life.

Although God used the name *Jehovah* prior to the Exodus, the early Patriarchs did not comprehend the significance of that name.<sup>65</sup> The fuller significance was revealed to Israel when God wished to emphasise Himself as a “personal, living Being, fulfilling to the people of Israel the promises made to their fathers”.<sup>66</sup>

Thus we find the name “Jehovah” used by God to express “His essential moral and spiritual attributes”.<sup>65</sup>

God describes Himself as Jehovah:

The LORD (Jehovah) descended in the cloud ... and proclaimed the name of the LORD (Jehovah), the LORD (Jehovah) God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.<sup>67</sup>

Space limitations preclude a fuller expose of this topic and the interested reader is recommended to refer to works dealing more thoroughly with this topic.

Suffice to say, “Jehovah” describes the great moral and spiritual facets of God’s nature, especially in His covenant relationship to Israel

### **JESUS USED “JEHOVAH”**

From our study thus far, we have seen that Jesus possesses all of the essential attributes of God, and is called God, even the true and great God. By reading the inspired commentary of the New Testament writers, we have seen that the Person called Jesus Christ was known as Jehovah during His pre-incarnate state.

We have also seen that just as Jesus Christ is described by one of several titles by New Testament writers according to the occasion (for example, “Lord”, “Master”, “Christ”, “Son of God”, “Son of Man”, Messiah”, “High Priest”, “Logos”, and so on). Likewise, God in the Old Testament used a name taken from a selection, and also used a combination of names.

Because the Triune Godhead is One, each Person is entitled to each of the names used in the Old Testament. Thus we find that not only is the pre-incarnate Jesus known as Jehovah, but the Father also uses this name when the occasion is appropriate.<sup>68</sup>

Needless to say, some of the post-incarnate titles of Christ’s are uniquely His because of His unique condescension in adding perfect human nature to the attributes of His divine nature.

It is significant that when the Greek-speaking Jews produced the Septuagint version of the Hebrew Scriptures, they translated the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) as KURIOS (Lord). When

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<sup>63</sup> *Names of God* (Moody Press), Nathan J. Stone, page 15

<sup>64</sup> 1 John 5:20 (AV)

<sup>65</sup> Exodus 6:2, 3

<sup>66</sup> *Names of God* (Moody Press), Nathan J. Stone, page 17

<sup>67</sup> Exodus 34:5 – 7 (AV)

<sup>68</sup> Psalms 110:1 cf. 1 Cor. 15:24 – 27; Heb. 1:13

the primitive, pure Christian church realised Who Jesus was, they used that very same name – KURIOS, Lord.

Not that Jesus is just another Lord, for human lords are transitory, mortal and weak, but He Is THE ONLY LORD, KURIOS.

Again we point out that where God asserts “The LORD (Jehovah) our God (Elohim-plural) is one (ached, plural) LORD (Jehovah)”<sup>69</sup>, it shows the oneness of the Godhead and the complex unity of Jehovah.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT USED “JEHOVAH”**

Resulting from His role as a window, shining forth Truth and Light as they emanate forth from Father and Son, evidences for the Holy Spirit’s use of the tetragram are less frequent than they are for Jesus’ pre-incarnate use of the Name. The proofs come more as illuminations in the manner of comments from inspired writers.

Thus in Isa. 6:8, Isaiah says, “I heard the voice of Jehovah saying ...”. In Acts 28:25, 26, Paul, when quoting the passage says, “Well spake the Holy Spirit by Isaiah.”

In Jer. 31:31, it is said, “Behold the days come saith Jehovah ...”. In Heb. 10:15, it is said, referring to the same passage, “The Holy Spirit after that He said ...”<sup>70</sup>

### **SUMMARY**

Thus, Jehovah is one name of several used by each Person of the Triune Godhead. It is used in certain circumstances, and by each member of the Godhead.

The great moral and spiritual attributes encompassed by the name Jehovah are innately self-possessed by each person of the Godhead. Hence we are not surprised to see statements such as are found in John 12:41; 19:37; 1 Peter 2:6, 8 that Jesus is Jehovah, the great God Himself (Titus 2:13, etc.).

So that we give true meaning to doctrine, we must apply this realisation to our lives and worship Him<sup>71</sup> Who made heaven and earth, the fountain of waters and all that is in them.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4 (AV)

<sup>70</sup> *A Help to the Study of the Holy Spirit* W. Biederwolf, page 28. Also *The Holy Spirit* Charles Ryrie, page 20

<sup>71</sup> Rev. 5

<sup>72</sup> Rev. 14:6 – 8

# 5. THE PERSONAL DIVINE HOLY SPIRIT

In our preceding chapters “God” and “The Triune Godhead”, we presented the bases for this present topic, in which we shall give scriptural evidence that the Holy Spirit is not only a Person, but possesses the essential attributes of the divine nature.

## HE IS A PERSON

Personality is “the possession of four component parts - thought, feeling, will and conscience.”<sup>1</sup> Thus there is no need for corporeality in personality, as is testified by the nature of these “parts”.<sup>2</sup> We shall consider each of these in turn.

### ***Thought***

The Holy Spirit possesses intelligence<sup>3</sup> (understanding<sup>4</sup> or intellect<sup>5</sup>), as is testified by the following scripture.

The Spirit also comes to help us, weak that we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us, in groans that words cannot express. And God, who sees into the hearts of men, knows what the thought of the Spirit is; for the Spirit pleads with God on behalf of his people, and in accordance with his will.<sup>6</sup>

The Spirit explores everything, even the depths of God’s own nature. Among men, who knows what a man is but the man’s own spirit within him? In the same way, only the Spirit of God knows what God is. ... We speak of these gifts of God in words found for us not by our human wisdom, but by the Spirit.<sup>7</sup>

Compare Isaiah 11:2 with

I remember you in my prayers, and ask the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious father, to give you the Spirit, who will make you wise and reveal God to you, so that you will know him.<sup>8</sup>

### **Feeling**

Scripture attests that the Holy Spirit has Emotion<sup>3, 5</sup> (affection<sup>4</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> *The Person of Christ* Vol. 1, H. Brash Bonsall, page 74

<sup>2</sup> *The Coming of the Comforter* Le Roy E. Froom, pages 41, 42

<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Spirit and His Gifts* J. Oswald Sanders

<sup>4</sup> *A Help to the Study of the Holy Spirit* W. Biederwolf

<sup>5</sup> *The Holy Spirit* C. Ryrie

<sup>6</sup> Romans 8:26, 27 (TEV)

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. 2:10, 11, 13 (NEB)

<sup>8</sup> Eph. 1:17 (TEV)

Do not make God's Holy Spirit sad. ... Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults! No more hateful feelings of any sort!<sup>9</sup>

Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God.<sup>10</sup>

Our adverse thoughts and actions touch the sensibilities of the Spirit, and make Him sad. He has feeling and emotions.

When He resides within the faithful heart, the Holy Spirit develops the recipient's emotions. This cannot be produced by an inanimate force but by a person, so that two lives may develop a harmonious relationship. Impersonal energy does not develop a human's love; but the Holy Spirit dwelling within, does:

The love that the Spirit inspires.<sup>11</sup>

(God's) Spirit fills us with power and love and self control.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Will***

The Book of Acts should more correctly, be known as the Acts of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as it describes the Holy Spirit's guidance and control of the primitive church. Several times we read of His directing the church's organisation and witnessing role.<sup>13</sup>

The Apostle summarises the various activities of the Spirit with:

All these (achievements and abilities) are inspired and brought to pass by one and the same (Holy) Spirit, Who apportions to each person individually (exactly) as He chooses.<sup>14</sup>

Thus the Holy Spirit possesses a will. Read the texts listed at Reference 13.

### **Conscience**

(Jesus said,) I tell you the truth. ... When he (the Spirit of truth) comes, he will confute the world, and show where wrong and right and judgement lie; he will convince them that right is on my side. ... He will convince them of divine judgement ... he will guide you into all truth.<sup>15</sup>

Thus Jesus Himself ascribes a conscience to the Holy Spirit.

## **THE ACTIONS OF PERSONALITY**

Actions are attributed to the Holy Spirit which cannot be attributed to a mere thing or influence or power or emanation.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Eph. 4:30, 31 (TEV)

<sup>10</sup> Eph. 4:30 (NEB)

<sup>11</sup> Romans 15:30 (NEB)

<sup>12</sup> 2 Timothy 1:7 (TEV)

<sup>13</sup> Acts 2:4; 8:29, 39; 10:19 (cf. verses 13 – 15); 11:12, 28; 13:4; 16:6, 7; 15:28; 13:2; 20:22; 21:4

<sup>14</sup> 1 Cor. 12:11 (Amplified)

<sup>15</sup> John 15:7 – 13 (NEB)

<sup>16</sup> *The Holy Spirit* Ryrie, page 12

Scripture states that the Spirit:

- Commands and directs people (Acts 8:29)<sup>16</sup>
- Hears (John 16: 13)
- Speaks (Acts 10:19; 13:2, 8; 8:29; John 16:13; Mark 13:11; Hebrew4 3:7)
- Prays (Romans 8:26)
- Teaches (Luke 12: 12; John 14:26)
- Forbids (Acts 16:6, 7)
- Comforts (Acts 16:6, 7)
- Guides (John 16:13; Romans 8:14)
- Reveals (John 16:14, 15; Luke 2:26)
- Witnesses (Romans 8:16; John 15:26)
- Strives with Men (Genesis 6:3)
- Quickens the Memory (John 14:26)
- Performs miracles (Acts 2:4; 8:39)
- Calls to the Ministry (Acts 13:2)
- Sets Pastors over Churches (Acts 20:28)<sup>17</sup>

### **INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

Men sustain relations toward the Holy Spirit such as are possible only toward a person.<sup>17</sup>

The Spirit can be:

- Obeded (Acts 10: 19-21a)<sup>18</sup>
- Grieved (Eph. 4:30)
- Resisted (Acts 7:51)
- Sinned against (Matt. 12:31; Mark 3:29)
- Lied to (Acts 5:3)
- Rebelled against (Isa. 63:10)
- Insulted (Heb. 10:29).<sup>19</sup>

People enter into communion with Him (2 Cor. 13:14), being baptised into His name (Matt 28:19). Collectively, these characteristics show the personality of the Holy Spirit.<sup>20</sup>

The Holy Spirit is presented by Scripture as being separate from God's power. Read the following texts, substituting "power" for "Spirit" or "Holy Spirit" to see the force of the argument:

Anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38 NEB). – A reading of "with power and with power" would be ludicrous.

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<sup>17</sup> Ryrie, page 13 (adapted as a listing)

<sup>18</sup> Biederwolf, pages 25, 26

<sup>19</sup> Biederwolf, page 26 (adapted as a listing)

<sup>20</sup> See also *The Coming of the Comforter* Le Roy E. Froom, page 45

“Jesus, armed with the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:14 NEB). – If the Spirit was God’s power, this statement would have been, “Jesus armed with the Spirit”, or “Jesus, armed with the Power”. See also Romans 15:13, 19 (NEB) and 1 Cor. 2:4 (TEV).

### GRAMMATICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Greek word for spirit is *pneuma* ... and is a neuter gender word. According to every normal rule of grammar, any pronoun that would be substituted for this neuter noun would itself have to be neuter. However, in several places the biblical writers ... deliberately contradicted the grammatical rule and used masculine pronouns. Indeed they used three different kinds of pronouns, all in the masculine gender. This shows that they considered the Spirit to be a Person. ...

1. In John 16:13 – 14 the masculine demonstrative pronoun is used for *pneuma*. (Demonstrative pronouns are “this” and “that”). ... Instead of “He”, the translation would better be “that person”. ...
2. In John 15:26 and Eph. 1:14 the masculine relative pronoun is used. ... (Relative pronouns are translated “who” if masculine or feminine, and “which” if neuter). ... In Ephesians 1:14 the masculine pronoun (in the Greek) is the first word in the verse – “which is the earnest”.
3. In John 16:7-8 the masculine personal pronoun is used. ... (The masculine personal pronoun is “he”; the feminine, “she”; the neuter “it”) – “but if I depart, I will send him unto you”.<sup>21</sup>

The idea of personality dominates the grammatical construction of (Jesus’) sentences. Twenty-four times in John 14, 15 and 16 the personal pronouns *He*, *Him*, and *Whom* are applied to the Spirit. (For example, note John 15:26 and 16:13).<sup>22</sup>

### THE SPIRIT IS A SEPARATE PERSON

That the Holy Spirit is a personality distinct from the Father and the Son is evident from the fact that He is said to be the *Spirit of God*. (Matt. 3:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 3:3; 1 Peter 4:14) and the *Spirit of Christ* (Rom. 8:9; Phil. 1:19; Acts 16:7).

He proceedeth from God (John 16:26)

He is sent by the Father (John 14:26)

and by the Son John 15:26.

They could not send themselves. Jesus says He will send another Paraclete, namely, one distinct from Himself, and in Romans 8:26, the Spirit is said to make intercession; certainly the Father could not make intercession to Himself. How the idea of the Holy Spirit as a distinct personality could be more clearly set forth than is done in the Word of God is impossible for an unbiased mind to conceive.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ryrie, pages 14, 15

<sup>22</sup> Froom, page 45

<sup>23</sup> Biederwolf, pages 26, 27

### HE IS GIVEN THE NAMES OF DEITY

Too much cannot be made of the fact that He, a person separate from Father and Son, is called “Holy”. To any rational, unbiased mind, this fact is adequate proof of His deity. It speaks not only of His divine position, but also of His divine attributes.

Jesus calls Him *another* Comforter<sup>24</sup>, His own other self (alter ego). In His association with Father and Son,<sup>25</sup> the Holy Spirit fully, completely and adequately represents the godhead, as He fully self-possesses the essential attributes of deity. Else He could not adequately represent the infinity of God, nor could He adequately present our petitions to God, satisfactory to His infinite love and Justice.<sup>26</sup>

Because He Is God, the Holy Spirit can be blasphemed.<sup>27</sup> Comparison of scripture shows that the Holy Spirit at times used the name -YHWH (the tetragram יהוה, transliterated as *Yahweh* and mistakenly as *Jehovah*). This is shown by comparison of the following texts:

Isaiah 6:1 – 13 with Acts 28:25

Jeremiah 31:31 – 34 with Hebrews 10:15 – 17

Psalms 95:6 – 9 with Hebrews 3:7 – 9

Exodus 17:7 with Hebrews 3:1 – 9

Numbers 12:6 with 2 Peter 1:21

Psalms 78:17, 21 with Acts 7:51

Luke 2:26 – 29, Acts 4:23 -- 25 with Acts 1:16, 20, 2 Thess. 3:5

Comparison of scripture also shows that the Holy Spirit is called *God*. Compare:

Genesis 6:3 with 1 Peter 3:20

Acts 1:16; 28:25 with Luke 1:68 – 70 (same writer)

Matt. 9:38 with Acts 13:2 – 4 (the Holy Spirit is the *Lord of the Harvest*)

Acts 5:3 with Acts 5:4.

In 2 Sam, xii 2,3, we read, “The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me and his word was in my tongue: the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me” Therefore we conclude, the Spirit of Jehovah who spoke to David was the God and the Rock of Israel. In Acts i:16 and xxviii 25 we read of the Holy Ghost speaking by the mouth of David and Isaiah; and in Luke i 68 – 70 it is written, ‘The Lord God of Israel ... spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began! Therefore we conclude that the Holy Ghost is the Lord God of Israel.’<sup>28</sup>

Scripture also calls the Holy Spirit, *Lord*. For example, He is spoken of as “Lord” quite separately from Father and Son in the following:

May the *Lord* direct your hearts towards God’s love and the steadfastness of Christ!<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> John 14:6

<sup>25</sup> Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14

<sup>26</sup> Rom. 8:26, 27

<sup>27</sup> Matt. 12:31, 32; Acts 5:3, 4

<sup>28</sup> *The Holy Spirit* E. Bickersteth, page 58

<sup>29</sup> 2 Thess. 3:5 (NEB)

Knowing of the love developed in the recipient of the Spirit's residing presence, read:

May the *Lord* make your love mount and overflow towards one another and towards all ... May he make your hearts firm, so that you may stand before our God and Father holy and faultless when our Lord Jesus comes with all those who are his own.<sup>30</sup>

Every time the Law of Moses is read, a veil lies over the minds of the hearers. However, as Scripture says of Moses, "whenever he turns to the Lord the veil is removed." Now the Lord of whom this passage speaks is the Spirit. ... We are transfigured into his likeness, from splendour to splendour; such is the influence of the Lord who is Spirit.<sup>31</sup>

Through (Christ) we ... have access to the Father in the one Spirit. ... In (Christ) the whole building is bonded together ... in the Lord. In (Christ) you too are being built ... into a spiritual dwelling for God..<sup>32</sup>

Here the terms "Spirit", "Lord" and "God" are used interchangeably. We are the dwelling place for the Holy Spirit<sup>33</sup>, here called God.

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES**

The nature of the attributes of Deity demands that Person's eternal self-possession of these characteristics.

Taken in concert, considering all the possible combinations and permutations, these attributes would show that this Person is consubstantial (the same substance, or nature) with the other Persons who self-possess these attributes. In this instance, the other Persons are known as the Father and the Son.

For example, the attribute of omnipresence, which encompasses temporal omnipresence (beyond the confines of time) and spatial omnipresence (beyond the confines of space), by its very nature cannot be derived from another. One cannot be given this attribute without giving lie to its meaning.

A created being, such as a human, could not be endowed with omnipresence for there has been a period when he was confined, by Time and by Space. In fact, the confinement produced a period when he did not even exist, so definite is his limitation. To have omnipresence, a being must exist in every place and at every time, contemporarily. For a created being to have omnipresence would give lie to all meaning and reason, and strip away the difference between man and his Creator.

The Holy Spirit, a person, is omnipresent, possessing temporal omnipresence (*the eternal spirit*, Hebrews 9:14) and spatial omnipresence (Psalms 139:7-10).

Not forgetting the possible combinations, other attributes of deity possessed by the Holy Spirit include:

Omnipotence (Luke: 1:35; Romans. 15:19; Job33:4)

Life (Romans 8:2; *Quickener* John 6:63; 1 John 5:7, cf. John 14:16)

Goodness (Psalms 143:10; Neh. 9:20 cf. Matt. 19:17; Rev. 15:14)

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<sup>30</sup> 1 Thess. 3:12, 13 (NEB)

<sup>31</sup> 2 Cor. 3:15 – 18 (NEB)

<sup>32</sup> Eph. 2:19 – 22 (NEB)

<sup>33</sup> 1 Cor. 6:19



Truth (1 John 5:6[b] cf. John 14:6.)

Creative wisdom (Isaiah 40:13)

Holy (93 times in the New Testament; Luke 11:13; cf. Psalms 51:11; Isaiah 63:10, 11)

The descriptive adjective *holy* is used to distinguish Him from other spirits which are creatures<sup>34</sup>

### **HE PERFORMS THE WORKS OF DEITY**

Seeing ... that the Holy Spirit is the Creator of heaven and earth, that he holds the issues of life and death in his hands, that he is the Author and Finisher of spiritual life, that he inspired the Sacred Writers of the Old and New Testaments, that he anoints the Incarnate Word, and that he guides and governs the universal Church; we acknowledge that these are the operations of God alone, and that he who performs them can be none other than Jehovah.<sup>35</sup>

Thus the Spirit performs the activities of Deity in:

Creating (Job 33:4; Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; 27:3; Ps. 33:6; 104:30)

Giving life (Romans 8:2; cf. verse 11)

Regenerating (Jn. 3:5 – 8, esp. verse 6)

Resurrecting (1 Peter 3:18; cf. Acts 2:24; Romans 8:11; Hebrews 13:20; with Romans 1:4)

Authorship of prophecy (2 Peter 1:21 – Inspiration cf. 2 Tim. 3:16)

Begetting Christ (Luke 1:35)

Convincing<sup>7</sup> (John 16:8)

Comforting (John 14:16; cf. Isa. 51:12 and also 2 Cor. 1:3)

Interceding (Rom. 8:26)

Sanctifying (2 Thess. 2:13)

Source of Wisdom (1 Cor. 12:8)

Casts out devils (Matt. 12:28).

### **SUMMARY**

Let us commence to glimpse our mysterious, wonderful God as hinted at in the Triad of Praise, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.”

### **THE WATCHTOWER SOCIETY’S POSITION**

The Watchtower Society (WTS) deny both the personality and the deity of the Holy Spirit, defining the Holy Spirit as

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<sup>34</sup> John F. Walvoord, quoted by Sanders, page. 29

<sup>35</sup> Bickersteth, page 57

The invisible active force of Almighty God which moves his servants to do his will. (*What Has Religion Done for Mankind?* page 108)<sup>36</sup>

The WTS has a vested interest in saying that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force. This permits them to control the distribution of that force and to manage it. The WTS does this by limiting the activity of the force to its own leadership group. Were the Holy Spirit a person and possessed the divine attributes, who knows which people He might decide to work with? That would never suit the aims and ambitions of the leadership group, which needs absolute control. Thus it says that God's "impersonal" holy spirit energy comes through it alone.

An impersonal, invisible force, such as heat or electricity, does not possess the qualities of personality (thought, feeling, will and conscience). But the Holy Spirit does possess these. He is a person, and a divine One possessing the essential attributes of the divine nature.

The WTS endeavours to bolster its eisegesis by

- (a) Resorting to the criterion of human rationality, and
- (b) Incorporating its preconceptions into its own translation of God's Word, *the New World Translation*.

### **Human rationale**

Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) generally ask "How could a person be poured out?" or "How could a person be like a dove at one time, like a wind at another, and like fire at yet a third time?"

Sir Isaac Newton is attributed with saying, "when you can get me a worm that can comprehend man, then I shall get you a man who can comprehend God". JWs generally believe everything may be comprehended, including God.

What they are saying, in effect, is this: "We refuse to accept as Scriptural what our minds cannot grasp!"<sup>37</sup>

God is not to be limited by the confines of human capacities. He does not do those things that are only within man's capacity. Indeed there are numerous things at the finite human level that individual persons are unable to comprehend or explain – how much more must this be on the infinite plane!

We cannot grasp the fullness of the meaning of elements affecting our lives, such as Time, Space and Life, so how may we positively comprehend these elements in respect of God in Eternity, Omnipresence and Self-existence?

### **The WTS's New World Translation**

Their New World Translation of the Bible is by no means rendering of the sacred text into modern English, but is a biased translation in which many of the peculiar teachings of the Watchtower Society are smuggled into the text of the Bible itself.<sup>36</sup>

A close examination which gets beneath the outward veneer of scholarship (of the NWT) reveals a veritable shambles of bigotry, ignorance, prejudice and bias, which violates every rule of Biblical criticism and every standard of scholarly integrity.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Jehovah's Witnesses* A.A. Hoekema, page 26

<sup>37</sup> *Jehovah's Witnesses* A.A. Hoekema, page 131

<sup>38</sup> *The New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures, Our Hope*, 50:34. July, 1953, cited in *The Australasian Record* (SDA), 20.5.1974, page 7

It is a well-known fact that the WTS is often guilty of misusing the information found in scholarly works. It has quoted from the *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* by Dana and Mantey in order to support its renderings of John 1:1. Dr. Mantey was so incensed by this that he wrote an article calling it “Adulterating the Bible” (Exposing a Misleading Translation!)<sup>39</sup>

In a letter to the Watchtower dated July 11, 1974, Mantey wrote: “I herewith request you not to quote the *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* again, which you have been doing for 24 years. Also that you not quote it or me in any of your publications from this time on. Also that you publicly and immediately apologize in the Watchtower magazine.”<sup>40</sup>

The WTS’s actions in other fields have prompted respective and proper authorities to publicly denounce the WTS and defend their own works, which the WTS had misused and misrepresented. Prof. E. Theile is a notable example.<sup>41</sup>

The WTS makes a tacit admission to the poorness of its translation. Its own *Interlinear* text of the Greek Scriptures shows the contrast of the Greek text with that of its own translation. This is particularly so with key texts of John 1:1 (“a god”) and Col. 1:16 – 17 (“other”).

Further, the WTS has used several explanations for its translation of John 8:58 (“I have been”). In its 1950 edition, the WTS explained: “properly rendered in the perfect indefinite tense”. In 1963, the footnote read: “properly rendered in the perfect tense indicative”; and its 1969 Interlinear translation explained: “properly render in the perfect tense”. This is an example of prejudice, deciding the required solution and then finding a reason.

The translators of the NWT would have done well to heed Westcott, whose Greek text they profess to follow. He wrote:

*I am* – the phrase marks a timeless existence. In this connexion, “I was” would have expressed simple priority. Thus there is in the phrase the contrast between the created and the uncreated, the temporal and the eternal.

Also, the first two editions of the NWT did not use brackets to set off “other” from the rest of the text of Colossians 1:16 – 17. (Not that we agree with the word *other* appearing anywhere in that passage).

These are not example of “improving” the translation but of maintaining errors in the text of God’s Word in the face of overwhelming evidence and pressure.

### ***The NWT and the Holy Spirit: capitalisation***

The WTS does not explain why it uses capitals for names and titles of the first two Persons of the Godhead (“God, Lord Jehovah, Rock, King, Shepherd, and so on”<sup>42</sup>). We may readily assume they indicate that the designated one is a person.

It is highly significant that the word spirit, when used to designate the Holy Spirit, is never capitalized In the New World Translation.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *The New World Translation of the Bible* Max Hatton, *The Australasian Record*, (SDA), 20.5.1974, page 7

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in the pamphlet: *Wake Up!* January 25, 1975 and in the booklet *The Scholastic Dishonesty of the Watchtower* Buskirk, CARIS

<sup>41</sup> See photocopy of his letter in *Our Friends: The Jehovah’s Witnesses* E.B. Price. See also *The Jehovah’s Witnesses and Prophetic Speculation* Dr. E.C. Gruss, pages 37, 38

<sup>42</sup> *Jehovah’s Witnesses* A.A. Hoekema, page 27

How difficult it is for the reader to recognise the personality of the Holy Spirit by such means is demonstrated by 1 Corinthians 12:3: “nobody can say: ‘Jesus is Lord!’ except by holy spirit”. See also Matthew 28;19; 2Corinthians 13:14; Isaiah 63:10; John 14:26; Acts 8:29.

One cannot appeal to the Greek text to settle the question ... since in the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament all the letters of every word were capitals. The capitalization of words in a translation, therefore, reflects the Judgment of the translator or editor.<sup>43</sup>

### ***The NWT and The Holy Spirit: biased renderings***

We have already noted in this Chapter how New Testament writers used grammatical techniques to indicate the personality of the Holy Spirit. In its NWT, the WTS not only ignores these indicators, but it intrudes its own teachings into the text of the Word of God.

For example, the NWT rendition of John 14:26 reads: “but the helper, the holy spirit which the Father will send”. The balance of the text shows the personality of the Holy Spirit by the use of the masculine singular demonstrative pronoun, *ekeinos*, “that one” or “that person” and by attributing the function of teaching, necessitating a mind, will, thought and conscience, hence personality.

Though there is a neuter singular form of this pronoun, *ekeino*, it is not the neuter form which is used here. The NWT correctly recognises that a masculine or feminine pronoun may refer to a neuter noun, as in Matt. 14:11.<sup>44</sup>

By the use of “which” in this text instead of “whom”, the NWT conveys to the unsuspecting reader that the “holy spirit” here spoken of is not a person.

In modern English ... *which* may not be used to refer to persons; hence recent versions have substituted *who* for *which* in Matt. 6:9.<sup>45</sup>

The Greek word rendered by the NWT as “which” is “*ho*”; which is the neuter singular form of the relative pronoun. The reason for this, however; is that the antecedent of the relative is *pneuma* (spirit), which is a neuter noun in Greek.<sup>43</sup>

The WTS’s mistranslation result from their “preconceived conception of the impersonality of the Holy Spirit”<sup>46</sup>, not from any grammatical basis.

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<sup>43</sup> *Jehovah’s Witnesses* A.A. Hoekema, footnote, page 27

<sup>44</sup> *Jehovah’s Witnesses* A.A. Hoekema, page 29

<sup>45</sup> *Jehovah’s Witnesses* A.A. Hoekema, page 28

<sup>46</sup> *Jehovah’s Witnesses* A.A. Hoekema, page 29 footnote

## 6. REFUTING THE WTS'S CHRISTOLOGY

### SEMI-ARIAN ATTITUDES

Of the numerous heresies besetting the forming church, Arianism most closely resembles the false Christology of the WTS. Both teach that the Son is not equal to the Father, thus they do not have identical natures (that is, they are not *consubstantial*). They also teach that the Son was created by the Father.

The church replied to Arius with the Nicene Creed:

We believe ... in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father ... begotten not made, of one substance with the Father. ...

As for those who say, there was when He was not, and, before being born He was not, and that He came into existence out of nothing, or who assert that the Son of God is from a different ... substance, or is created, or is subject to alteration or change – these the Catholic (universal) Church anathematizes.<sup>1</sup>

The similarity between Arius and the WTS is also shown by their appeals to the same passages of Scripture, such as Proverbs 8:22; Col. 1:15; John 14:28; Mark 13:32 and so on.

The champion of truth against Arius was Athanasius (295 – 373 CE), and in his writings<sup>2</sup> one finds telling arguments against the WTS's heresy. To Athanasius, the Arians were in error as much as the Jews, as each cries "blasphemy" to His claims of Deity. Arianism was Judaism cloaked with the name of Christianity.

We should note, however, that Arius would consider the WTS heretical, for their deviation is even greater than his. The WTS teaches that upon His incarnation, Jesus ceased His pre-existent state and became merely a man, whereas Arius taught that Jesus' continued as the Logos while on earth. Further, Arius did not deny the personality of the Holy Spirit, although he denied His deity.

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<sup>1</sup> *Early Christian Doctrines* J.N.D. Kelly (London: Adam & Chas. Black 1958) page 232

<sup>2</sup> *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* Volume iv, Second Series, on the Incarnation of the Word, and Four Discourses Against the Arians. (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1953).

## A BRIEF REVIEW

Before entering into our refutation of the WTS's Christology, we should recall the salient points.

- a. Personality      This is "the possession of four component parts – thought, feeling, will, and conscience<sup>3</sup>. These do not require a bodily manifestation.
- b. Nature            This is impersonal, and consists of a matrix of attributes, or characteristics. Typical natures include divine, angelic, human, and animal. Sin is a cancerous growth, not an attribute of human nature.
- c. Attribute        This is "an ESSENTIAL characteristic, feature or quality of a thing"<sup>4</sup>
- d. God                God is a person with the attributes of the divine nature. We previously listed the attributes of the divine nature, and let us not overlook the inter-relationship between them.  
  
"For example, ... God is omnipotent ... omnipresent and eternal. He is all-powerful everywhere, ... hence He has omnipresent omnipotence. And He has been is and will ever be all-powerful, ... hence God has eternal omnipotence. ...  
  
"We could also apply in turn to His omnipotence each of the other attributes and say that God is ... omniscient omnipotence; ... infinite omnipotence; deathless omnipotence; unchangeable omnipotence; holy omnipotence; loving omnipotence, and wise omnipotence.  
  
"Similarly we could say He is omnipotent, infinite, deathless, unchangeable loving OMNISCIENCE, and so on. ...  
  
"He is loving wisdom, and wise love; holy love and loving holiness; wise holiness and holy wisdom"<sup>5</sup>  
  
Oh Lord my God, how Great Thou art!

## THE WTS'S MISCONCEPTIONS

In any discussion or disagreement, there must be a common agreed ground of reference. There is no point in discussing variants in Christian theology, philosophy, ethics, and so on, unless both parties agree on the Bible as their common basis.

Having done this, we must then agree upon the meanings (definitions) accorded to the topics being referred to. For example, the significance of Christ's position at "the right hand of God" cannot be determined unless the significance of the expression has been previously proven.

Also, we must demand that all parties use terminology correctly. A term may be used only as far as the definition allows, which produces correctness and hence consistency.

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<sup>3</sup> *The Person of Christ* Volume 1, H. Brash Bonsall, page 74

<sup>4</sup> *The Person of Christ* Volume 1, H. Brash Bonsall, page 75

<sup>5</sup> *The Person of Christ* Volume 2, H. Brash Bonsall, page 120

In this chapter we briefly examine some of the WTS's incorrect and inconsistent definitions.

Our reference is the WTS's publication, *Aid to Bible Understanding* (1969, 1971), abbreviated "Aid", and the topics are:-

God (Aid, pages 665 – 666)

Son (pages 917 -- 920, 1525)

Father

Firstborn (pages 584 – 585, 918, 1530)

Monogenes (pages 918, 1254, 1530)

YHWH (pages 882 – 894)

Only after considering the WTS's misconceptions may we deal with its eisegetical errors.

### **THE WTS'S MISCONCEPTION: GOD**

Constrained by the rationale of finite comprehensibility, the WTS's "God" is fashioned in the image of man, and is thus no less an idol than the wooden and stone images of the heathen.

"To what will ye liken God?" thunders scripture; certainly not to concepts such as a triangle, family, corporation, and so on. Not by human ideas determined by "surely", "reasonably", and the like, nor by the experiential limitations finite beings impose upon the utterances of God.

Although it gives lip service to the sentiments we have just expressed, the WTS does not apply its mouthings. The WTS rightfully says:

The True God is infinite and beyond the mind of man fully to fathom, The creature could never hope to ... understand all the workings of His mind.<sup>6</sup>

Because it does not rightfully understand the meaning of the divine nature, and because it endeavours to impose the limitations of human concepts on God, the WTS is inconsistent in its handling of this subject, and as a consequence fails to recognise Jesus' just claim to being God in the highest.

The WTS's inconsistencies prove its failure to grasp the subject fully. As an example, in the same context as the above statement, we read:

Jehovah God is described in the Bible as "Living from time indefinite to time indefinite ... the King of eternity"

From this we must conclude, quite correctly, that God is outside of time, inhabiting eternity. This is omnipresence, temporal omnipresence. God is ever-present in every age. Yet, still in the context of these two statements., we read a third:

The true God is not omnipresent.

Yet three sentences further on we discover that God is omnipotent omnipresence and omniscient omnipresence:

(God's) power and knowledge extend everywhere, reaching every part of the universe.

The WTS's confusion results from its failure to realise its own words:

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<sup>6</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* WTBTS, page 665

The true God is spirit, not flesh, though he sometimes likens his attributes of sight, power and so forth, to human faculties. Thus he speaks figuratively of his "arm", his "eyes", and "ears".

In other words, God speaks of Himself to us in anthropomorphic terms.

Not understanding the subject of which it makes such grand assertions, the WTS falls into inconsistencies. The reason that "God is not omnipresent", we are informed, is because "(God) is spoken of as having a location. His throne is in heaven". Thus while saying, "God is spirit, not flesh" and uses anthropomorphic language, the WTS fails to realise that God's throne (not a seat but symbolizing the source, extent, and focus of authority) is an anthropomorphic expression, not to be limited by the extent of human rationale. (See "Aid" on "Throne", page 1596).

Little wonder the WTS fails to recognise Jesus' claim to Deity. The WTS does not understand the significance or meaning of the term, God.

For example, the WTS holds that:

Jesus' existence as a spirit creature began thousands of millions of years prior to the creation of the first human ... (and) was used by his Father in the creation of all other things.<sup>7</sup>

Let us realise that space and time are as much part of God's Creation as is the tree, the bird, and, and the sun.

Thus we may recognise the obvious self-contradictions presented by the WTS, for how could Jesus be created at a point in time if He Himself did not create time until the Father had brought Him forth?!

The WTS demands that all other things were brought forth in time and in space, entities not yet created by Him!

No wonder, with such confusing ideas, the WTS is unable to recognise the true worth of Jesus, the True God, our Great God and Saviour.

The WTS lists God's "primary attributes" as:

Love, wisdom, justice and power ... order and peace. He is completely holy, clean and pure, happy and merciful, Many other qualities of his personality (sic, surely "nature" is meant) are described in the Scriptures".<sup>8</sup>

One would like to know in which of these attributes of Deity is Jesus lacking? If He possesses all of these He has the attributes of God's nature and is thus "consubstantial" with the Father.

The WTS correctly divorces God's position or authority from the attributes of His nature, discussing those aspects under separate headings.<sup>8</sup> Authority and position are not attributes of nature.

(On the human plane) wealth, jewellery or a fur coat, or a white or black skin is not an attribute of man. He would still be a man even without these things, which are therefore not essential attributes. Memory, imagination, will, affection, are essential attributes; without any of these a person would not be a normal man.<sup>9</sup>

Failing to recognise these fundamental facts, the WTS is unable to understand that Jesus always possessed inately the very nature of divinity, God, yet did not prize the possession of

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<sup>7</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* WTBTS, page 918

<sup>8</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* WTBTS, page 665

<sup>9</sup> *The Person of Christ* Volume 2, H. Brash Bonsall, page 118



His position above the role required to vindicate God's name, and willingly added to His divine nature the attributes of the human stepping down from His position of authority, that through His poverty we might become rich.

Being very God, who does not change, Jesus remained God when He relinquished the associated authority (else He was not God initially), taking a different role in order to fulfil the Plan of Salvation.

Not only is the WTS's "God" no less an idol than the heathen's, being fashioned after man's imaginings. It is polytheistic, in distinct contrast to the Scriptural teaching of the one True Godhead, and in distinct contrast to its claims to being monotheistic. This we confirm in our next chapter when we discuss the WTS's exegesis of 1 Cor. 8:4 – 6.

### **THE WTS'S MISCONCEPTION: SON**

Scripture gives strong evidence that Jesus' appellations *Son of God* and *Son of Man* speak of the unique intimacy between Himself and the Father. The title "Son" speaks at one and the same time of identical nature and of Jesus' submissive role. It shows there is no contradiction in having the essential attributes of the divine nature and taking a subjective position for the vindication of that nature.

The WTSy recognises that "Son" has several meanings in Scripture.

"Son" ... (is) often used in a sense broader than merely to designate one's immediate male offspring. "Son" may mean adopted son or son of a foster father, a descendant (grandson, great-grandson, and so forth), son-in-law.<sup>10</sup>

Additionally; the word "sons" frequently serves a descriptive purpose, as Orientals; "anointed ones"; ... "sons of the prophets" ... returned exiles; good-for nothing men, scoundrels. Those who pursue a certain course of conduct, or who manifest a certain characteristic, are designated by such expressions as "sons of the Most High", "sons of light and sons of day", "sons of the Kingdom", "sons of the wicked one", "sons of the Devil", "sons of disobedience".<sup>11</sup>

Thus we may ask why are Jesus' Sonship titles not consistently so interpreted, namely that *Son of God*, *Son of Man* are descriptive titles faintly illustrating the unique oneness and intimacy He enjoys with the Father?

One answer is because the WTS arbitrarily selects only one meaning for Father to describe Jesus's relationship, and because of its misconceptions related to the expressions *Firstborn* and *Monogenes* (only-begotten).

### **THE WTS'S MISCONCEPTION: FATHER**

The WTS recognises that in biblical Hebrew and Greek, "father" is used in various senses<sup>12</sup>. Father commonly means "begetter".

"Father" also means "the head of a household, ... a founder of a nation, ... a protector, ... and as a term of respect".<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* WTBS, page 1525

<sup>11</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* WTBS, page 1526

<sup>12</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* WTBS, page 569

Jesus, in His submissive role, thus may address the First Person as "Father" because of His Headship, yet not infer either inferiority in nature or that Jesus owed any origin to Him.

However, because of its prejudicial outlook (that is, pre-judged or decided before investigating), the WTS arbitrarily selects only one meaning for Father, and of course it is taken to mean "Life-giver"<sup>13</sup>.

The WTS endeavours to corroborate its stand from John 6:57 "I live because of the Father" (NWT), with the comment:

This meant that (Jesus') life resulted from or was caused by his Father, even as the gaining of life by dying men would result from their faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice.<sup>13</sup>

But these "dying men" already existed before they "gained life"! So the example collapses as quickly as a burst balloon. Jesus, also, was not a "dying" man, being the self-possessor of Eternal Life, as the context explicitly states and demands.

John 6:57 does not indicate any primary cause of Jesus' existence, but refers to the eternally continuous relationship between Himself and the Father. Nor is it faith alone in Jesus' ransom that saves, else faith is our saviour. Rather, life comes from the dynamic, living, vibrant, personal relationship with One Who IS Life. This is "eating His flesh and drinking His blood". The text does not indicate any origin for Jesus' life, but rather relates to the Father as the centre and sustenance of His human existence, for while on earth He was completely dependent upon the Father (see verse 11). Likewise, Jesus' followers depend for their sustenance not upon knowledge or doctrine, but upon a living faith in and relationship with Jesus, the Life, eternal life, the self-existent God.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life. ... My flesh is the real food, my blood is the real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him. The living Father sent me, and because of him I live also. IN THE SAME WAY, whoever eats me will live because of me".<sup>14</sup>

As the Jews misunderstood Jesus, as did the disciples, so too does the WTS. Instead of speaking of origin of life, Jesus was speaking of its sustenance, thus presupposing its prior existence. In His human state, Jesus was as dependent upon the Father for sustenance as we are dependent upon Jesus.

In fact, those references to the First Person as "Father" by Jesus Invariably refer to Protection and Provision, not to Procreation; they refer to equality of nature, as a Father begets identical nature, not to inferiority of nature, as produced by a creator, such as a sculptor, who produces a less-than-human nature in an object having only the external appearance of a real person.

"Father" means "same nature":

By calling God his own Father, (Jesus) claimed equality with God.<sup>15</sup>

"Father" means "dependence for provision for all things":

The Son can do nothing by himself, he does only what he is doing what the Father does, the Son does.<sup>16</sup>

I must be about my Father's business.

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<sup>13</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* WTBT, page 918

<sup>14</sup> John 6:54 – 57 (TEV) emphasis supplied

<sup>15</sup> John 5:18 (NEB)

<sup>16</sup> John 5:19 (NEB)

As Jesus grew up he advanced in wisdom and in favour with God and men.<sup>17</sup>

Father, I thank thee: thou hast heard me. I knew already that thou always hearest me.<sup>18</sup>

I love the Father, and do exactly as He commands. ... I am the real vine and my Father is the gardener.<sup>19</sup>

“Father” never means “source of existence”.

In John 6, Jesus was speaking parabolically, and because of this the Jews – and the WTS – misunderstood His words. As a result of His infinite humiliation, when He “made himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave”<sup>20</sup>. Jesus depended upon the father for continued power, but never is *Father* used to indicate primordial source of existence.

Speaking plainly, without figures<sup>21</sup>, Jesus described His condescension, using the term *Father* as the Source of His actions, not as any Source of existence:

I came from the Father and have come into the world. Now I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.<sup>22</sup>

His relationship to the first person is so unique (see “Monogenes” also) that even when Jesus speaks of Him as “God” He separates Himself from His followers:

I am going to your God and to my God.<sup>23</sup> (Not to “our” God.)

### **THE WTS'S MISCONCEPTION: FIRSTBORN**

“Firstborn” is a single word. It is not “First born”. It is a title denoting office or position, and does not describe birth, or that the person is the first one so produced.

The “Emphatic Diaglott” by Benjamin Wilson, and published by the WTS says:

“Firstborn” ... may mean “chief of the whole creation”. Col. 1:15<sup>24</sup>

Col. 1:15 – 16 reads:

(Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation because by means of him all things were created in the heavens and upon the earth. (NWT)

Jesus **thus** has the title “Firstborn” because He is the Source of existence for the visible and the invisible universe, physical and spiritual, visible and invisible.

We removed the word “other” from the WTS's rendering of Col. 1:15-16 as there is no warrant for it. To denigrate Jesus, the WTS has to tamper with the Word of God.

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<sup>17</sup> Luke 2:52 (NEB)

<sup>18</sup> John 11:41 (NEB)

<sup>19</sup> John 14:31 – 15:1 (NEB)

<sup>20</sup> Philippians 2:7 (NEB)

<sup>21</sup> John 16:25, 29

<sup>22</sup> John 16:28 (NEB)

<sup>23</sup> John 20:17

<sup>24</sup> Page 889 (1942 edition)

“Firstborn” is not a description of any origin of Jesus but refers to His originating, of His bringing the universe into existence. Thus He is the Chief of the Universe, the Firstborn. One translation says:

(Jesus) is the image of the invisible God; his is the primacy over all created things” (NEB).

Just as in the Jewish barley harvest there were afterfruits to be reaped, so too there must be afterfruits in the resurrection of the dead. But since Jesus Christ ranks first, Paul called him “the firstborn from the dead, that he might become the one who is first in all things.”—Col. 1:18.<sup>25</sup>

Jesus, in creating all things is responsible for the existence of time and space, thus could not have been brought forth at a point in time, and is therefore as eternal as the Father. Because *Firstborn* denotes RANK, the Greek word is ‘*prototokos*’ (first-born), not ‘*prototiskos*’ (first-created).

Romans 8:29 also shows that Firstborn is a title of rank, not a description of a birth or origin for Jesus:

Those whom he gave his first recognition he also foreordained to be patterned after the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers. (NWT)

### THE WTS'S MISCONCEPTION: MONOGENES

Only the apostle John uses “monogenes” of Christ. In these, five instances – 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9 – many translations render “only begotten”. Because of its misconception, the WTS teaches that “monogenes” means that Jesus, in order to become the pre-existent Logos, had a birth.

#### Grammatical meaning of “Monogenes”

(*Monogenes* comes) from two (Greek) words meaning “only” and “kind”, and (is) thus properly translated “unique”, “only”, “only one of a kind”<sup>26</sup>

The WTS concurs:

The individual components (of the word “monogenes”) do not include the verbal sense of being born.<sup>27</sup>

It tries to bolster its argument by reasoning that it “does embrace the idea of descent or birth.” That “descent” is meant but not birth may be seen from the WTS’s admission:

The latter portion of the word (genes) does not come from gennao (“to beget”) but from genos (“kind”), hence *monogenes* refers to “the only one of a class or kind.” ... Genos means “stock; kin; direct descent; offspring; race.”<sup>27</sup>

A Greek lexicon, an authoritative source, says:

(Monogenes:) The only member of a kin, or kind; hence generally only, single.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *The Watchtower*, June 15 1979 page 22 par. 3 “The Dead in Christ Shall Rise First”

<sup>26</sup> *SDA Bible Commentary* Volume 5, page 902, on John 1:14

<sup>27</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* WTBT, page 1530

<sup>28</sup> *Greek-English Lexicon* Volume 2, Liddell and Scott, page 1144

The WTS reads its preconceived ideas into the meanings of *genos*, instead of allowing the word to speak to it. The WTS is unfortunate when it quotes the Latin Vulgate:

(Jerome) renders *monogenes* as *unigenitus*, meaning “only begotten” or “only”.

As another says:

*Monogenes* has been translated *unigenitus* in ecclesiastical writings, a translation that is incorrect.<sup>29</sup>

The correct Latin word for *monogenes* is thus “unicus”, not “unigenitus” as used by Jerome (and referred to by the WTS).

(*Monogenes*) is literally “one of a kind”, “only”, “unique” (*unicus*).<sup>30</sup>

Thus *monogenes* is “unicus”, meaning “kind”, but not “unigenitus”, “only-begotten”.

Some of the (Old Latin) texts render *monogenes* here by *unicus*, which is the original meaning, rather than by *unigenitus*, which became the accepted Latin rendering so soon as controversies arose about the Person and Nature of Christ.<sup>31</sup>

Significantly, it was Arius (328 CE) and Eusebius of Caesaria, (325 CE), a semi-Arian who first described Jesus as *gegenneemenon*, “begotten”.

Arius does not use *monogenes* or *ginomai*; but the word *gennaō*, which is correctly translated “begotten” ... which word is not used in the Bible of Christ for any eternal generation.<sup>32</sup>

To give the appearance that authorities support its position, the WTS alludes on page 1530 of “Aid” to two Greek-English lexicons and quotes from a theological dictionary. These state that *monogenes* includes the meaning “only begotten”. But the WTS fails to explain what meanings these authorities give to that term.

This is clearly illustrated by reference to *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* edited by G. Kittel (Vol. iv), pages 737 – 741 (1967), from which the WTS quotes a few sentences. The article, written by F. Buschel, first considers the usage of *monogenes* outside the New Testament and then its usage within the New Testament. Those sentences quoted by the WTS from the former section do not fully convey the intent of the original article. We read, also in part because of space limitations,

In compounds like *diogenes*, ... (etc.) the *genes* suggests derivation rather than birth. Nouns as the first part of the compound give the source, e.g., from Zeus, the earth. Adverbs describe the nature of the derivation, e.g., noble or common. ... The *mono* does not denote the source but the nature of derivation. Hence *monogenes* means “of sole descent”, i.e., without brothers or sisters. This gives us the sense of only-begotten. ... The word can also be used more generally without ref. to derivation in the sense of “unique”, “unparalleled”, “incomparable”.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Problems in Bible Translation* SDA, page 199

<sup>30</sup> *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, Moulton and Milligan, pages 416, 417

<sup>31</sup> *The Gospel According to St. John* Volume 1, International Critical Commentary, J.H. Bernard, page 23

<sup>32</sup> *Problems in Bible Translation* SDA, pages 201, 202

<sup>33</sup> *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* edited by G. Kittel (Vol. iv), pages 737, 738

The writer is thus saying that *only-begotten* is to be understood as meaning “of sole descent”, describing the derivation and its nature, but not birth.

Through its highly selective quotation, the WTS has endeavoured to misrepresent the author's intent. We should note also the alternate usage of monogenes, as indicated by the above quote.

In the latter section of the article, dealing on the use of monogenes in the New Testament, the writer of the article is represented as supporting the WTS's point, but he does not. The WTS uses statements out of context to try and show that the article suggests monogenes indicates Jesus had an origin or birth as a spirit son of Jehovah. But the author does not use monogenes that way. For example, he says:

John uses monogenes to describe the relation of Jesus to God. ... John emphasises more strongly the distinction between Jesus and believers and the uniqueness of Jesus in His divine sonship. ... Monogenes is thus a predicate of majesty. ... As the only-begotten Son Jesus is in the closest intimacy with God. There is no other with whom God can have similar fellowship. He shares everything with this Son. ... (Jesus) knows God, not just from hearsay, but from incomparably close intercourse with Him. ... It is the relation of the only-begotten to the Father. ... Monogenes denotes the origin of Jesus. He is monogenes as the only-begotten. ...

This is personal fellowship with God, divine sonship. ...

Because He alone was God's Son before the foundation of the world, because the whole love of the Father is for Him alone, because He alone is one with God, because the title God may be ascribed to Him alone, He is the only-begotten Son of God.<sup>34</sup>

In summary, monogenes denotes Jesus' unluckiness and that the centre or origin of His behaviour lay in His intimate personal knowledge of God.

It is a pity that the WTS does-not present authorities that deny monogenes to mean only-begotten and also fails to explain the meanings attended to “only-begotten” when authorities do use this term.

This is a typical example of highly selective quotations from a selected source. When an authority disagrees with the WTS's ideas, it is ridiculed out of hand; but the WTS is quick to use misuse these same authorities when it suits -them.

We close this section on the grammatical aspects of monogenes with a quotation from an eminent source, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by W E Vine:

The word ‘begotten’ does not imply a beginning of (Jesus’) Sonship. It suggests relationship indeed, but must be distinguished from generation as applied to man.

We can only rightly understand the term “the only begotten” when used of the Son, in the sense of unoriginated relationship. “The begetting is not an event of time, however remote, but a fact irrespective of time. The Christ did not become, but necessarily and eternally is the Son. He, a Person, possesses every attribute of pure Godhead. This necessitates eternity, absolute being; in this respect He is not ‘after’ the Father (Moule)”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* edited by G. Kittel (Vol. iv), pages 739 – 741

<sup>35</sup> *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by W E Vine, article “Only Begotten”, page 140

### ***Exegesis of Monogenes***

The use of monogenes in the LXX (the Greek version of the OT, used by Jesus and His followers, including writers of the NT) and the use of monogenes in the NT cast light on John's application to Jesus.

However, as Jesus' role of monogenes is not perfectly comparable on the finite plane, our final appeal must be to those texts of John.

In the OT, monogenes is translated from the Hebrew, *yachid*. In turn, monogenes is rendered several ways in English, including:

“only one”, Gen. 22:2, 12

“only son”, Jer. 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zech 12:10

“only beloved”, Prov. 4:3. ...

“darling”, Psa. 22:20; 35:17

“desolate”, Psa. 25:16

“solitary”, Psa. 68:6.<sup>36</sup>

(In several instances), the LXX renders *yachid* by *agapetos*, which brings to mind *o' Hios mov o agapetos* of Mk. 1:11, Mt. 3:17, Lk. 3:17, Lk. 3:22, Mk. 9:7, “this is My Son, the Beloved”, although monogenes and *agapetos* are not absolutely identical in meaning.<sup>37</sup>

There are four texts in the NT where monogenes does not refer to Christ, Lk. 7:12, 8:42; 9:38; Heb. 11:17.

In Luke 7:11 – 18 we have the story of the death of the son of the widow of Nain. ... He is described as monogenes, which may be translated “only”, “precious”, “dear”, “beloved”, but as Moulton and Milligan say, “not ‘only begotten’”.

In Luke 8:42 ... the daughter of Jairus (is) described as an ‘only daughter’ ... The father may have had several sons, but only one daughter ... but we cannot say the daughter was an only-begotten child. A similar usage is in Luke 9:38. ...

The final use of this word is in Hebrews 11:17. ... But Isaac was not an only-begotten son; neither was he the eldest child of Abraham. Here as in Luke 7:1.2; 8:42; and 9:38, the translation should be “only”, “sole”, “precious”, “dear”. Similarly in respect to the five texts in John's writings of Christ, the translation should be one of the following: “unique”, “precious”, “only”, “sole”, “the only one of a kind”, but not “only begotten”.<sup>38</sup>

Every one of John's references to Jesus as *monogenes* refers to the incalculable enormity of the Supreme Gift.

The value and the greatness of the gift lay in the Sonship of Him who was given. ... In John 3:18 the phrase “the Name of the Only Begotten Son of God” lays stress upon the full revelation of God's character and will, His

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<sup>36</sup> *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* W E Vine, article “Only Begotten”, page 140

<sup>37</sup> *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* edited by G. Kittel (Vol. iv), page 739

<sup>38</sup> *Problems in Bible Translation* SDA, page 198

love and grace, as conveyed in the Name of One who, being in a unique relationship to Him was provided by Him as the object of faith.<sup>39</sup>

What is meant (by monogenes) is plainest in John 3:16 and 1 John 4:9. Because Jesus is the only Son of God, His sending into the world is the supreme proof of God's love for the world. On the other side, it is only as the only-begotten Son of God that Jesus can mediate life and salvation from perdition. ... The fact that He is the only begotten Son means also that men are obligated to believe in Him, and that they come under judgment, indeed, have done so already, if they withhold faith from Him. (John 3:18).<sup>40</sup>

This last quote – on the meaning of monogenes as revealed by exegesis of John's writings – and the following one are from that source which the WTS quotes to try and arrive at an absolutely different meaning for monogenes.

Similarly in John 1:14 '*doxan os monogenous para patros*', (Jesus) glory is not just compared with that of an only child; it is described as that of the only-begotten Son. ... The total usage of monogenes is very emphatically against taking *os monogenous* as a mere comparison.

(footnote): *os* can ... introduce a said fact of Matt. 14:5; *os propheten*, which does not mean "like a prophet" (which he is not), but "as one of the prophets" (because he is one), Romans 1:21: ... not "They have not worshipped him as a god", but "They have not worshipped him as the God he is". ... It makes no difference that the *os monogenous* in John 1:14 has no article. In all the verses in which *os* introduces a fact the noun is without article, cf. esp. Heb. 3:6 *os hios*, "as the Son he is".<sup>41</sup>

Thus Jesus is the unique glorious exponent of God's name, the Supreme Gift for the salvation of mankind, the only true Representative of God's infinite empathy. This is what exegesis of John's references to Christ as monogenes reveals.

The WTS ignores what the authorities they quote are saying. Monogenes, the authorities tell them, refers not only to the unique intimacy with the Father that Jesus enjoys, but also describes the pricelessness of the Gift.

(Thus monogenes means) life is given only in (Jesus), John 5:6 ... (and) is thus a predicate of majesty.<sup>39</sup>

Monogenes refers to Jesus' role in saving men, and does not require, nor even infer, origin through any birth or creation. The WTS reasons:

Jesus is not merely God's unique or incomparable Son, but also his "only begotten Son".<sup>42</sup>

This, as we have seen, is gross mishandling of terms. Their reason for so doing is obvious from the balance of the WTS's sentence, which reads:

hence descended from God in the sense of being produced by God.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* W E Vine, article "Only Begotten", pages 140 – 141

<sup>40</sup> *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* edited by G. Kittel (Vol. iv), page 740

<sup>41</sup> *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* edited by G. Kittel (Vol. iv), Kittel, pages 740 – 741. See also on 'pros' in *Problems in Bible Translation*.

<sup>42</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* WTBTS, page 1530



Where did the WTS gain this idea? Certainly not from the grammar of monogenes; not from the exegetes it quotes (misquotes?), not from any exegesis of non-Johannine usage of monogenes, nor from any contextual exegesis of John.

What usage of monogenes demands that the "sense" in which descent is to be understood as "being produced by God."? Are other "senses" possible, as the WTS's statement strongly infers? If so, why are they excluded, and on what grounds is this one accepted?

The answer to these questions lies in the preconceived misconceptions given by the WTS to "Son", "Father", "Firstborn", and also to Revelation 3:14, "the beginning of the creation of God". We have discussed the first three topics, and shall cover the fourth in our examination of some of the WTS's exegeses.

### ***The effects on the WTS's reasoning***

#### **John 1:1**

The WTS's reasoning is faulty. For example, consider the following on John 1:1.

The word "beginning" in John 1:1 cannot refer to the "beginning" of God the Creator, for he is eternal, "having no beginning."

This is correct. But faulty conclusions are arrived at when faulty reasoning is employed:

("Beginning") must therefore refer to the beginning of creation.

'Arche' (beginning) is inarticulate, describing a quality of God, His eternity, and not an event. But even if we were to allow "beginning" to refer to "the beginning of creation", we find that at that point "the Word *was*". He did not become, or commence existence at that point; no, He already "was", He was already existing.

Notice also the WTS's use of "must therefore", as if no alternative exists. Phrases like this one are typical when trying to steer a person's reasoning.

It must therefore refer to the beginning of creation, when the Word was brought forth by God as his firstborn Son.<sup>42</sup>

Were it not for the fact that the WTS does not realise their statement means that Jesus was "brought forth" before the creation of Time, and that as "firstborn" is a title of rank, we would conclude that this is a paraphrase of Origen and his doctrine of "eternal generation".

This is typical of the devious routes used by the WTS to arrive at the conclusion it wanted to arrive at. As one writer has so correctly commented, the WTS tries to force its own ideas onto Scripture, rather, than letting Scripture speak to it.

### **THE WTS'S MISCONCEPTION: YHWH (YAHWE, YAHWEH, JEHOVAH)**

The WTS uses YHWH as a Given Name for the Father in the same way as Jack or Mary identifies human individuals. Because of the inherent virtues proclaimed by the meanings of YHWH, this concept is correct insofar as it identifies the unique qualities of God, but it is not correct when it is understood to identify the Father from the Son.

As we note elsewhere, and as the WTS freely agrees, the Hebraic and Greek concepts of "Name" mean far more than identification, as it does today.<sup>43</sup>

Thus the infinite God, to teach that particular facet of His Infinite Nature that is pertinent to a particular incident, uses one of several names, either individually or in combination, depending upon the dominant attribute of His nature that is particularly relevant. These sentiments are agreed to by the WTS, for in commenting on Exodus 3:14 it states:

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<sup>43</sup> *Aid to Bible Understanding* WTBTS, page 888

This meant no change in God's name but only an additional insight into God's personality (sic).<sup>43</sup>

Exodus 6:2, 3, the WTS comments:

God meant that he manifested himself to (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) in the capacity of Jehovah only in a limited way.<sup>43</sup>

However, the WTS is begging the question when it states that Jesus has no right to personal use of the tetragram, YHWH. As shown in the chapter "Jesus God", Jesus is in no way lesser in nature than the First Person of the Godhead, thus He has every right to personal use of the tetragram. And we show in our chapter, "Jehovah" that in fact Scripture very explicitly teaches that at times Jehovah who is speaking in the Old Testament is none other than the Jesus of the New.

The reader interested in the WTS's tampering of the New Testament by its substitution of "Jehovah" for "Lord" is referred to other sources, such as "The Books and The Parchments" by F.F. Bruce<sup>44</sup>, as this issue does not bear directly on our concern with the WTS's misconceptions.

Also, the space consumed would far outweigh any usefulness, especially in view of its excellent coverage in the above reference. However, it is interesting to note the WTS's inconsistency in not rendering "Jehovah" for "Lord" in "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord."<sup>45</sup> Imagine the effect if the WTS had been consistent! --- "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Jehovah"!

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<sup>44</sup> Publisher: Pickering and Inglis Ltd., London. Especially (1971 paperback edition) pages 37, 114ff (incl 119), 125, 146ff (especially page 159), 152, 154, 178, 189. Note also the comments on John 1:1 on his page 247

<sup>45</sup> Phil. 2:10 – 11

# 7. REFUTING THE WTS's EISEGESIS

## JOHN 1:1

The major comment and exegesis on this text is provided in the chapter, "Jesus God".

In the NWT, the WTS opens John's gospel with: "Originally the Word was", with a footnote alternative, "In (At) a beginning".

By using here the indefinite article 'a' the translators have overlooked the well-known fact that in Greek grammar nouns may be definite ... whether or not the Greek definite article is present. A prepositional phrase, for example, where the definite article is not expressed, can be quite definite in Greek, as it is in fact in John 1:1.

(Footnote) Thus, for example, in Heb. 10:31 *eis cheiras Theou xontos* is properly rendered (even by the New World Translation) with the definite article expressed twice, "into the hands of the living God"<sup>1</sup>

Most notable, however, is the WTS's rendering, "and the Word was a god".

### **Colwell's Rule**

This rule of Greek grammar states,

A definite predicate nominative has the article when it follows the verb; it does not have the article when it precedes the verb. ... The opening verse of John's Gospel contains one of the many passages where this rule suggests the translation of a predicate as a definite noun. *Kai Theos han Lo Logos* looks much more like "And the Word was God" than "And the Word was divine" when viewed with reference to this rule. The absence of the article does not make the predicate indefinite or qualitative when it precedes the verb; it is indefinite in this position only when the context demands it. The context makes no such demand in the Gospel of John, for this statement cannot be regarded as strange in the prologue of the gospel which reaches its climax in the confession of Thomas.<sup>2</sup>

In a lengthy Appendix in the Jehovah's Witnesses' translation ... there are quoted thirty-five other passages in John where the predicate noun has the definite article in Greek. These are intended to prove that the absence of the article in John 1:1 requires that Theos must be translated "a god". None of the thirty-five instances is parallel, however, for in every case the predicate noun stands after the verb, and so, according to Colwell's rule, properly has the article. ...

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<sup>1</sup> *The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ* Bruce Metzger, in *Theology Today*, April 1953, pages 74, 75

<sup>2</sup> *A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* LII (1933), E.C. Colwell, page 13

Furthermore, the additional references quoted in the New World Translation from the Greek of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament ... are exactly in conformity with Colwell's rule.<sup>3</sup>

### ***The WTS's inconsistency***

A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, under *Theos* states that the word is used "sometimes with, sometimes without the article".<sup>4</sup>

In fact, *Theos* appears several times without the article in the first chapter of John, and in every instance (verses 6, 12, 13, 18) the WTS renders it as "God", and not as "a god".

Furthermore, Matthew 6:24; 27:43; Luke 3:2; 20:38; Romans 1:17; 1 Thess. 2:13 and other passages, all relating to Almighty God, have no article with *Theos*.

## **PHILIPPIANS 2: 5-8**

The Watchtower Society (WTS) is not alone in failing to comprehend the condescension of Jesus Christ. Each and every person falls, but the WTS fails more so because they willfully deny His initial exalted position. That God should willingly strip Himself of privilege and prerogative is beyond man's comprehension. For Him to take the nature of a creature and experience death for him in his place, staggers the whole of the universe. But by their misguided conceptions, WTS fails to appreciate that this is what in fact occurred.

Consequently, when Christ assumed a subordinate role, the WTS assumes this to mean an inferior essence. This attitude by the WTS is seen in their rendition of Phil 2:6,

Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God's form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God".

The first part of the verse says that Jesus "always had the very nature of God"<sup>5</sup>, since *morphe* refers to the innermost being, the abiding, essential nature.

The NWT rendering of the balance of the text not only does gross injustice to the first part, but also "is a misunderstanding of the Greek".<sup>6</sup>

*The standard Greek lexicon of the New Testament* edited by J. H. Thayer ... explains the passage as follows (This book is selected as an authority here both because of its intrinsic merit and because the Jehovah's Witness translators themselves refer to it more than once on other occasions): "(Christ Jesus) who, although (formerly when he was *logos hasarkos*) he bore the form (in which he appeared to the inhabitants of heaven) of God (the sovereign, opposite to *morphe doulou*), yet did not think that this equality with God was to be eagerly clung to or retained" (p. 418, col. 6). In similar language, Arthur S. Way ... renders Phil. 2:6, "He, even when He subsisted in the form of God, did not selfishly cling to His prerogative of equality with God" ... J.B. Phillips agrees with Way's translation: "For He, Who had always been God by nature, did not cling to His prerogatives as God's equal, but stripped Himself of all privilege by consenting to be a slave by nature and being born as mortal man".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ* Bruce Metzger, in *Theology Today*, April 1953, pages 75, 76

<sup>4</sup> *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, W.F. Arnott and F.W. Gingrich, page 357

<sup>5</sup> TEV

<sup>6</sup> *The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ* Bruce Metzger, in *Theology Today*, April 1953, page 78

Rather than Paul saying Christ scorned an opportunity at becoming equal with God, as the WTS would have it, he is saying that the pre-Incarnate Jesus did not cling to or retain the rights of His existing equality, but willingly gave it up, unselfishly.

### REVELATION 3:14

In this verse, the NWT has the exalted Christ refer to Himself as “the beginning of the creation by God”.

“OF GOD”                      “(The Greek text) is far from saying that Christ was created by God, for the genitive case, *tou theou*, means “of God” and not “by God” (which would require the preposition *hupo*).”<sup>7</sup>

The text is not saying that Christ is the first being created by God, but that Christ is the *arche*, the beginner, or source, of the creation of God. Even the WTS's *Interlinear Translation* says “of God”.

“BEGINNING”                “Arche. . . . signifies that Christ is the origin, or primary source of God's creation (compare also John. 1:3).”<sup>7</sup>

Later in Revelation, the “one who sits on the throne”<sup>8</sup> is likewise called the “Arche”<sup>9</sup>, the *beginning*, and the WTS would never suggest this means that the Father had an origin.

“PRE-EMINENCE”         This text in Revelation 3:14 is part of the message to Laodicea.

Colossians 1:15 – 17, which speaks of the primacy of Christ over creation, with the title “Firstborn” (denoting His rank not source - see the previous Chapter), is also part of a letter to the “church at Laodicea”<sup>10</sup>.

Thus these passages are complementary, with each referring to Jesus' pre-eminent position over God's creation, “(because) by him God created everything”.<sup>11</sup>

Thus the TEV renders Rev. 3:14, “(Christ) is the origin of all that God has created”.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 8:6

In the TEV, this verse reads, “there is for us only one God, the Father, who is the creator of all things, and for whom we live, and there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created, and through whom we live”.

The WTS contends that the import of the passage is that Jesus is Lord, but not God.

However, as we have seen in our chapter, “Jesus, God”, the term “Lord” (Greek, *Kurios*) is taken by the NT writers from the LXX name for YHWH.

Fragments of a second century CE LXX and 9th to 12th century CE translations of the NT into Hebrew contain the tetragram, but these isolated specialised cases provide no proof that the LXX familiar to and used by Jesus and His followers of the first century contained the

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<sup>7</sup> *The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ* Bruce Metzger, in *Theology Today*, April 1953, page 79

<sup>8</sup> Rev. 21:5 (TEV)

<sup>9</sup> Rev. 21:6 (TEV)

<sup>10</sup> Col. 4:16 (TEV)

<sup>11</sup> Chap. 1:16 (TEV)

tetragram. Such assertions are too weak to allow rampant yet selective alteration to the Word of God.<sup>12</sup>

The context of the verse refers to “food offered to idols”<sup>13</sup>, and is contrasting, not Jesus versus God, but the monotheistic God of Christianity versus the polyglot of heathenism (and the polytheism of the WTS).

Even if there are so-called “gods” ... and even though there are many of these “gods” and “lords”, yet there is for us only one God ... (and) one Lord”.<sup>5</sup>

(The apostle used) the very words to which the Jews clung with such tenacity as establishing the fundamental truth of the Unity of God (Deut. 6:4; Zechariah 14:9), and adopting the very words of the common version, the Septuagint, applies them to Jesus Christ”.<sup>14</sup>

Thus when Jesus is called “Lord”, *Kurios*, He is being called “God”. Just as when the Father is called “God” He is also being called “Lord”. In John 20:28 Jesus is correctly called “Lord” and “God”. Only the preconceptions of the polytheistic WTS see in this passage a separation of essence, although none is implied. This particular text, if anything, speaks of a union of nature, as each is, separately and together, God and Lord (see our Chapter, “Jesus, God”).

The exclusive “only”, which also appears in John 17:3, must be understood with limitations imposed by the context. For example, in Matt. 11:27 Jesus says, “No one knows the Father, but the Son, and none knoweth the Son, but the Father” Yet the Spirit is not to be excluded from the “No One” for He “searcheth the depths of God”<sup>15</sup>. Nor does it exclude the faithful Christian, who is to “know God”<sup>16</sup>, and to be “in Christ” and to “fellowship with God”.

The context shows that in 1 Corinthians 8:6 the exclusive “only” God is to be compared to the heathen’s polytheism. For scripture elsewhere consistently affirms the unity of nature (essence) of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which is not denied here.

In fact, Paul consistently unites Father and Son,<sup>17</sup> and even bases His apostleship on the uniqueness of Christ:

Paul whose call to be an apostle did not come from (*apo*) man or by means (*dia*) of man, but from (*dia*) Jesus Christ and God the Father”.<sup>18</sup>

Here the Apostle declares that his apostleship was derived neither from men as a source nor through a man as a channel. ... In these words, Paul clearly distinguishes Jesus Christ from men and ranges him with God the Father. ... Although (Paul) uses two prepositions (*ape*, *dia*) when speaking of “men” and “a man”, here he uses only one preposition “through (*dia*) Jesus Christ and God the Father”. J. B. Lightfoot comments succinctly on this verse, “The channel of (Paul’s) authority (*dia*) coincides with its

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<sup>12</sup> After writing this Study in 1976, I wrote a study into the WTS’s use of “Jehovah” in its NT, including an explanation of the ancient LXX material referred to by the WTS. That Study is now available at [http://au.geocities.com/doug\\_mason1940/Witnessing\\_the\\_Name.pdf](http://au.geocities.com/doug_mason1940/Witnessing_the_Name.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Verses 1, 4 (TEV)

<sup>14</sup> *The Trinity*, E. Bickersteth, page 76 (emphasis supplied)

<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor. 2:10

<sup>16</sup> John 17:3

<sup>17</sup> Chronologically: 1 Thess 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Rom. 1:7; Eph. 1:2; Eph. 6:23; Col. 1:2; Philemon 3; Phil. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:2; (see also James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:2; 2 John 3)

<sup>18</sup> Gal. 1:3 (TEV)

source (*apo*)” (St. Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, 6th edition (London, 1880), page 72).<sup>19</sup>

## PROVERBS 8: 22

This passage presents a poetic personification of Wisdom. As such, the exegete must be careful to extract the message from the medium, and not force conclusions upon the text that were never intended.

In the NWT the passage reads,

Jehovah himself produced me (wisdom) as the beginning of his way, the earliest of his achievements of long ago ... earlier than the earth.”

The KJV has “possessed” where the NWT has “produced”. (Hebrew verb, *QANA*).

The WTS’s contention is that Wisdom is the personification of Jesus Christ and hence the passage indicates He was created.

The point of the passage, however, is that as God’s Wisdom predates the beginning of His creative activity, it is to be preferred and treasured.

The poetry used as the vehicle of the Proverb must be interpreted in the greater light of New Testament revelation.

The proper methodology, of course, is to begin with the New Testament, and then to search in the Old Testament.<sup>20</sup>

This is particularly so with this text as the verb *QANA* etymologically means “begat” (in contrast to “create”), and by extension, “got” (“possessed”).

Whatever the accepted meaning, one must not draw a conclusion that God ever existed without Wisdom (or Jesus).

### **Begot**

The true translation of this passage ... according to a learned study by the eminent Semitic scholar F. C. Burney, must be, “The LORD begat me as the beginning of his way”. ... The context favours this rendering, for the growth of the embryo is described in the following verse ... and the birth of Wisdom is described in the two following verses (24 and 25). Thus, in the context, the verb *QANA* in verse 22 appears with certainty to mean “got” or “begot”.<sup>19</sup>

### **Possessed, Get**

Elsewhere (in the OT), this verb (*QANA*) predominantly means “get” and hence “possess” (see e.g. Prov. 4:5, 7, where wisdom is the object, as here). Of its 84 Old Testament occurrences, only six or seven allow the sense “create” Gen. 14:19, 22; Ex, 15:16; Deut. 32:6; Ps. 74:2; 139:13; Prov. 8:22), and even these do not require it. The derived nouns still more strongly emphasize possession.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *The Jehovah’s Witnesses and Jesus Christ* Bruce Metzger, in *Theology Today*, April 1953, page 71

<sup>20</sup> *The Jehovah’s Witnesses and Jesus Christ* Bruce Metzger, in *Theology Today*, April 1953, page 80 (emphases supplied)

<sup>21</sup> *Proverbs*, Derek Ridner, page 80

**In summary**, the point of the passage is *not* the “origin” of either Wisdom or of Christ.

(It sets) forth the value of wisdom as a guide to be followed by believers. In pursuit of this purpose, the author presents a poetic personification of wisdom. . . . To use Proverbs 8:22 as ground for a denial of the eternity of the Son – a doctrine clearly taught in the rest of Scripture – is to use the passage in an unwarranted manner.<sup>22</sup>

### **SUBORDINATION PASSAGES**

These passages, such as “My Father is greater than I”, “My God and your God”, etc. reflect the condescension of the Second Person of the Godhead in willingly taking a subservient role for the achievement of God’s purpose. If the humility of God stooping down is beyond man’s comprehension fully to grasp this in no way means that it is not so.

The role taken by Jesus in no way indicates any inferiority of nature. For example, if an ambassador declares that his countrymen have sent him, it does not mean he is any less a human being than they. In fact, while acting as emissary of the Godhead, Christ maintained His deity.

For the full content of the divine nature lives in Christ, in his humanity.<sup>23</sup>

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in (Christ).<sup>24</sup>

While human, Jesus was and is full deity. If this is mind boggling, then the reason lies within us.

Let us rest upon that which is revealed. There is sufficient given for our confidence and salvation, and speculation borders on blasphemy.

Other subordination passages should be treated similarly, for example, the husband’s position relative to his wife does not deny that both have human natures (consubstantial). Just so, the relative positions of the First and Second Persons of the Godhead do not deny their self-possession of identical natures (consubstantial).

Let us beware, lest we deny the Son.

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<sup>22</sup> *Jehovah’s Witnesses*, by A. Hoekema, pages 126 – 127

<sup>23</sup> Col. 2:9 (TEV)

<sup>24</sup> Col. 1:19 (NIV)



# 8. ATTACHMENTS

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lands from 1933 to 1945. Thousands were thrown into the concentration camps. Many were tortured and killed. Countless numbers died because of their loyalty to Jehovah God. They could have lived had they chosen to renounce the name of Jehovah God. Every well-informed person knows of the intense persecution of Jehovah's witnesses in the United States and Canada during 1933 to 1945. Witness the court cases by the thousands and the mobs by the hundreds! More than seventy countries at one time or another during the past forty years have made restrictive decrees and have persecuted Jehovah's witnesses.

<sup>18</sup> Did the fall of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy and Japan at the end of World War II stop our persecution? No, it did not! In lands taken over by the Communist rulers in eastern Europe we have been banned because of our refusal to stop preaching. Jehovah's witnesses have been thrown into dungeons and concentration camps by the thousands. Look at what has happened in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and other countries. Thousands are in prison and forced labor camps! Today in all communistic countries Jehovah's witnesses are stalked and pursued like wild beasts by hunters, the secret police. Restrictive bans are imposed to prohibit the preaching of the gospel completely in those communistic lands. Our brothers there have been jailed and given mock trials. Many have been killed.

<sup>19</sup> No other religious organization on the earth has been persecuted for the name

19. In what way do the arrests of Jehovah's witnesses differ from those of the clergy?



of Jehovah God, for which also the name Jesus stands. True, some religious clergymen have been jailed in these Communist lands. But these were not for righteousness' sake. (1 Pet. 3:14) They were imprisoned because of political reasons. They were not imprisoned because of witnessing for Jehovah God or for bearing the name of Jesus. Today the Catholic and Protestant churches are still free to hold open church services in places such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany and in other Communist countries. In these countries Jehovah's witnesses cannot worship God openly.

<sup>20</sup> In other lands persecution continues. Do you know that recently, January, 1954, a ban was imposed against Jehovah's witnesses by the legislature of Quebec, Canada? It provided for treatment of the witnesses of Jehovah similar to that ordered by Adolph Hitler in Nazi Germany. This was done at the instance of Quebec's Catholic Premier Duplessis. Do not forget that the ban against Jehovah's witnesses continues in the Dominican

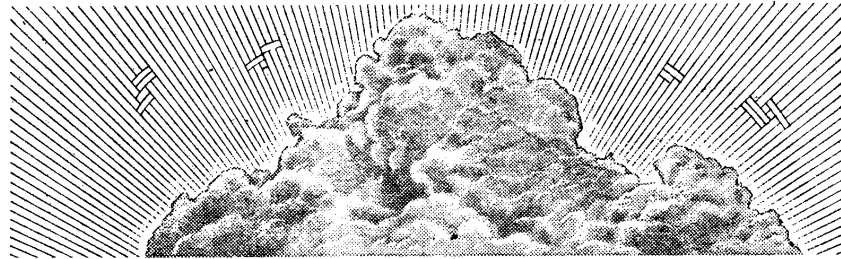
Republic, in Argentina and in other countries. Let us call to mind the mobbings and ambush-shooting of our brothers at assemblies in the Philippines during the last two years. Consider the multitude of other cases of persecution world-wide that appears in the reports in each *Yearbook of Jehovah's*

*Witnesses* during the last nine years. Look at the democratic countries of Europe: Italy, France, Switzerland and the Scandinavian lands! In fact, in every part of the

20. (a) During the past two years in what other lands particularly have Jehovah's witnesses suffered violent persecution? (b) What have the *Yearbook* reports of the past nine years shown?

The name of Jehovah God, for which also the name Jesus stands

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**“THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST”**

**W**HAT hope would there be for the dead of mankind were it not for the promised resurrection? The resurrection of the dead is an absolute necessity since the human soul is not immortal. Hence, at the body's death it could not enter into a fuller life on a higher plane in an invisible world. (Ezek. 18:4, 20; Isa. 53:12) For dead humankind to live again anywhere there needs to be a resurrection. That is why God has laid the basis for such a miracle to take place in his due time. When he raised his self-sacrificing Son from the dead on the third day, he opened the way for this worthy Son to ascend back to where he was before, to heaven. The Son took along with him the full redeeming value of his perfect human sacrifice. Never again will Jesus Christ die. He offered up one human sacrifice for mankind's sins forever. So, when he comes the second time, it does not mean his facing death.—Heb. 9:28; Rom. 6:9.

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah God follows a certain order with regard to the resurrection of the dead. This is called to our attention by the apostle Paul, who himself saw the glory of the resurrected Jesus and talked with him. About 18 years after that, Paul wrote to the Christian congregation in Corinth, Greece, and raised this question: “Now if

1. Why does there need to be a resurrection for dead mankind if ever they are to live again anywhere, and how did God lay the basis for the needed resurrection?  
2. How does 1 Corinthians 15:22, 23 show that God observes order with respect to the resurrection?

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Christ is being preached that he has been raised up from the dead, how is it some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead?” (1 Cor. 15:12) Following upon this question, Paul went on to develop the inspired answer. As he goes along, he says: “Just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive. But each one in his own rank: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ during his presence [Greek: *parousia*].” (1 Cor. 15:22, 23) God alone was responsible for Jesus' resurrection.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus Christ was resurrected on Nisan 16, 33 C.E., the day when the Jewish high priest offered up the firstfruits of the barley harvest. This fits in accurately with Jesus' being the “firstfruits” in the resurrection of the human dead. (1 Cor. 15:20) This put Jesus Christ in the first “rank.” Just as in the Jewish barley harvest there were afterfruits to be reaped, so too there must be afterfruits in the resurrection of the dead. But since Jesus Christ ranks first, Paul called him “the firstborn from the dead, that he might become the one who is first in all things.”—Col. 1:18.

<sup>4</sup> By his sacrificial death Jesus Christ bought back or redeemed all the human family who are dying “in Adam.” Hence,

3. How did Jesus become “first” in the matter of resurrection?

4. The resurrecting of even the first ones of the human dead had to wait until what official event begins, and when did this begin?

THE WATCHTOWER — JUNE 15, 1979

**Since Jesus Christ ranks first, Paul called him “the firstborn from the dead”**

## THE SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY OF THE WATCHTOWER, MICHAEL VAN BUSKIRK (1976, CARIS)

Grammatically, exegetically and contextually John 1:1 cannot be correctly translated "a god." The Watchtower easily dismisses all protests raised by the world's foremost scholars, labeling them "biased Trinitarians" or simply "against Jehovah's people."

It would be useless here to start quoting various Greek grammarians and scholars who have already gone on record as opposed to the Watchtower's rendering of "a god" in John 1:1. The average Jehovah's Witness would only conclude that those scholars are biased in their motives, and (if they believe in the Trinity) blinded by Satan. Their testimony, therefore, would not be of any help here. But the Watchtower publishes an appendix with its *Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* (1969 ed.) and the *New World Translation* (large print, revised 1971). In this appendix the Watchtower quotes from numerous Greek grammars by eminent Greek scholars that appear to support its rendering of John 1:1 as "a god."

The importance and value of a correct translation of John 1:1 is acknowledged by the Society in a quote from *The Word — Who is He? According to John*, page 52, where it states:

. . . how are we to understand John 1:1,2 of which there are differing translations? Many translations read: "And the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Others read: "And the Word (the Logos) was divine." Another: "And the Word was God." Others: "And the Word was a god." Since we have examined so much of what John wrote about Jesus who was the Word made flesh, we are now in position to determine which of those several translations is correct. It means our salvation.

The Watchtower is absolutely correct here in saying, "It means our salvation," for if Jesus Christ is the Eternal God, then all who believe that He is a mere creature are eternally lost (John 8:24) and will face Him at the judgment (John 5:22).

Simply stated, the Society's basis for translating John 1:1 "And the Word was a god," is the absence of the Greek definite article HO (the) before the word THEOS (God).

The *New World Translation* and the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*, in trying to emphasize the significance of the absence of the article before THEOS, write in the appendix:

. . . *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, by Dana and Mantey . . . Accordingly on page 148 paragraph (3) this same publication says about the subject of a copulative sentence, that in a copulative sentence sometimes the article makes the subject distinct from the predicate. Xenophon's *Anabasis*, 1:4:6, but the place was a market, corresponds with what is stated in John 1:1. In both examples above the article used differentiates the subject. The market mentioned by Xenophon was not the only market. Correspondingly the same argument could be used respecting the Greek THEOS without the article HO in John 1:1. Instead of translating John 1:1, and the word was deity, this Grammar could have translated it, and the word was a god, to run more parallel with Xenophon's statement, "and the place was a market."

An examination of the context of the quoted passage from Dana and Mantey's *Grammar* reveals that the *Grammar* quoted Xenophon's *Anabasis* and John 1:1 to show that "The article points out the subject in these examples."<sup>10</sup> Their

<sup>10</sup>*A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, by Dana and Mantey, p. 148, in the same paragraph referred to by the Watchtower.

quote had NOTHING TO DO WITH THE ABSENCE OF THE ARTICLE BEFORE "THEOS." They were merely showing the subject in each of those examples.

In answer to a personal letter written to Professor Mantey, inquiring about the Watchtower's applying his *Grammar* to support their "a god" explanation, the following reply, dated February 25, 1974, was received:

In response to your request, I give you the following facts: In Jehovah's Witnesses' Translation of the New Testament, where I am quoted in a footnote on John 1:1 (cf. D-M Gk. Gram. Pg. 148 (3) ), I was writing on how the *article* "distinguishes the subject from the predicate in a copulative sentence," not on the significance of the absence of the article before THEOS. My closing statement in the paragraph was: "As it stands the other persons of the Trinity may be implied in THEOS." My interpretation of John 1:1 in that same paragraph was "The Word was Deity," i.e. that Christ is of the same essence as the Father, of the same family. So I was quoted out of context. Is that honest scholarship?

One of the authors of the very *Grammar* the Jehovah's Witnesses employ in their defense says they not only quoted him out of context, but he was not even talking about what they quoted him as affirming! The point here is that the Watchtower does not have to agree with Professor Mantey's theology (he is Trinitarian), nor do they even have to believe that he knows Greek: But why misrepresent what he actually stated?

Because of a desire to know the reason for the Society's incorrect application of the *Grammar*, a letter was sent to them quoting exactly what Professor Mantey had asserted, that he "was writing on how the article 'distinguishes the subject from the predicate in a copulative sentence,' not on the significance of the absence of the article before THEOS." In the Watchtower's three-page reply, dated June 27, 1974, they said concerning *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* by Dana and Mantey, that:

... their work allows for the rendering found in *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* at John 1:1. In their grammar, Dana and Mantey set out the rule. From that rule they attempt to argue in support of the trinity. The rule, however, that they propose is plainly and unmistakably stated in their book. In the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* and also in the *Interlinear*, the same rule was taken that they used and accepted for just what it says. It was shown that it is possible to argue in favor of the fact that the Word of God was "a god" or a divine personality. . . . we can take the plainly stated "rule" and with it show that the rendering of John 1:1 in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* is consistent and reasonable.

(See photostat group #2 for complete reproduction of this letter.) After this reply was received from the Watchtower, it seemed important to show Professor Mantey that his book, according to the Watchtower, allowed for the rendering "a god," especially since his comment had had nothing to do with the *predicate* (THEOS or God) in John 1:1, but had dealt with the fact that the *subject* was distinguished from the predicate by the use of the definite article (i.e. HO LOGOS). Therefore Professor Mantey was sent a copy of the letter from the Watchtower with the suggestion that he write them to comment on their claim regarding his *Grammar*. His letter to them, dated July 11, 1974, is quoted on the next page in its entirety:

Dear Sirs:

I have a copy of your letter addressed to Caris in Santa Ana, California, and I am writing to express my disagreement with statements made in that letter, as well as in quotations you have made from *The Dana-Mantey Greek Grammar*.

(1) Your statement: "their work allows for the rendering found in the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* at John 1:1." There is no statement in our grammar that was ever meant to imply that "a god" was a permissible translation in John 1:1.

A. We had no "rule" to argue in support of the trinity.

B. Neither did we state that we did have such intention. We were simply delineating the facts inherent in Biblical language.

C. Your quotation from P. 148 (3) was in a paragraph under the heading: "*With the Subject in a Copulative Sentence.*" Two examples occur here to illustrate that "the article points out the subject in these examples." But we made no statement in this paragraph about the predicate except that, "as it stands the other persons of the trinity may be implied in *theos*." And isn't that the opposite of what your translation "a god" infers? You quoted me out of context. On pages 139 and 140 (VI) in our grammar we stated: "without the article *theos* signifies divine essence . . . *theos en ho logos* emphasises Christ's participation in the essence of the divine nature." Our interpretation is in agreement with that in NEB and the TEM: "What God was, the Word was"; and with that of Barclay: "The nature of the Word was the same as the nature of God," which you quoted in your letter to Caris.

(2) Since Colwell's and Harner's article in JBL, especially that of Harner, it is neither scholarly nor reasonable to translate John 1:1 "The Word was a god." Word-order has made obsolete and incorrect such a rendering.

(3) Your quotation of Colwell's rule is inadequate because it quotes only a part of his findings. You did not quote this strong assertion: "A predicate nominative which precedes the verb cannot be translated as an indefinite or a 'qualitative' noun solely because of the absence of the article."

(4) Prof. Harner, Vol. 92:1 (1973) in JBL, has gone beyond Colwell's research and has discovered that anarthrous predicate nouns preceding the verb function primarily to express the nature or character of the subject. He found this true in 53 passages in the Gospel of John and 8 in the Gospel of Mark. Both scholars wrote that when indefiniteness was intended that gospel writers regularly placed the predicate noun after the verb, and both Colwell and Harner have stated that *theos* in John 1:1 is not indefinite and should not be translated "a god." Watchtower writers appear to be the only ones advocating such a translation now. The evidence appears to be 99% against them.

(5) Your statement in your letter that the sacred text itself should guide one and "not just someone's rule book." We agree with you. But our study proves that Jehovah's Witnesses do the opposite of that whenever the "sacred text" differs with their heretical beliefs. For example the translation of *kolasis* as cutting off when *punishment* is the only meaning cited in the lexicons for it. The mistranslation of *ego eimi* as "I have been" in John 8:58. The addition of "for all time" in Heb. 9:27 when nothing in the Greek New Testament supports it. The attempt to belittle Christ by mistranslating *arche tes ktiseos* "beginning of the creation" when he is magnified as "the creator of all things" (John 1:2) and as "equal with God" (Phil. 2:6) before he humbled himself and lived in a human body here on earth. Your quotation of "The father is greater than I am" (John 14:28) to prove that Jesus was not equal to God overlooks the fact stated in Phil. 2:6-8. When Jesus said that, he was still in his voluntary state of humiliation. That state ended when he ascended to heaven. Why the attempt to deliberately deceive people by mispunctuation by placing a comma after "today" in Luke 23:43 when in the Greek, Latin, German and all English translations except yours, even in the Greek in your KIT, the comma occurs after *lego* (I say) - "Today you will be with me in Paradise." 2 Cor. 5:8, "to be out of the body and at home with the Lord." These passages teach that the redeemed go immediately to heaven after death, which does not agree with your teachings that death ends all life until the resurrection. Cf. Ps. 23:6 and Heb. 1:10.

The afore mentioned are only a few examples of Watchtower mistranslations and perversions of God's Word.

In view of the preceding facts, especially because you have been quoting me out of context, I herewith request you not to quote the Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament again, which you have been doing for 24 years. Also that you not quote it or me in any of your publications from this time on.

Also that you publicly and immediately apologize in the Watchtower magazine, since my words had no relevance to the absence of the article before *theos* in John 1:1. And please write to Caris and state that you misused and misquoted my "rule".

On the page before the Preface in the grammar are these words: "All rights reserved - no part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher."

If you have such permission, please send me a photo-copy of it.

If you do not heed these request you will suffer the consequences.

Regretfully yours,

Julius R. Mantey

Professor Mantey's comments need no further explanation.

In a personal letter, Professor Mantey commented on the New World Translation (N.W.T.) rendering of Rom. 9:5, and gave a brief quote from A. T. Robertson's *Word Pictures*, Vol. 4, page 381:

"Who is over all, God blessed forever (*ho on epi panton theos culogetos*)." This is atrociously mistranslated in the N.W.T. and KIT. "God, who is over all, (be) blessed forever." *HO OHN*' is referring to *HO CHRISTOS* = "he being (present participle) over all is God blessed forever, amen." The article *HO* indicated that *OHN*' (not *theos*, as J.W.'s have translated) is the subject of the sentence. The use of the article here, as in John 1:1, denotes the subject.

It could have been the Apostle Paul's remembrance of this same expression in Exodus 3:15, "*HO OHN*' sent me to you," where it was expressed by *HO THEOS*, God.

Here it (in Rom. 9:5) states that Christ was of the same nature and family of God the Father, and of the Holy Spirit. I disagree radically with this statement in the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*, page 1161.

In the same letter Professor Mantey stated the following:

In a Watchtower publication *All Scripture is Inspired of God and Beneficial*, copyright 1963, page 321, this statement occurs:

In that year (1896) printing rights were obtained from the British Bible Translator, Joseph B. Rotherham, to publish in the United States the Twelfth Edition Revised of his New Testament.

Rotherham gave a correct translation of the tenses, for instance, in John 20:23, "Whosoever's sins you may forgive, they have been forgiven," i.e. forgive those whom God has forgiven. Note how the NWT mistranslated this verse: "If you forgive the sins of any persons, they stand forgiven to them." Rotherham really translated the perfect tense, but the NWT *did not*. Why? Did they mean to infer that God would forgive whomever they forgave? At any rate it reads that way. After studying their mistranslation in hundreds of N.T. verses, it has dawned upon me that when Scripture disagreed with their peculiar teachings they deliberately mistranslated it or so altered the reading that there would be some apparent support for their unbiblical views. And yet they claim the Scripture was inspired. Why not treat it as such then? Why have they perverted it scores of times?

Rotherham was an excellent translator. Why reverse what he rightly translated? Most of the translations of the Bible are honest and scholarly translations. Who can honestly state that of the Jehovah's Witnesses' translation? When not even one of their translators was a college graduate, nor a seminary graduate, no wonder they did so poorly. But what is far worse, they were guilty of *de liberate deception*. That makes their translation *abominable*.

A series of questions was submitted to Professor Mantey to obtain his views of the Watchtower Society's continual misrepresentation of his *Grammar* and are quoted as follows:

**Question:** Are you accurately quoted and in context on what you were giving grammar rules and examples on?

**Answer:** No. I am not accurately quoted, and in the context I am quoted only in part. Where they quote me, I was writing about the subject of the sentence which happens to be "the Word." I was bringing out the fact that if there are two nouns in a copulative sentence – a copulative sentence is one that is joined together by the verb "to be" in some form or other. I was writing on the use of the article showing which noun was the subject of the sentence and since there was an article in front of "Word", it naturally, according to grammatical rules, was the subject – "the Word was deity." One reason I put "deity" instead of "God" was due to the fact that Jesus was also God in the sense that He was one of the Trinity and especially in view of the fact that quality or nature is expressed by the absence of the article, providing the predicate noun precedes the verb of the sentence (and it does in this case) because *Theos* in that sentence is before the word *en* (was). They took the sentence that I had given and the example that I had given of how the article indicated which the subject was of a sentence from Xenophon and they jumped on the predicate. I wasn't writing about the predicate. They quoted the predicate "the place was a market." The article went before "the place," and there was no article before "market." It could be, in that case, "a market" instead of "the market." So I translated it in that way. But to bring out the fact that the idea of nature or essence was implied in this sentence, I translated it "deity" – "The Word was deity." That was a development beyond what some grammarians had arrived at that time. They didn't seem to be very clear on how an anarthrous noun, or noun without an article in front of it, could be used to express the idea of nature or essence, characteristics, etc. I was aware of it and of the teachings of Robertson, by the way; so I interpreted it that way, and, I think, that is one reason they quoted me. I wasn't saying that God and Jesus were one and the same person; I was saying they were both of the divine family, namely called God.

**Question:** Are you honored that the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society quoted you and associated your name with the four above publications?

**Answer:** Yes, in a sense because it is recognition. I am quoted with other grammarians and, as it happens to be, the rest of them are dead and I am the only one that is alive now. And the only one, I guess, that can therefore defend himself.

**Question:** Have you read the booklet *The Word – Who is He? According to John?*

**Answer:** Yes, I have read it.

**Question:** Please tell us as a whole or in part what you personally feel about the above named booklet. Are you happy or unhappy your book has been used in support of the article? Would you recommend it as worthwhile reading?

**Answer:** Well, it is a booklet that is defensive of their particular viewpoint or interpretation of Scripture, but all their writings that I have read and certain interpretations that they have given are of this type. They have their set doctrines, definite beliefs, and they go through the Scriptures looking for some support for those particular beliefs. Beliefs that are not necessarily all of them Biblical, but they have put together these particular ideas for their viewpoint. When they do meet certain passages of Scripture that seem to be against their viewpoint, to my great disappointment, they mistranslate them deliberately and deceptively – deliberate deception – in some cases and, to me, that is unpardonable. It's dishonest and, to a certain extent, it's diabolical. They state in their writings that they believe that the Scripture is inspired. You would take it that they believed that so definitely that they would faithfully translate the Scripture in every instance regardless of what it said, regardless of whether it favored their viewpoint or not. But I have found in a very careful analysis (and I am recognized as a research scholar in the field of Biblical literature) that they have mistranslated. I think that it wasn't due to ignorance. I think it was due to deception. They want to get across their viewpoint and whether the Scripture agrees with their viewpoint or not, they are going to continue advocating it. In that sense they

are unorthodox because they claim they are translating the Scripture correctly, and they are not. That, to me, is hypocritical as well as because they are claiming one thing and doing another. I am not very happy about it. No.

Would I recommend it as worthwhile reading? No. I would not recommend it as worthwhile reading because it is not in full accordance with the revelation that God has given us in the Bible. One of their viewpoints that is interesting to me is how they quote different people, different translations. Translations of the Scripture that are old and give agreement on "a god." Those versions, as far as I know, never are recognized as outstanding translations, and other sources that they have quoted from time to time are not the best in the field of those particular writings. They use a good deal of psychology – throwing up a smoke screen, quoting different people as though what they were quoting was favorable to their viewpoint, whereas they are just quoting them (grammarians especially). Those who have something in common, but who do not agree with them; yet, they quote them as if the implication is that they do agree with them. That, to me, isn't convincing because it is not positive proof, but it does confuse people to a certain extent and give the impression that they are very scholarly and are following the best possible sources.

**Question:** Do you feel there is good reason for the New World Translation Committee wishing to remain anonymous even after death?

**Answer:** Well, I am not sure what they had in mind when they decided to go anonymous, but I suspect it was because the translators did not have the recognition that would be convincing to the scholarly world and so they decided to remain anonymous. I may be wrong in that, however.

**Question:** Please give any and all recommendations as both a Greek scholar and theologian on the two translations under consideration.

**Answer:** Well, there are many things that are good in their translations. I would say that since there is such a big field and the Scripture covers so many things, that they have no objection to, they accept those passages of Scripture. When Scripture runs counter to their particular set beliefs, they try to change the Scripture so they will appear to have divine authority for their viewpoint. That is the most disturbing thing about it all. I want to comment on John 8:58 with reference to the New World Translation, 1950 edition, of the verse. There is a footnote that says, "I have been . . ." I will quote the verse. "You are not yet fifty years old and you have seen Abraham. Jesus said unto them 'most truly I say to you before Abraham come into existence, I have been.'" Now, that is a very unfortunate translation – "I have been." It does not come from the Greek text which it is supposed to come from; by the way, in the *Interlinear*, they have a correct Greek text. It is *ego eimi* in the Greek text which is "I am" or "I am He," "I am the existing one." But they, for some reason have mistranslated, definitely mistranslated. It is a present indicative; *eimi* is present indicative. They have translated it as a perfect indicative. There is no perfect indicative in this verse in the Greek. They have deliberately mistranslated it as perfect when it is present. They go on to say, too, that "hence properly rendered in the perfect indefinite tense." Where they get that is beyond my understanding. You will find no such definition of the perfect in any Greek grammar. If you did, it would be absolutely wrong! I understand that in later editions, more recently, when they got out a translation, they left out the word "indefinite." It is a good thing that they did. They go on to say (without evidence) that it is not the same as *ho ohn*, meaning "the being" or the "I am" of Exodus 3:14 which is in the Septuagint, the translation of the Old Testament translated by 70 Jews (that is the reason they call it The Septuagint).  
(Signed by Julius R. Mantey, dated and notarized August 2, 1974.)

This testimony is the Watchtower's death knell provided by the only scholar, alive today, quoted (or misquoted) by the Watchtower Society, "and still able to defend himself." Professor Mantey can never be labeled as "biased" in the proper sense of the word. He is merely speaking out against an obvious evil, as if to say, "It's your choice not to believe my personal views; but don't lie about and misrepresent what I have said." The Watchtower Society stands guilty and without excuse.

Like a rich vein of gold that runs deep into a mountainside, the more one digs, the more he finds. Such is true with the "a god" deception.