

Christadelphian Vs Trinitarian

Trinitarian debate 2006

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Moderator Introduction

Wednesday, August 02, 2006

Moderator Introduction

This is a four point debate between [Searchingone1033](#) a non-Trinitarian and [Prophetnick77](#) a Trinitarian. The format is as follows, point one is the subject of the Trinity, is it or is it not sound biblical doctrine, point two is the being of the Father, point three who is the person of the Son and point four who or what is the Holy Spirit.

Each point will have an opening statement by the first participant and a rebuttal by the second. Each participant will then each get one follow up comment or statement on each point. [Searchingone1033](#) will have the opening statement on point one and [Prophetnick77](#) will have the opening statement on point two, alternating between each participant on points three and four.

The debate will begin on Monday August 7, 2006 each participant will have three days to respond to the others statement or comments with a 1500 word limit for opening statements and each response.

As per the participants request this is a closed debate and we will not be able to post any comments, statements or question from anyone outside of this debate.

Christadelphian: Point 1 Opening Statement

Sunday, August 06, 2006

[Searchingone1033 -- Point 1: Opening Statement](#)

Point 1: The Trinity--Is it or is it not sound biblical doctrine?

The doctrine of the trinity was declared to be an essential tenet of the Christian faith by the Athanasian Creed of the 5-6th century:

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith;
2. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;
4. Neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance.

Prior to this date, no such statement of orthodoxy had been issued by any Christian council, nor any of the early Christian leaders.

It is reasonable to question the legitimacy of such a doctrinal statement, made by uninspired men who lived some 300 years after the apostolic era, which had no precedent in the first 400 years of Christian history. Under such circumstances, why should such a doctrinal statement, made by a council of however many men, be considered accurate and binding on all Christians?

If such a doctrinal statement as this is truly accurate and binding on all Christians, then why not other doctrinal statements made by other church councils, whether earlier or later?

Traditionally, the doctrine of the trinity has been assembled using the following syllogistic reasoning:

- * The Father is God
- * The Son is God
- * The Holy Spirit is God
- * There is only one God
- * Therefore, the one God must constitute Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Such a syllogism is necessary because the Bible nowhere describes God in Trinitarian terms – nowhere is He described as three persons in one being.

The doctrine has to be assembled gradually by inference and a chain of syllogistic reasoning, taking a passage of Scripture from here, a passage from there, and cobbling them together into one formula in a way which Scripture itself never does, to describe a concept which Scripture does not contain.

It must be noted that this particular syllogism results in a logical fallacy, that A is X, B is X, and C is X, but

there is only one X. This alone demonstrates that the reasoning is false. Accurate reasoning from the Scriptures should not result in logical fallacies which have to be dismissed with hand waving explanations such as 'God can do anything'. If logic is to be used to formulate the doctrine, then the doctrine must submit to logic.

The syllogistic method by which the Trinity is assembled is useful as a demonstration that Trinitarians acknowledge that God is nowhere described in the Bible as three persons in one being. Since God is nowhere described in the Bible in this way, and since God is consistently described as one person, this definition of God cannot be accepted as accurate.

There are four important points to be made here:

- * Nowhere does the Bible describe God as three persons in one being – on the contrary, He is consistently described as one person, the Father
- * Nowhere in the Bible is the doctrine of the trinity said to be the central tenet of the Christian faith, and the doctrine itself (that God constitutes three persons in one being), is completely absent from the Bible, and on the contrary the Bible predicates salvation on knowledge of, and belief in, God as one person (the Father), and Jesus Christ His son, who is described as 'the man, Christ Jesus'
- * None of the earliest Christian creedal confessions contain the statement that the trinity is an essential tenet of the Christian faith
- * The doctrine of the trinity as found in the Athanasian Creed (though not the Nicene Creed, which contains no formal definition of the trinity), is absent from the Christian writings of at least the first 300 years of Christian history, being the product of long and gradual development over time, amid decades of disputes, bickering, disagreement, and even violence

We shall address these points one by one.


The first is that the Bible repeatedly describes God as one person (the Father), not three persons. The personal pronouns 'He', 'His', 'Him', 'I', 'Me', 'My', and 'Mine' are used repeatedly to describe **God**, not 'God the Father' (one person of three in one being), and not 'We', nor are the Trinitarian distinctions 'God the Father', 'God the Son', and 'God the Holy Spirit' found in the Bible (the latter two are terms invented by Trinitarians).


We are told explicitly that 'The Lord our God is **one Lord**' ([Deuteronomy 6:6](#), [Mark 12:29](#)), that '**he is one**', and there is no one else besides **him**' ([Mark 12:32](#)), never 'God is three in one'. The absence of the word 'trinity' from the Bible is completely unimportant, but the fact that the very **concept** of God being three persons in one being is found nowhere in the Bible, is of great significance.


Particularly in the New Testament, the apostles repeatedly distinguish God from Christ, not 'God the Father' from 'God the Son', indicating that 'God' and 'Christ' are two separate beings, and that 'God' is one person, the Father ([quotes](#)).

We look in vain in any of the preaching speeches of the apostles (see the Acts), or even their letters and epistles to mature Christians, for evidence that they taught people of a God who was three persons in one being. The concept is entirely absent from their teaching.

The second is that nowhere in the Bible is the doctrine of the trinity said to be the central tenet of the Christian faith. On the contrary, salvation is predicated on knowing that the Father is the 'only true God', and that Jesus Christ is His son:

[John 17:3](#)  Now this is eternal life—that they know **you, [the Father] the only true God, and Jesus Christ**, whom you sent.

[1 Corinthians 8:6](#)  yet for us there is **one God, the Father**, from whom are all things and for whom we live, and **one Lord, Jesus Christ**, through whom are all things and through whom we live.

[Ephesians 4:4](#)  There is one body and one Spirit, just as you too were called to the one hope of your calling,
5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,
6 **one God and Father** of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

These declarations are the complete opposite of the statement made by the Athanasian Creed.

The third is that none of the earliest Christian creedal confessions contain the statement that the trinity is an essential tenet of the Christian faith. It is not found in the earliest creedal statements such as the 'Apostles' Creed' and the 'Didache' ([proof](#)), or the confessions of the Elders of Smyrna, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Marcellus or Rufinus ([proof](#)).

This is significant, because it demonstrates that this insistence on the Trinity as an essential tenet of the Christian faith was invented much later, and was not a part of the original gospel message, nor even a belief among the early Christians of the 2nd century.

The fourth is that the doctrine was as much an innovation as the doctrines of purgatory and transubstantiation, demonstrable from the fact that it underwent the same process of centuries of argument and development, remains disputed as to its details even among those who hold it, was not declared to be an essential tenet of the Christian faith (still less **the** essential tenet), for the first 400 years of Christian history, and is derived **by inference from** Scripture, rather than being **taught explicitly by** Scripture, through a process of syllogistic reasoning.

A [comparison](#) of the 'Apostles' Creed', the 'Nicene Creed', and the later 'Athanasian Creed' demonstrates clearly the development which took place over time. The 'Apostles Creed' (though preserved completely in the early creedal statements we have considered), was almost completely excluded from the later creeds. This demonstrates a clear departure from what was originally taught.

In summary:

- * The Bible describes God as one person, the Father, and never as three persons
- * There are no verses in the entire Bible which say that you are a heretic if you deny the trinity (there are plenty of verses in the Bible which say that you are a heretic if you deny that Jesus is a man)
- * The teaching of the apostles was that to a true Christian there is **one God**, and that one God is **one person**, that one person is **the Father**, Jesus Christ is His **son**, and the **man** who is the mediator between

God and **men** is His son.

* The Lord Jesus Christ himself says it is life eternal to know that **the Father** is the **only true God**

* The earliest Christian creedal statements make no mention of the doctrine of the Trinity whether explicitly or implicitly, describe God as one person ('the Father Almighty'), Christ as His son, the Holy Spirit as simply 'the Holy Spirit' (not even a person), and say nothing of the doctrine of the Trinity being essential to the Christian faith

Trinitarian: Point 1 Rebuttal

Monday, August 07, 2006

[Prophetnick77 -- Point 1: First Rebuttal](#)

Point 1: The Trinity--Is it or is it not sound biblical doctrine?

Before beginning it is imperative that we establish some fundamentals for the topic of conversation. The first being that there is only one God and His name is Yahweh ([Deuteronomy 4:35](#); [2Samuel 22:32](#)). The second matter at hand is unequivocally defining two terms from the onset. Those terms are (1) "Being" and (2) "Person" as they will be used repeatedly throughout this debate.

(1) The term "Being" will be used in reference to **what** Yahweh is. Synonyms for this word will be "nature," "essence," and "substance." Being is an ontological designation speaking to the "stuff" that Yahweh consists of. It describes Deity.

(2) "Person" will be used in reference to each member of the Trinity. We are limited in our language and as such are at a disadvantage to truly describe God in His fullness, but the term "Person" will not be used in its normal connotation of humans, but rather in the sense that a "Person" is one with personality, who thinks, has intelligence, self-awareness, and the ability to reason. The "Persons" are **who** Yahweh is.

Having established that, the question at hand is: "The Trinity—is it or is it not, sound Biblical doctrine?" To this question I answer that it is sound Biblical doctrine. Before beginning this debate Searchingone1033 asked me what kind of Trinitarianism I hold to and I told him that I hold to orthodox Trinitarianism as affirmed in the Nicene-Constantinople Creed and the Athanasian Creed. The question was then asked if I would be arguing based on these creeds and my response was "no." I explained that I would be arguing my point based on the inspired Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Scriptures. I will stand by my words and do exactly that, but I would first like to address the claim of illogic concerning the Trinity.

It was asserted that the Trinity is proven by means of a fallacious syllogism and that *"Trinitarians acknowledge that God is nowhere described in the Bible as three persons in one being."* Well, in point of fact, this Trinitarian acknowledges no such thing and as per the above definitions we see from the One Being (Substance) of Deity there subsists, Three Persons. Next, we are never told *why* the reasoning of the Athanasian Creed was fallacious or unscriptural; we are simply told that it is.

The example my opponent has used is a faulty analogy in that he is representing 3 X's as being 1 X ("A is X, B is X, C is X, but there is only one X"), while this is clearly not the belief of Trinitarians. This would violate the law of non-contradiction that states something cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same sense. In other words, God cannot be both 3 Gods and 1 God at the same time and in the same sense; neither can God be both 3 Persons and 1 Person at the same time and in the same sense. But there is no rule of logic violated in the Trinitarian belief of 1 God eternally existing as 3 Persons.

Now concerning the propositions as set forth in the Athanasian Creed, we can see clearly that they are scriptural and have their foundation in the very Word of God. Observe:

(1) So the Father is God ([Malachi 2:10](#) 📖)

(2) the Son is God, ([Hebrews 1:8](#) 📖)

(3) and the Holy Ghost is God ([Acts 5:3-4](#) 📖).

(4) And yet they are not Three Gods, but One God ([Isaiah 43:10-11](#) 📖, [44:6](#) 📖, [8](#) 📖, [45:5-6](#) 📖, [14](#) 📖, [21-22](#) 📖, [46:9](#) 📖)."

Now as it stands, the English word "God" in and of itself is ambiguous. There are many applications of the various Hebrew (El, Elim, Eloah, and Elohim), Aramaic (Elah, Elahin), and Greek (Theos) words translated as "God" in the Bible. The Hebrew word "elohim" alone has reference to at least 5 different groups including:

(1) The one true God of creation ([Genesis 1:1](#) 📖)

(2) Idols ([Deuteronomy 4:28](#) 📖)

(3) False gods ([Judges 11:24](#) 📖)

(4) Angels ([Psalm 8:5](#) 📖)

(5) Men ([Exodus 7:1](#) 📖)

God is described in [Daniel 2:47](#) 📖 as "Elah elahin" (Aramaic for "God of gods"). The Greek word "Theos" is used in reference to:

(1) The one true God of creation ([Matthew 4:10](#) 📖)

(2) Men ([Acts 28:6](#) 📖)




(3) Idols ([Acts 19:26](#) 📖)




(4) Satan ([2Corinthians 4:4](#) 📖)




The reasons I make mention of this is that it is not enough that the Father is *called* God, the Son is *called* God, and the Holy Spirit is *called* God. The title in and of itself does not necessitate that each person being called God is the one true God, nor does it irrefutably prove the Trinity. My opponent has claimed that the Trinitarian must take a passage here and a passage there and string them together in order to arrive at the doctrine of the Trinity. To this I say that the Trinitarian observes every passage in context and then systematically arrives at the doctrine. In other words, it is not random passages put together to create foreign doctrine, but rather contextual readings put together to eliminate confusion, contradiction, and error in the Word of God.

As I just stated, the title "God" in and of itself is not enough to make my case, so for this reason I must examine other areas and draw my conclusions based on the all the relevant data. Not only do the 3 Persons in question share the title "God" they also share the title "Lord" as can be seen in [2Corinthians 6:18](#) 📖, [John 20:28](#) 📖, and [2Corinthians 3:17](#) 📖. Once again, this is not an exclusive title reserved for Yahweh alone. So now we must extend our search into attributes that do exclusively belong to the one true God, namely: (1) Eternality, (2) Omnipotence, (3) Omniscience, and (4) Omnipresence. There are only three Persons in all of scripture who possess these attributes.

(1) The Father is eternal ([Psalm 90:2](#) 📖), as is the Son ([Micah 5:2](#) 📖), and the Holy Spirit is as well ([Hebrews 9:14](#) 📖).








(2) The Father is omnipotent ([Daniel 4:35](#) ) , as is the Son ([Matthew 28:18](#) ) , and the Holy Spirit as well ([Isaiah 40:12](#) ) .














(3) The Father is omniscient ([1John 3:20](#) ) , as is the Son ([John 16:30](#) ) , and the Holy Spirit as well ([1Corinthians 2:10-11](#) ) .










(4) The Father is omnipresent ([1Kings 8:27](#) ) , as is the Son ([John 3:13](#) ) , and the Holy Spirit as well ([Psalm 139:7-18](#) ) .

Now as such the Trinity is already proven scripturally, for if there is only One Being who possesses these attributes and there are Three Persons which exhibit them, then we must conclude that the Three Persons constitute the One Being.

The case for the Trinity can be further proven in specific acts/functions which God alone can perform. Although there are more I will establish this matter in the mouth of three witnesses: (1) Creation, (2) Salvation, (3) Indwelling.

(1) [Isaiah 44:24](#) ) tells us that Yahweh has made all things, stretched out the heavens alone, and spread out the earth by Himself, yet scripture reveals the Father as creator ([Isaiah 64:8](#) ) , the Son as creator ([John 1:3](#) ) , [Colossians 1:16](#) ) , and the Holy Spirit as creator ([Job 26:13](#) ) , [33:4](#) ) . Combine this with God's use of the plural pronouns "us" and "our" in [Genesis 1:26](#) ) and the Trinitarian has an airtight case.

(2) [Isaiah 43:11](#) ) informs us that besides Yahweh, there is no savior. Salvation in scripture is presented as a threefold process involving (1) Justification, (2) Sanctification, and (3) Glorification which is accomplished via resurrection ([1Corinthians 15:42-44](#) ) , [53-54](#) ) . The Bible affirms that we are justified by the Father ([Romans 8:30](#) ) , the Son ([Acts 13:39](#) ) , and the Holy Spirit ([1Corinthians 6:11](#) ) . Likewise we are Sanctified by the Father ([1Thessalonians 5:23](#) ) , the Son ([Hebrews 2:11](#) ) , and the Holy Spirit ([1Peter 1:2](#) ) . The believer's glorification is procured by the resurrection of our bodies which is an act that the Father ([1Corinthians 6:14](#) ) , the Son ([John 6:39-40](#) ) , [44](#) ) , and the Holy Spirit ([Romans 8:11](#) ) .

(3) While dedicating the temple King Solomon asked this question—he said, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have built?" ([1Kings 8:27](#) )) Stephen in his final speech before he was stoned to death said that God does not dwell in temples made with hands ([Acts 7:48](#) ) cf. [Isaiah 66:1](#) ) . Paul confirms this point in his speech to the Athenians in [Acts 17:24](#) ) . That being said we can see that God does indeed dwell somewhere; that place being the bodies of believers ([1Corinthians 3:16-17](#) ) , [6:19](#) ) . Since we are the temple of God, it makes no sense to believe that another other than God would dwell in us. From here we see that the Father dwells in us ([2Corinthians 6:16](#) ) , as does the Son ([Colossians 1:27](#) ) , and the Holy Spirit ([2Timothy 1:14](#) ) , hence another example of God's Tri-unity.

So while an attempt was made to dismiss a doctrine based on its late arrival in Christian confessions of faith or its *perceived* absence from the earliest writings of second century Christians ([Click Here for Ante-Nicene quotes on the Trinity](#)), it has been proven scripturally that the Trinity is in fact a Biblical doctrine.

Christadelphian: Point 1 Counter Rebuttal

Friday, August 11, 2006

[Searchingone1033 -- Point 1: Counter Rebuttal](#)





Point 1: The Trinity--Is it or is it not sound biblical doctrine?

These points were not addressed:

- * The Bible describes God as **one person, the Father**, and never as three persons
- * The pronouns 'He', 'His', 'Him', 'I', 'Me', 'My', and 'Mine' are used to describe God, not 'God the Father' or 'We', 'They', 'Them', nor are the Trinitarian distinctions 'God the Father', 'God the Son', and 'God the Holy Spirit' made in the Bible
- * The Bible does not describe denial of the Trinity as a heresy, but **does describe denial that Jesus is a man as heresy**
- * The apostles taught that to a true Christian there is **one God**, and that one God is one person, the Father, Jesus Christ is His son, **a man** who is the mediator between **God and men**
- * Christ says it is life eternal to know that **the Father is the only true God**, not Father, son and Holy Spirit
- * The earliest Christian creedal statements describe God as one person ('the Father Almighty'), Christ as His son, the Holy Spirit as simply 'the Holy Spirit' (not a person), and do not say the Trinity is essential to the Christian faith.

My opponent disagrees that God is nowhere described in the Bible as three persons in one being, so I request a list of **every individual passage in the Bible** which describes God as **three persons in one being**.


Contrary to my opponent's claim, reasons were given 'why the reasoning of the Athanasian Creed was fallacious or unscriptural'. I identified that it asserts the following errors:

- * The Trinity is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith (the Bible never says this)
- * A definition of God which is not only absent from the Bible, but contradicts the Bible's explicit definition of God as one person ([John 17:3](#) ) the Father is '**the only true God**', [1 Corinthians 8:6](#)  'there is **one God, the Father**', [Ephesians 4:6](#)  '**one God and Father of all**', [1 Timothy 2:4](#)  '**one God**, and one mediator between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus**')
- * The logical fallacy that A is X, B is X, C is X, but there is only one X


It was asserted by my opponent that the analogy I provided is '**clearly not the belief of Trinitarians**', and yet he used this formula himself (his words in italics, my analogy inserted in bold):

(1) So the Father is God ([Malachi 2:10](#) )








*** A is X**

(2) the Son is God, ([Hebrews 1:8](#) )

*** B is X**

(3) and the Holy Ghost is God ([Acts 5:3-4](#) )

*** C is X**

(4) And yet they are not Three Gods, but One God ([Isaiah 43:10-11](#) , [44:6](#) , [8](#) , [45:5-6](#) , [14](#) , [21-22](#) , [46:9](#) )

*** But there is only one X**



Note the inconsistent reasoning:

- * The Father is a person
- * The Son is a person
- * The Holy Spirit is a person
- * Therefore there are three persons

- * The Father is God
- * The Son is God
- * The Holy Spirit is God
- * But there is only one God

The logic of the syllogism is appealed to in one argument, but rejected in the other. The conclusion of the second argument contradicts the premises.

My opponent acknowledged that the Trinity is derived systematically from Scripture, and presented the traditional syllogism I predicted. Unable to find the doctrine preached by the apostles, he must assemble it himself by taking a verse from this letter, a verse from this book, a verse from this epistle, and constructing arguments which the apostles never preached nor penned. Why did the apostles never present such formulas?

As for the passages cited, [Hebrews 1:8](#)  does not refer to Christ as God (though it uses the term THEOS, used of the king of Israel in the psalm quoted), nor does [Acts 5:3-4](#)  define the Holy Spirit as God (though it does represent lying to a Divinely appointed man filled with the Holy Spirit as equivalent to lying to God). The reader can compare the claims made with the texts themselves, [here](#).

Since the Holy Spirit itself is an attribute of God (referred to consistently 'the Spirit of God'), and explicitly the agent by which He works ([Job 26:13](#) 'by His spirit', [Zechariah 4:6](#) 'by My spirit', [1 Corinthians 2:10](#) 'by His spirit', [Ephesians 3:16](#) 'by His spirit'), we should expect to see it described as omnipotent, omnipresent and eternal (though it is never described as such separate from the Father). In [1 Corinthians 2:10-11](#) the Holy Spirit is not referred to explicitly, Paul refers to 'the spirit of God', which he defines at the end of the chapter as 'the mind of God' ([1 Corinthians 2:16](#), quoting LXX [Isaiah 40:13](#)).

Supporting references for the following points are [here](#):

* In [Micah 5:2](#) Christ is not defined as eternal, but said to have an ancient lineage ('whose origins are in the distant past'), and other passages make it clear the son had a beginning in time (such as [Matthew 1:1](#)), which a number of the Early Fathers acknowledged.

* In [Matthew 28:18](#) Christ is not defined as omnipotent, but was **given** all authority, so there was a time when he **did not have** this authority, and there was one greater than himself who **gave him** this authority.

* In [John 16:30](#) Christ is not defined as omniscient, the disciples simply say 'You know all things', when Christ had previously stated explicitly that he did not ([Mark 13:32](#)). Christ's knowledge was limited during his life in earth ([Luke 2:52](#) 'Jesus **increased** in wisdom', [Hebrews 5:8](#) 'he **learned** obedience'), and still is ([Revelation 1:1](#) 'The revelation of Jesus Christ, **which God gave to him**').

* In [John 3:13](#) the phrase 'which is in heaven' is an interpolation (see Novum Testamentum Graece, Nestle-Aland 27th edition).

* **Creator:** In [Genesis 1:26](#) the pronouns 'us' and 'our' are used, but in verse 27 the noun and verb are in the singular, declaring only one person is involved in the act of creation of man and woman ('God created mankind in **his** own image, in the image of God **he** created them, male and female **he** created them'), repeated later in [Genesis 2:8](#), [22](#); [5:1-2](#), and [Matthew 19:4](#).

A range of Bible passages and Christian creedal confessions from the 1st to the 2nd centuries say the Father created alone ([proof](#)).

* **Saviour:** Christ and the Holy Spirit are described as involved in the process of salvation not because they effect it through their own acts, but because they are specifically **agents by which God saves** ([Romans 6:23](#), [Titus 3:5-6](#), [Galatians 3:15](#), [Hebrews 13:20-21](#)), through justification ([Romans 3:24-26](#); [5:1-2](#)), sanctification ([Hebrews 10:10](#)), and glorification ([2 Thessalonians 1:12](#)). It should be noted that glorification is not effected by resurrection, but by that which takes place subsequent to resurrection ([John 5:28-29](#)).

Christ does not act independently of God ([John 5:19](#), [30](#); [8:28](#)), but is **the agent** through whom God worked ([Matthew 9:8](#), [Acts 2:22](#)), by which God spoke ([John 12:49-50](#), [Hebrews 1:2](#)), and the man appointed by God to raise and judge the dead on His behalf ([John 5:22](#), [Acts 10:42](#); [17:31](#)).

It should be noted that Christ also had to be justified ([1 Timothy 3:16](#)), sanctified ([John 10:36](#)), and

glorified ([John 7:39](#); [11:4](#); [12:16](#), [Acts 3:13](#)), meaning he had to be saved through the same process as those he came to save.

* **Indwelling:** My opponent makes the assumption 'Since we are the temple of God, it makes no sense to believe that another other than God would dwell in us', and fails to take into account different senses of 'dwell'.

A number of quotes were provided by my opponent from men who did not believe in the Trinity as he defines it ([proof](#)).

Athenagoras: Only describes the Father and Son as God.

Theophilus: Uses the Greek word 'trias' (anachronistically translated 'trinity', though it meant 'three', or 'a group of three', and was not used to refer to the Trinity until the 6th century, see Liddell, Scott, Jones exhaustive Greek lexicon, edition 9), referring not to the trinity (three persons in one being), but explicitly to a group of three, the Father, Word and Wisdom (not Father, Son and Holy Spirit), of which only the Father is identified as God.

Clement: No reference to the three of them being God.

Tertullian: Nowhere are all three referred to as God, and Tertullian was a Modalist in any case.

Hippolytus: Here God is explicitly two persons, not three.

Cyprian: Uses a word translated 'trinity', but there is no definition of what this 'trinity' is.

The earliest of these quotes is dated to 175-177 AD, none of them are from creedal statements, and none refer to 'a Triune Godhead'. In contrast, I supplied three creedal statements predating the earliest quote by up to 100 years. This statement stands:

* The earliest Christian **creedal statements** describe God as **one person** ('the Father Almighty'), Christ as His son, the Holy Spirit as simply 'the Holy Spirit' (not a person), **and do not say Trinity is essential to the Christian faith**

Trinitarian: Point 1 Closing Statement

Saturday, August 12, 2006

[Prophetnick77 -- Point 1: Closing Statement](#)






Point 1: The Trinity--Is it or is it not sound biblical doctrine?



Once again the first point of debate is:


“The Trinity—is it or is it not sound Biblical doctrine?”

This is very important as Searchingone1033 wants to divert the issue via red herring argumentation to early Christian creeds and the alleged beliefs of the Church fathers.

I fail to see how I didn't address the Bible's claims of God being Three Persons. I went to great lengths to define what a Person is in the sense Trinitarians use it, as well as demonstrated from scripture each Personality. Let me mention that the Bible never describes the Father as one Person. By whatever reasoning Searchingone1033 considers the Father to be a Person, I can take that and use it to prove the Personality of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The pronoun issue is a non-issue. Trinitarians affirm One Being who is God. If the One Being speaks as a whole then we'd expect to see singular pronouns. If any One Person which constitutes the One Being speaks then we'd expect singular pronouns. Searchingone1033 has failed to notice that plural pronouns are used by God and can only be explained in light of His Tri-Unity. In other words, when one is speaking for the others we'd expect to see plural pronouns such as in [John 3:11](#) . We'd expect to see plural pronouns when the Trinity converses amongst itself such as [Genesis 1:26](#)  or [3:22](#) . (Cf. [Genesis 11:7](#)  & [Isaiah 6:8](#) ).

The Bible itself doesn't outline specific heresies in explicit terms. Thus we have to establish sound Biblical doctrine and conclude that any denial or deviation of these doctrines is heresy. Perhaps the clearest statement we have concerning what heresy is may be in [2Peter 2:1](#)  which speaks of false teachers bringing damnable heresies, denying the Lord Jesus. If denying Jesus is considered heresy then it follows that denying the Trinity is heresy as well because denying the Trinity is denying the second person of the Trinity who is the Jesus of scripture. Denying Jesus' humanity is heresy because this denies the incarnation ([1John 4:3](#) ), but to deny that Jesus was merely a man and nothing else is just good sense. The Bible presents a clear picture of the deity of Christ.

The Apostles teaching that there is One God is not anti-Trinitarian. We're monotheists. They never taught that God was One Person, the Father, and once again I point out that by whatever criteria Searchingone1033 believes the Father to be a Person, I can use it to prove the Personality of the Son and Holy Spirit. Also, Jesus' confirmation of the Father as the “only true God” is not a denial of His status as the “only true God.” [1John 5:20](#)  refers to the Son as “true God.”

The earliest creedal statements make no comments about God being only one Person, this has been read into them by Searchingone1033. We see the foundation of Nicene Trinitarianism in these creeds. And notice that more precision in definition was only needed as deviant teaching arose (e.g. Arian controversy). Even if no creed affirmed the Trinity that would have no bearing on the Bible's statements concerning the Nature and Persons of God. Once again, this is a red herring used to divert the issue.

Now the request of INDIVIDUAL passages that show Yahweh to be One Being subsisting as Three Persons—I'll save us all some time—There is no SINGLE passage that states this. As I said, we arrive at the doctrine of the Trinity systematically. Systematic theology brings consistency, harmony, and exclusion of contradiction in the Bible. Without it we run into more problems than can possibly exist in an inerrant Word of God.


Concerning the syllogism, Searchingone1033 didn't tell us WHY the syllogism in question was fallacious. He just said that it was, and once again he is representing the belief as $3X = 1X$. That would be false. We would represent it as $1A, 1B, 1C = 1X$. No illogic involved.


Next notice the straw man argument presented in arguing that the logic of one syllogism is appealed to in one argument yet rejected in another. Notice the difference:


The Father is God, The Son is God, The Holy Spirit is God, and there is Only One God.



The Father is **A** Person, The Son is **A** Person, The Holy Spirit is **A** Person, and there are Three Persons.



See the difference? The difference is in the distinction made between Persons. The Father is **A** Person distinct from the Person of the Son and the Person of the Holy Spirit. Yet there is no distinction in Deity. ***Each is not A God—They are the Same God!***


Now we're faced with the attempted refutations of the scriptures I presented. The claim that [Hebrews 1:8](#)  does not refer to Jesus as God is ridiculous. *"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God..."* is clear enough.







Next we're told that the Holy Spirit isn't referred to as God in [Acts 5:3-4](#)  but rather a divinely appointed man filled with the Holy Spirit was. Such an interpretation is not warranted from the text. Clearly the Holy Spirit was lied to in vs. 4 *"why did Satan fill your heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?"* and then in vs. 5 it's said that Ananias lied to God. A clearer statement couldn't have been made.





The Holy Spirit being an "attribute" of God in no way diminishes His Personality. Likewise Wisdom is an attribute of God yet we know that the Person Christ is the Wisdom of God ([1Corinthians 1:24](#) ). No one would claim that Christ is not a Person.



As for the eternity of the Son in [Micah 5:2](#) , additional witnesses can be added, this one was used because of the clear implications of the phrase *"mi'y'mei olam"* (from everlasting). First note that this is the only time this phrase appears in the entire Tanach. Secondly, notice the progression in emphasis, *"from old, from everlasting."* Thirdly, although not identical, there's a supporting reference in [Proverbs 8:23](#)  speaking of God's Wisdom (see above) as being set up *from everlasting*, and Wisdom is obviously an *eternal attribute* of God.

We can just as easily point to [John 1:1](#)  which speaks of the Word existing in the beginning making use of the imperfect tense which represents a continuous or reoccurring action in past time. The only way the Word could have been present in the beginning (no matter how far back the beginning extends) is to have pre-existed the beginning of time, which shows eternity. While it's true that Jesus had a beginning (via the incarnation) the Son has existed from all eternity. In [Proverbs 30:4](#)  the question

was asked concerning the name of God's Son (pre-incarnation). Job knew his redeemer lived before the incarnation ([Job 19:25](#) ).

[Matthew 28:18](#)  certainly refers to the Son as omnipotent and the Father's giving the authority to him in no way detracts from this fact. A.T. Robertson describes this act as a "*timeless aorist*" since there is no point in time where we are shown the giving of authority. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament says, "*His [God's] omnipotence, in which Christ shares as Kurios (1 C. 8:6; [Col. 1:16](#) ; [Mt. 28:18](#) )*, extends over the whole world, over heaven and earth." (TDNT, 1:679) We can also reason that only an omnipotent being can create ex nihilo (from nothing) which the Son has done ([John 1:3](#) ; [Colossians 1:16](#) ; [Hebrews 1:3](#) ).

In [John 16:30](#)  Jesus does not correct the statement that he knows all things. This is confirmed in [John 21:17](#)  post-resurrection. An argument can only be made that Jesus was not omniscient if we focus on his humanity alone. Impossible since within the one Person there are two Natures. Jesus' not knowing the hour of His return is not a denial of omniscience, but rather spoken in His humiliated state. So even if we exclude [John 16:30](#)  which was also during Christ's humiliated state, we have [John 21:17](#)  after Christ was glorified.

The textual variant in [John 3:13](#)  don't affect the omnipresence of the Son a bit. We also have [Matthew 28:20](#)  to bear witness to this fact. To be with the disciples always even unto the end of the age would require that the Son be everywhere that disciples are. This is an impossible task without omnipresence.

I'm out of space but allow me to state:

Tertullian: Not a modalist, in fact he "was branded with the charge of polytheism in circles where modalism flourished." (Kelly, J.N.D., *Early Christian Doctrine*, p. 110)

Athenagoras: Too clear to misunderstand.

Theophilus: Used trias in the sense of the Trinity (See footnotes 2 & 3 in ANF, 2:101) or Triad (Kelly, ECD, p. 109)... Tertullian derived his Latin trinitas from Theophilus' trias. No anachronism necessary.

Hippolytus: Equally as clear, "*God is one...threefold manifestation.*" (See also Kelly, ECD, p. 110-15).

Cyprian: Why expect an exact definition that didn't come for another 75 years?

Want earlier quotes? OK... [Earlier quotes here.](#)

The earliest creedal statements do not define God as One Person; in fact they all list all Three Persons of the Trinity thus laying the foundation for later more exact definitions.

Moderator Comment

Sunday, August 13, 2006

Moderator Comment

We have now come to the end of the first of the Four Point Debate. Point two will be on the subject of the being or person of the The Father. Prophetnick77 will make the opening argument and Searchingone1033 will have the follow up rebuttal.

Trinitarian: Point 2 Opening Statement

Wednesday, August 16, 2006

[Prophetnick77 -- Point 2: Opening Statement](#)

Point 2: The Person or Being of the Father

The topic of the Father is an interesting one because there is little disagreement concerning Him even amongst the most adversarial positions. Muslims, Jews, Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians, Mormons, etc... all acknowledge the Father as God. So from this it would seem that there is little to debate, but on the contrary, our views of the Father are all different.

Immediately I must define the Father as a Person, the first Person of the Trinity. The Father's Being is the same as that of the Son and the Holy Spirit yet he is Distinct Personally from the other two.

There isn't much to be said in this topic concerning the Father's Deity as we both agree that the Father is God. Where we disagree is in the Father being alone in possession of the Nature of Deity. I have set forth my affirmative position on the Trinity in three points (Creation, Salvation, Indwelling), showing the Father to be active in all three. To this list many things can be added, but they would be added for naught. I will however revisit one point where Searchingone1033 said that the Bible and Early Church Fathers declared that the Father created alone. Such is not the case at all.

The scriptures cited in support of this all showed that Yahweh God created alone. As a Trinitarian I readily affirm that truth because Yahweh is a Tri-unity of Persons. One has to reason circularly to say that the Father created alone. It requires first the belief that Yahweh is only the Father, and then it takes this belief and reads it back into every passage concerning Yahweh, concluding that they all speak of the Father alone. Such is begging the question and must be pointed out as fallacious.

The Early Church quotes simply affirmed that the Father is God Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. This is also a fact that I affirm as a Trinitarian as all three Persons were active in creation, the Father included. The statements are not denials of the other two Persons creative abilities and roles. I'd also point out that the "us" and "our" issue from [Genesis 1:26](#) was glossed over. We were only told that in the next verse the singular noun and verb were used, yet we weren't told how this coincides with the previous verse or how this in any way shows One Person as opposed to One Being. The Trinitarian position explains this seeming contradiction with clarity and good reason.

That being said, it is obvious that Searchingone1033 does not deny the deity of the Father. He does not deny that the Father is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. Therefore I find myself needing to affirm first the Personality of the Father.

Let me first state that Searchingone1033 made many appeals to God being One Person, the Father, yet never told us in what way the Father is a Person. It appears that this has been taken for granted. Perhaps he believes that the pronouns 'He', 'His', 'Him', 'I', 'Me', and 'My' establish this fact, but I would argue that they only help to build the case. As per my definition in my first rebuttal to Searchingone1033's opening statement, I will set forth the Father's Personality.

The Father thinks (intelligence)

Many, O LORD my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. ([Psalm 40:5](#) 📖)

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! ([Psalm 139:17](#) 📖)

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. ([Isaiah 55:8](#) 📖)

The Father reasons (rational)

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. ([Isaiah 1:18](#) 📖).

The Father is self-aware (conscious)

And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; ([Genesis 35:11](#) 📖)

Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. ([Psalm 46:10](#) 📖)

Having now established firmly the Personality of the Father with a scriptural foundation we can look into his identity as Father. Why is He called “Father” and in what sense is He called this? These questions will be answered in the following paragraphs.

The Father is known in relation to the Son. A Father cannot by logical necessity be a Father (that is, truly a Father) without a child. When we use terms like “Early Church Fathers” or “Founding Fathers of our Nation” we are using the word “Father” in a symbolic sense. Symbolically these men were at the foundation of these movements and helped to symbolically birth them. Such is not the case with God the Father.

Eternality

God the Father is eternal as evidenced by [Psalm 90:2](#) 📖, “*from everlasting to everlasting thou art God*” and [Deuteronomy 33:27](#) 📖, “*The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms...*” God’s power and divinity are eternal ([Romans 1:20](#) 📖) as well as His glory ([1Peter 5:10](#) 📖) and purpose ([Ephesians 3:11](#) 📖). Establishing the Father’s eternity is central to His Person because what follows will show the sense in which he has eternally been the Father.

Immutability

God is immutable as [Psalm 102:27](#) 📖 declares, “*thou art the same and thy years shall have no end.*” Yahweh emphatically stating His immutability in [Malachi 3:6](#) 📖 saying, “*For I am the LORD, I change not...*” James informs us that there is no variation in the Father of lights ([James 1:17](#) 📖). Thus the immutability of God the Father is established from scripture which brings me to my next point.

Logical Arguments

If God is eternal (which He is) and immutable (which He is), and God is the Father (which He is), then it follows that God has always been the Father. We cannot understand this in the symbolic sense because God has existed from all eternity, pre-existing all that could be considered symbolic children. In other words, to claim that God is known as “Father” in the symbolic sense because he is “*The Father of Spirits*” ([Hebrews 12:9](#)) or the “*Father of Lights*” ([James 1:17](#)) or because angels are referred to as “*sons of God*” ([Job 1:6](#), [2:1](#)) is necessarily false because all of these things are created. They all came into existence in time, not eternity.

There was a time when there was no light because God had to create light ([Genesis 1:3](#)). Likewise there was a time before men had spirits because God had to breathe the breath of life into the nostrils of the first man Adam ([Genesis 2:7](#)) and [Ecclesiastes 12:7](#) affirms that God gave the spirit to man. We also see that by the Word of the LORD and the breath of His mouth were all the hosts of heaven (angels) made ([Psalm 33:6](#)). Even if one holds to the Arian position of Jesus being the first creation of God, there is still no accounting for the Father being the Father before creation, from all eternity. Thus we must conclude that in the real sense of the word “Father” that God the Father has always been exactly that—an eternal Father with an eternal Son.

We cannot conclude the Father to ever have not been the Father because of his eternality and immutability, yet we cannot conclude the Father to be the Father in either sense (truly or symbolically) without a child of some sort. If there was a time when all things which were created were not in existence, then we can’t take this in the symbolic sense. If the Son was a creation, then He falls into the former category. Therefore we can only reason that there had to have been an eternal child, the Son of God who could qualify the Father as Father. This is also the position supported by scripture and one that will be dealt with in more detail in the next point of debate concerning the Son.

Now having stated all of this I expect to hear a lot of things more focused on the Father’s Deity than anything else. I expect to see scripture passages calling the Father God, a point that I affirm. I expect to see the topic shifted from the Father being God to the Son not being God, a point that I reject. But what I would like to see most and don’t expect to see at all (*because none exists*) is a valid reason for how a Father can be a Father from all eternity without having a Son who has been His Son from all eternity.

Christadelphian: Point 2 Rebuttal

[Searchingone1033 -- Point 2: First Rebuttal](#)

Point 2: The Person or Being of the Father

The previous exchange reached an agreement that:

- * The Bible does not describe God as three persons in any passage of Scripture
- * The Trinity is derived by systematically associating texts which speak separately of the Father, son, and Holy Spirit
- * The Trinity as defined in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan and Athanasian Creeds was developed over time from the 2nd century onwards, and was not declared in any creed to be an essential Christian belief until at least the 4th century

Readers, ask yourself if this is truly a doctrine taught by the apostles.

We move now to the Father. I believe in one God, the Father. My opponent believes in one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. I quoted directly from the earliest creedal confessions, demonstrating that they expressed the belief that there is one God, who is one person, the Father.

However, my opponent claims 'The earliest creedal statements make no comments about God being only one Person'. I invite the readers to consider whether the following statements (taken from the earliest creedal statements), refer to one person or more than one:

- * I believe in **God the Father, Almighty**
- * We thank thee, **holy Father... Thou, Almighty Master**
- * I believe in **one God, the Father Almighty**
- * Do you believe in **God the Father Almighty?**
- * I believe in **God the Father Almighty**

These statements refer to God as the Father, one person, and speak of Him using the singular pronoun (which is used for **one person**). Readers, ask yourself if the Father is one person or more than one. Even Trinitarians acknowledge the Father is one person.

My opponent wishes to claim that the following statements are equivalent:

- * I believe in God the Father, Almighty; Maker of Heaven and Earth
- * We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance, for there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit

I ask the readers to consider if these statements are really equivalent. It is inaccurate to claim that the second statement is merely a 'clarification' of the first, because it contradicts it. The fact that the first statement was eventually abandoned when the Trinity was finally developed, and replaced in the creeds with the second, proves that the first statement was **certainly not** considered to be equivalent to the second, nor merely a 'clarification' of it. The original teaching was discarded, and replaced by another teaching entirely, which required a totally different description.

Readers, ask your Trinitarian friends which of these statements they confess. Ask them if they would accept the first statement as a true definition of God.

My opponent claimed 'The scriptures cited in support of this all showed that Yahweh God created alone', and yet explicit statements to this effect have been provided from both Scripture and the earliest creedal confessions ([here](#)). These statements do not simply say '**God** created alone', but refer explicitly to a person, **one** person, the **Father**.

Likewise my opponent wishes to claim that the following statements are equivalent:


* I believe in God the Father, Almighty; Maker of Heaven and Earth

* I believe God the Father Almighty, and in God the Son Almighty, and in God the Holy Spirit Almighty, and that all three Persons were active in creation

My opponent wishes to claim that the first confession is equivalent to the second, on the basis that Trinitarians believe that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were all involved in creation. But that is not what the first statement says. It says explicitly and exclusively that **God, the Father** (one person), is the maker of heaven and earth. The earliest confessions say nothing about Jesus or the Holy Spirit being 'active in creation', and only attribute creation to the Father.

Readers, ask your Trinitarian friends which statement they confess. The first statement was the earliest Christian creedal confession, but the Trinitarians who came later abandoned this statement for a completely different statement with which it is incompatible ([here](#)), since they did not believe this first statement to be a true expression of their belief.

My opponent wishes to claim that the first person pronoun does not necessarily refer to one person, saying 'Trinitarians affirm One Being who is God, and claiming 'If the One Being speaks as a whole then we'd expect to see singular pronouns'.

This isn't an inadequate description of the Trinity, since Trinitarians do not simply 'affirm One Being who is God', but affirm one being **who is three persons**. Since their 'One Being' is three persons, then if the 'One Being' speaks as a whole the correct pronoun is the first person **plural** pronoun '**we**', as Trinitarians acknowledge when they make their argument for [Genesis 1:26](#) .

In grammar, personal pronouns do not count **beings**, they count **persons**, and therefore when the **singular** pronoun is used, only **one** person can be speaking. When more than one person is speaking, the plural pronoun **must** be used.

My opponent accepts that the plural pronoun refers to more than one person, but wants to claim that **singular pronoun** can refer to **more than one person** also. This is bad grammar, since the singular

pronoun actually refers to **one person** not **more than one** (check any English or Hebrew grammar reference), and it is bad theology from the Trinitarian perspective because it fails to distinguish the three persons, representing God as one person instead of three. In the Athanasian Creed this is condemned as 'confounding the persons'.

It is worth noting that Trinitarians censure so called 'Oneness Pentecostals' (who believe that there is one God, who is one person, and that person is Jesus), for representing the **plural pronouns** as referring to only **one person**, so it is ironic that so many Trinitarians make an equally false argument by likewise abandoning the true meaning of the grammar when it comes to the **singular pronoun**.

The fact is that the Bible states explicitly concerning God that 'The Lord our God is one Lord' ([Deuteronomy 6:6](#), [Mark 12:29](#)), and that '**he** [one person] is one, and there is no one else besides **him** [one person]' ([Mark 12:32](#)), never describing God as 'three in one'. This is not a description of 'One Being' who is 'three persons', for pronouns actually **count persons** not 'beings', and since the singular pronoun is used then we are being told repeatedly that God is **one person**.

Far from being 'glossed over' as my opponent claims, [Genesis 1:26](#) was expounded by me in some detail, but since my argument was never addressed and the passage has been raised again, I shall repeat it.

In [Genesis 1:26](#) the plural pronouns 'us' and 'our' are used, but in verse 27 the noun and verb are in the **singular**, indicating that **only one person** is involved in the act of creation of man and woman, thus the translation 'God created mankind in **his** own image, in the image of God **he** created them, male and female **he** created them'.

This is repeated later in [Genesis 2:8](#), '**he** placed the man **he** had formed', [Genesis 2:22](#), 'the Lord God made a woman from the part **he** had taken... **he** brought her', [Genesis 5:1-2](#), '**he** made them... **He** created them male and female... **he** blessed them', and Christ described the creation of man and woman as the act of **one person who was not himself** ([Matthew 19:4](#), '**he** made them male and female').


The following quote is from the footnote on [Genesis 1:26](#) in the New English Translation, a standard Evangelical translation produced by a committee which is uncompromisingly Trinitarian. All emphasis is mine, and the ellipsis omits only a discussion of the 'plural of majesty' explanation, which it explains is wrong (and I agree):

'Many Christian theologians interpret it as an early hint of plurality within the Godhead, **but this view imposes later trinitarian concepts on the ancient text.**

[...]

In [2 Sam 24:14](#) David uses the plural **as representative of all Israel**, and in [Isa 6:8](#) the Lord speaks **on behalf of his heavenly court**.

In its ancient Israelite context the **plural is most naturally understood as referring to God and his heavenly court** (see [1 Kgs 22:19-22](#); [Job 1:6-12](#); [2:1-6](#); [Isa 6:1-8](#)). (The most well-known members of this court **are God's messengers, or angels**. In [Gen 3:5](#) the serpent may refer to this group as "gods/divine beings." See the note on the word "evil" in 3:5.)

If this is the case, God invites the heavenly court to participate in the creation of mankind (**perhaps in the role of offering praise**, see [Job 38:7](#) ) **, but he himself is the one who does the actual creative work** (v. 27).'

Objection to moderators: The argument that 'We cannot conclude the Father to ever have not been the Father' is an argument for the external existence of the son prior to his birth, and should be held over to the next point in the debate.

Trinitarian: Point 2 Counter Rebuttal

Saturday, August 19, 2006

[Prophetnick77 -- Point 2: Counter Rebuttal](#)

Point 2: The Person or Being of the Father

Have you ever seen a comedian bomb on stage? Or perhaps watched your infant fall off of the bed after being left unattended for a second or two? If you have then you know how painful it is and how these things appear to happen in slow motion. That's how I felt while reading Searachingone1033's rebuttal to my opening argument. It was akin to watching a train wreck—I was horrified by what I was witnessing.

I must immediately begin by pointing out the less than honest conclusions of my opponent.

1. It was NEVER agreed upon that scripture does not describe the one Being of God as Three Persons. In fact that statement was supported.
2. Yes, the Trinity is arrived at by systematically studying the whole of scripture in context. The underlying presupposition is that God as an eternally perfect Being cannot contradict Himself. I'd ask for the 'lone verse' that says doctrine must be spelled out clearly in a 'lone verse.'
3. No doubt that the definition was given more precision in later creeds. Such is the destiny of all theology. But let's not confuse this with the doctrine not being taught in scripture or being believed by the earliest Christians—such is not the case at all as has been sufficiently proven.

I must point out that the same fallacy which has run throughout all of my opponent's posts rears its ugly little head again in this one and that's the constant attempt to make this about creeds and not scripture. If he wants to argue creeds then so be it, that's his right—but I'll be arguing based on scripture. Any mention of creeds will be supplemental.

We now move into the repeated circular reasoning which is that there is One God who is One Person, the Father. He takes this for granted and then reads into every passage of scripture that speaks of God. I'd like to see a positive proof of this—so far none has been provided or from what I can see even attempted.

Another red herring swims into the debate in the question posed to the readers of whether or not the Father is "one person or more than one person" which is immediately followed by an acknowledgement that Trinitarians don't believe he is more than one person! Why even ask the question then?

More illogic surfaces, this time in the form of straw man arguments claiming that I'm contending that "One God the Father Almighty" is synonymous with "God in Trinity, Trinity in Unity." When have I ever made such a claim? It's then argued that my claim would be that the Nicene-Constantinopolitan and Athanasian Creeds are further clarifications of this phrase—but this isn't an argument that I have made or will make. I would however say that the later creeds are a further and more precise treatment of the rudimentary language of the ENTIRE Apostle's Creed. Irenaeus himself endeavored to expound upon the creed which can be seen in Searachingone1033's [links](#). There is no doubt that the Son and Holy Spirit are mentioned alongside the Father in the Apostle's Creed, thus it isn't surprising that they would be given

more attention in the years to come.

Next we have the claim of the Father creating alone. With the exception of [Isaiah 64:8](#), none of the verses cited even say that the Father created. They all say that Yahweh/God created. Now it can be reasonably deduced that the Father created from these verses because the Father is One of Three Persons who equally share the Nature of Deity, and it was this One Divine Being who created. And once again it must be noted that each of these verses speaks of One God (Yahweh) creating, NOT One Person.

Another straw man argument is given attributing statements to me that I have never made. I won't dignify them with an explanation. Attention is then shifted back to the creeds as never saying the Son and Holy Spirit were active in creation. My response is "so what?" The Bible makes these declarations as was shown in my first post of point 1. I'd also point out that to argue from silence is no argument at all. I can equally claim that the creeds don't say anything about the Son and Holy Spirit not being active in creation.

And something I find to be extremely strange is that Irenaeus was quoted in one of the links as saying, "One God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth" as if he believed that the Father ALONE created.

Irenaeus said elsewhere:

"For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks, saying, 'Let Us make man after Our image and likeness;'" (ANF 1:487-88)

If his first statement can be taken as reflective of early Christian belief (which of course it can be) then his second statement can as well. There is no reason to assume that the early church would have deviated from the testimony of scripture that the Father was not alone in the act of creation.

I find it strange that a non-Trinitarian would tell a Trinitarian that his description of the Trinity was inadequate. For the record, all Trinitarians agree that there is One Being that is God. We understand that God is a noun and not a personal name hence the word "God" in reference to Deity always speaks of the One Being of Deity. Now we also acknowledge that this One Being (i.e. Nature/Essence/Substance) is shared equally by Three Persons. To level the charge of inadequacy in description only shows the lack of substantial argument against the points I have raised.

To continue, I was very careful to differentiate between the Three Persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) of the One Being (God) speaking collectively, which would employ use of singular pronouns since it is the One Being speaking, and the Three Persons of the One Being conversing amongst themselves which would employ the use of plural pronouns. And what is the response to this?—an alleged rule of grammar that beings don't speak but persons do.

I'd ask exactly which English or Hebrew grammar references state the rule that personal pronouns are never used of Beings but always Persons. I happen to have in my possession my 2nd grade English textbook. We shall now look to the section on Personal Pronouns and see if it is in agreement with Searchingone1033's claim.

"When a pronoun is used in place of a person's name, it is called a personal pronoun. **Personal**

pronouns may also refer to things.” - *Building English Skills*, (Evanston, IL: McDougal, Littell & Company, 1988) p. 427

Well there you have it—even at an elementary level we are taught that personal pronouns can identify things. If a Being is not a Person (as Searcingone1033 must claim in this case) then it is a Thing. Personal pronouns are still appropriate.

As for confounding the persons, I have done no such thing. This again is a caricature of the view that I took the time to explain in detail. My reason for doing so was so that no possible misrepresentation could occur, and although it has here, I believe the reader will be able to reference my original statements to see the falsity of the claim.

Concerning the Shema as was wrongly cited twice now as [Deuteronomy 6:6](#) (6:4 is the proper citation), there is no interaction with the verse itself. In Hebrew it reads, “*Shema Yisrael Yahweh eloheynu Yahweh echad*.” Immediately I must point out that “*eloheynu*” (‘our God’) is in the plural form. Secondly, the word “*echad*” translated as “one” in many versions is a word that allows for diversity in unity (cf. [Genesis 2:24](#), [11:6](#); [Ezek. 37:17](#)).

It’s the word that “*echad*” modifies which determines whether or not a plurality in unity is in view. In this case, “*echad*” modifies “Yahweh” and as such there is no *a priori* reason to assume that Yahweh is not a plurality of persons, especially in light of verses such as [Genesis 19:24](#).

The argument was simply repeated for [Genesis 1:26](#) but there was once again no attempt to harmonize vs. 26 with vs. 27. We’re then directed to a footnote from the NET Bible which makes inaccurate assertions. It’s a double-edged sword in that Irenaeus interpreted the “us” and “our” as a plurality of persons.

So Searchingone1033 is forced to admit that the Trinitarian concepts were held prior to Nicaea-Constantinople or that the NET Bible commentary is incorrect. I’d also point out that in [1Kings 22:19-22](#); [Job 1:6-12](#); [2:1-6](#), God does not speak using plural pronouns so any reference to them is irrelevant. Isaiah 6 shows Yahweh conversing within Himself.

As far as the objection goes, my treatment was dealing specifically with the Father. I see this as nothing more than an admission that the argument I posed is too strong to be dealt with accordingly.

Christadelphian: Point 2 Closing Statement

Tuesday, August 22, 2006



[Searchingone1033 -- Point 2: Closing Statement](#)

POINT 2: The person or being of the Father



My opponent acknowledges that his doctrine is inferred from various passages of Scripture, and not taught explicitly in Scripture. Since my understanding of God is taught explicitly in Scripture, I see no necessity to abandon it for my opponent's personal inferences. If there was even a single passage in which the apostles taught people the Trinity, or a single passage in which it was said to be essential Christian doctrine, my opponent would have quoted when by now, but we both know such passages do not exist.

My opponent asks where it is written that doctrines must be declared explicitly in order to be valid. I have never said that inferred doctrines are necessarily invalid. Doctrines which are merely inferred cannot be considered essential and necessary teachings, because there is **no evidence that they were taught at all** (else we would not have to infer them).

Consider instead the Biblical evidence:

* Christ declared that it is eternal life to know **the Father** as the only true God ([John 17:3](#) ) , meaning that [1 John 5:20](#)  (where the grammar is ambiguous), must refer to the Father and not Jesus (you cannot have two persons who are 'the **only** true God')


* The apostles repeatedly taught that God is one person, **the Father** ([here](#))

* [Acts 2: 3](#) , [000](#)  are baptized with the knowledge that God is **the Father**, and that Jesus Christ is 'a **man clearly attested to you by God** with powerful deeds, wonders, and miraculous signs **that God performed among you through him**'

* In the Divine throne room visions of Exodus 24, Ezekiel 1, Daniel 7, Acts 7, and Revelation 4-5, God is shown as **one person**, not three.

My opponent claimed that the Bible and the Early Fathers do not teach that the Father created alone. Readers, judge for yourselves ([here](#) and [here](#)), noting especially Christ's attribution of creation to **one person**, who was not himself.

It was further claimed that the apostles 'never taught that God was One Person, the Father'. The apostles did not simply teach that there is one God, they taught explicitly that there is **one God**, the **Father**:

[1 Corinthians 8:6](#)  yet for us there is **one God, the Father**...

Since the apostles taught that there is **one God**, who is **the Father**, and since my opponent has agreed the Father is **one person** ('The Father is A Person'), then the **one God** is **one person**, the **Father**. Note that Christ is distinguished **from** God, not included in 'God'.

The word 'elohim' is not a 'plural noun'. It has an ending which in other nouns is plural), but in fact it can refer either to a singular or plural subject, just like 'fish' and 'sheep'. It's the subject/verb agreement which identifies whether it is singular or plural, as in English.

Other nouns of this class include the following (places where the usage is singular are in parentheses):

* zequnim: old age ([Genesis 21:2](#), [7](#); [37:3](#); [44:20](#))

* ne`urim: youth ([1 Samuel 17:33](#))

* 'adonim: lord ([Isaiah 19:4](#))

In English, if I say 'The fish **is** blue', you know I'm talking about one fish, not because 'fish' is the singular form of 'fish', but because '**is**' is the singular verb. If I say 'the sheep **are** outside', you know I am talking about more than one sheep, not because 'sheep' is the plural form of 'sheep', but because '**are**' is the plural verb. The same applies to the Hebrew word 'elohim'. Whenever the verb is singular, the noun refers to **only one person**.

When 'elohim' takes the plural verb, it refers to more than one person, such as the gods of the heathen, men, or angels. But the singular verb is used when 'elohim' is used of God Himself. This reinforces repeatedly that God is **one person**.

In [Genesis 1:26](#), God ('elohim'), said 'Let us make', addressing persons other than Himself (the angels in His presence to whom He speaks, as in [1 Kings 22:19-22](#), and [Isaiah 6:1-8](#)).

When the actual creation takes place in verse 27, the word 'elohim' is used with the singular form of the verb 'make', proving that the creation was carried out by **only one person**. If the creation had been carried out by **more than one person**, it would necessarily have been described with the **plural form** of the verb.


It is worth noting that the Jews (who may be relied upon to know Hebrew), always understood 'elohim' and the singular verb to refer to **one person**, and translated it with the singular word for God in their Greek translations of the Old Testament (THEOS). The Jews of course have for thousands of years worshipped God as one person, and He has never seen fit to reveal they should do otherwise.

My opponent claimed that I said 'beings don't speak but persons do', when I said no such thing, I said personal pronouns **count persons**, not beings. It doesn't matter if you have only one being, if that one being is **more than one male person**, then you cannot use the singular male pronoun 'he', you must use 'they'. If you wish to refer to the entity without reference to the persons, you would have to say 'it'.

Readers, I invite you to ask yourself what you understand by '**he**'. Do you understand one person, or more than one person? In Hebrew, Greek and English, '**he**' means '**one person**'. My opponent has failed to show otherwise (and cannot).


An appeal was made to the Hebrew word 'echad', and it was erroneously claimed that the Trinity is a 'compound unity'. In fact a compound unity is a union of **separate entities**, not a single entity, and since Trinitarians insist that God is not a union of separate entities, He cannot be described as a 'compound

unity’.


The Hebrew word ‘echad’ functions as the English word ‘one’ does, and when placed in front of a noun such as ‘one **lord**’ ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#) ) , means **one single** noun, not a ‘compound unity’ (and a ‘lord’ is certainly not a ‘compound unity’). Academic Trinitarian apologists such as Gregory Boyd understand this ([here](#)).

It is of course meaningless to claim (as my opponent does), that God has always been the literal father of Christ, since in order to be a literal father a person must cause a son to **come into existence** when previously **they did not exist** (whereas my opponent wishes to claim that Christ has always existed).

The Bible says there was a time when God's fatherhood of Christ was still future, demonstrating that it was not eternal:

[2 Samuel 7:14](#)  **I will become** his father and **he will become** my son.

Scripture also tells us the time that God **became** the father of Christ:

[Hebrews 1:5](#)  For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my son! **Today I have fathered you**”? And in another place he says, “**I will be his father and he will be my son.**”

Scripture thus tells us explicitly that there was a time when God **was not** the father of Christ, and Scripture tells us explicitly that there was a time when God **became** the father of Christ.

Recognising that none of the earliest creeds declare the son and Holy Spirit to have been active in creation, my opponent responds:

* ‘...the creeds don’t say anything about the Son and Holy Spirit not being active in creation.’ This is a logical fallacy, an attempt to assert an argument in the basis of the absence of evidence.

In contrast, I have argued **positively**, from the data which is actually **in** the creeds. I have argued that the Christians who wrote those creeds believed in one God, the Father Almighty, and that the Father created all things. I have provided direct quotes from the creeds saying exactly this.

My opponent has claimed that these Christians believed in one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but is unable to find a single statement to this effect in any of these creeds, and has been reduced to claiming without evidence that they believed it.

I argue legitimately that the Christians who wrote those creeds believed in one God, the Father Almighty, and that the Father created all things, because that is what they **actually wrote**. This is positive evidence for my argument from the creeds, but there is none for my opponent’s.

My opponent complains about my raising the earliest creeds (to which he is unable to give unqualified consent), but I only raise them in response to his repeated claims that the Trinity was taught as essential doctrine from the 1st century onwards. If such claims were true, we would find the Trinity explicitly declared as such in these creeds (as it was in much later creeds), but we do not find it so much as referred to, not even once.

I have, of course, made a positive argument from Scripture, as a reading of both my posts and my web pages will show (over fifty passages of Scripture have been quoted).

Moderator Comment

Thursday, August 24, 2006

Moderator Comment

We have now come to the end of part two of our four point debate. At the half way point, I would like to thank both participants for their willingness and diligence in presenting their differing points of view. We will now be moving on to part three of our debate, the person of the Son. Searchingone1033 will have the opening argument and Prophetnick77 will have the first rebuttal.

Christadelphian: Point 3 Opening Statement

Friday, August 25, 2006

[Searchingone1033 -- Point 3: Opening Statement](#)

POINT 3: The Person of the Son

Readers, consider which is more authoritative, my opponent's inferences or the explicit teaching of the apostles.

The apostles taught explicitly that Christ is the **agent** by which **God** saves ([Romans 6:23](#)) 'the gift of **God** is **eternal life in Christ Jesus**', [Titus 3:5-6](#) 'renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom **He** [God] poured out on us in full measure **in Jesus Christ our Savior**', [Galatians 3:15](#) 'in **Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham would come** to the Gentiles', [Hebrews 13:20-21](#) 'God... working in us what is pleasing before him **through Jesus Christ**', including justification ([Romans 3:24-26](#); [5:1-2](#)), sanctification ([Hebrews 10:10](#)) 'we have been made holy ['sanctified'] **through the offering of the body of Jesus**', and glorification ([2 Thessalonians 2:12](#)).

Did the apostles teach the Trinity as an essential Christian doctrine?

* [Acts 2: 3](#), [100](#) are baptized with the knowledge that God is **the Father**, and that Jesus Christ is 'a **man** clearly attested to you **by God** with powerful deeds, wonders, and miraculous signs **that God performed among you through him**'

* Acts 3: The apostles teach that Christ is 'the servant of God', that '**the God of our forefathers**, has glorified **his servant Jesus**', distinguishing Jesus from God (not just from 'God the Father')

* Acts 4: The apostles attribute all creation to **God as one person**, and refer to Jesus not as God but **the servant of God** (again distinguishing Jesus from God)

* Acts 5: The apostles teach that **God** raised **Jesus** (again distinguishing Jesus from God), and say that **God** exalted **Jesus**, raising him to the right hand of **God** (as distinct from Jesus), preaching to everyone that Jesus was **the Christ** (not that Jesus was God)

* Acts 7: Stephen preaches Jesus is the son of man (not 'God'), distinguishes between God and Christ, and says that he **saw** Jesus and God as **two separate beings**, with Jesus on the right hand of **God**

* Acts 8: People are baptized after hearing 'the good news about the **kingdom of God** and the name of **Jesus Christ**', not that Jesus is God

* Acts 10: A household is baptized after the apostles preach that Jesus is 'the one **appointed by God**', and say that Jesus could perform miracles 'because **God** was **with him**', not because he was God

* Acts 11: Peter defends his baptism of Gentiles who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (not the Trinity), but does not have to defend neglecting to teach that Jesus is really God

* Acts 13: In a lengthy speech Christ is repeatedly distinguished from God, and the good news is that **'God** brought to Israel a Savior, **Jesus'** (not 'Jesus is God')

* Acts 17: God is repeatedly identified as one person ('He'), a person other than Christ, who made the world, and is 'going to judge the world in righteousness, by **a man** whom **he designated**', identifying Jesus as **a man** who is **the agent of God**, not as God

Why did the apostles **never make arguments of my opponent?**

Later Christians admitted the apostles never taught Jesus is God, but could not agree why ([here](#)).


The apostles predicate Christ's work of salvation on his being **a man identical to those he came to save**, who **really died**, and needed salvation ([here](#)). But Trinitarians cannot accept that Christ really died ([here](#)), and some Trinitarian Bibles obscure the fact he came 'in the flesh', along with making other translation errors motivated by bias ([here](#)).

Lacking explicit Biblical teaching that Jesus is the second person of the Trinity, Trinitarians attempt to make a case that Jesus is God on the basis that he:

* Is called THEOS:

My opponent has rightly corrected this (my emphasis):




'it is not enough that the Father is called God, the Son is called God, and the Holy Spirit is called God. **The title in and of itself does not necessitate** that each person being called God is the one true God, **nor does it irrefutably prove the Trinity.'**










Jesus said the same ([John 10:33-36](#) )





* Forgave sins:

The disciples could forgive sins ([John 20:23](#) ) , and no one claims they are God.

* Performed miracles

Christ performed miracles not because he was God, but because gave him the power to do so, just like other prophets sent by God ([Matthew 9:8](#) , [John 3:2](#) ; [14:10-11](#) ).

Christ taught that the miracles were the work of **God** through him ([John 5:19](#) , [30](#)  'the Son **can do nothing from himself**', 'I can do **nothing of myself**' [John 14:10](#)  ' **the Father** residing in me **performs his miraculous deeds**,'), and Scripture states explicitly that he had no power of his own, but received it from God ([Matthew 28:18](#) , [John 5:19-20](#) , [26](#) , [30](#) ; [8:28](#) , [Revelation 5:12](#) ).

The apostles likewise taught explicitly that the miracles were performed by **God**, through **Christ** ([Acts 2:22](#)  'a man clearly attested to you **by God** with powerful deeds, wonders, and miraculous signs **that God performed among you through him**', [Acts 10:42](#) ; [17:31](#) , [Philippians 2:9](#) ).

* Has authority to judge men

Christ has the authority to judge men not because he is God, but because he is **a man** whom **God has appointed** with this authority ([John 5:22](#), [27](#); [17:1-3](#) [Acts 10:42](#); [17:31](#)).

It is also claimed Jesus:

* Created all things

Christ explicitly attributed the creation to **one person** who was **not himself** ([Matthew 19:4](#)).

* Is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent

Christ had no power of his own, but received it from God ([Matthew 28:18](#), [John 5:19-20](#), [26](#), [30](#); [8:28](#); [14:10](#); [17:1-3](#), [Acts 2:22](#); [10:42](#); [17:31](#), [Philippians 2:9](#), [Revelation 5:12](#)).

That Christ is not omniscient is proved by the fact that Christ had previously stated explicitly that there was knowledge he did not have ([Mark 13:32](#)), and Christ's knowledge has clearly been limited from his life in earth up to and including his current life in heaven ([Luke 2:52](#) 'Jesus **increased** in wisdom', [Hebrews 5:8](#) 'he **learned** obedience', [Revelation 1:1](#) 'The revelation of Jesus Christ, **which God gave to him**').

That Christ is not omnipresent is proved by the fact that he told his disciples he would leave them and return later ([John 13:33](#), [36](#); [14:2-3](#), [18](#), [28](#); [16:7](#)), and the fact that he actually left and it was said by angels that he would return in the future ([Acts 1:9-11](#)).

In [Matthew 18:20](#), Christ says that he is present when two or three are gathered in his name, which places a condition on his presence (if he was omnipresent he would be there regardless of who was gathered in what name), and the proof that this is not a declaration of omnipresence is the fact that Paul says exactly the same of himself, and does not say that Christ is literally present, only the power of Christ ([1 Corinthians 5:4](#) 'When you gather together in the name of our Lord Jesus, and I am with you in spirit, along with the power of our Lord Jesus').

* Existed from all eternity and had no beginning in time

The Bible says there was a time when God's fatherhood of Christ was still future, demonstrating Christ's existence is not eternal:

[2 Samuel 7:14](#) 'I will become his father and he will become my son.

Scripture also tells us the time that God **became** the father of Christ:

[Hebrews 1:5](#) For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my son! **Today I have fathered you**"? And in another place he says, "**I will be his father and he will be my son.**"

Scripture thus tells us explicitly that there was a time when God **was not** the father of Christ, and Scripture tells us explicitly that there was a time when God **became** the father of Christ. Thus there was a point in time at which Christ was brought into existence, since in order to be a literal father a person must cause a son to **come into existence** when previously **they did not exist**.

In [Hebrews 1:6](#), Paul says 'But when he [God] **again brings his firstborn into the world**', proving that there was a time when God **first** brought Christ into the world, which could not have occurred if Christ had always existed. This states explicitly that Christ was brought into the world, twice (commentators usually attribute the second to the resurrection of Christ, again proof that Christ did not exist while he was dead).

* Is co-equal with the Father

That Christ is not co-equal with the Father is proved by the fact that he himself declared his subordination ([John 5:19](#), [30](#) 'the Son can do nothing from himself', 'I can do **nothing of myself**', [John 14:28](#) 'My Father is **greater than I**'), and the apostles taught that he **is** the servant **of God** ([Acts 3:13](#), [26](#) 'his servant Jesus', 'God raised up his servant', [Acts 4:27](#), [30](#) 'your holy servant Jesus').

The later Trinitarian distinction that Christ is ontologically equal but functionally subordinate is made nowhere in Scripture (which declares an **unqualified subordination**), nor in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds (which declare an **unqualified equality**).

Trinitarian: Point 3 Rebuttal

Sunday, August 27, 2006

[Prophetnick77 -- Point 3: First Rebuttal](#)

Point 3: The Person of the Son

We now move into the point of debate that I have anticipated more than any. Immediately I'd like to point out that my opponent has once again **violated the rules** of the debate with his link usage. His argument was continued in the links. But I will not fault him for this nor ask that it be changed in any way. As I see it the arguments are less than compelling on all counts. For the sake of space I will not be presenting a point by point refutation to the comments of Searchingone1033 because there wasn't much substance to the points raised. Instead I will present an affirmative position on the Person of the Son and His Deity.

One quick note is that the Biblical writers did explicitly teach that Jesus was the Savior, to this there is no doubt ([Matthew 1:21](#); [Luke 2:11](#); [John 4:42](#); [Acts 4:12](#), [5:31](#); [Ephesians 5:23](#); [Philippians 3:20](#); [2Timothy 1:10](#); [Titus 1:4](#); [2Peter 1:11](#); [1John 4:14](#); etc.). To say He is an "agent of salvation" seems nothing more than an admission that He is the Savior while trying to avoid actually saying it. Once again we must remember that Yahweh said in [Isaiah 43:11](#); *"I myself am Yahweh and besides me there is no savior"* (WEB).

I must at this point mention the Granville Sharp rule of Greek grammar. This rule states that when there are 2 nouns that are both singular which describe a person, and these nouns are connected by the word "and," the first noun having the article, the second noun not having the article then they refer to the SAME PERSON. (*Note that the nouns cannot be personal names*) There is absolutely no exception to this rule in all of the Greek New Testament. Having stated this rule I find it necessary to present two verses of scripture that unequivocally qualify Jesus as both God and Savior.

[Titus 2:13](#) - while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, (NIV)


[2Peter 1:1](#) - Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: (NIV)

Notice in both verses the noun "God" (theou) has the article (tou) and is connected to the second noun "Savior" (sōtēros) which does not have an article, by the word "and" (kai). Thus **"God and Savior"** both refer to the Person of Jesus. Grammatically this is irrefutable. So not only is Jesus Savior, He is God! Funnily enough these two verses were called "ambiguous" in one of my opponent's links, but such is not the case.

Searchingone1033 seems to think that I must show that the apostle's explicitly taught the Trinity as defined by the Nicene-Constantinopolitan & Athanasian creeds for it to be an essential Christian doctrine but truthfully I don't. My only task is proving that the Trinity is indeed **Biblical** which I have already done (see my first post of point 1). It then follows that if Jesus is the second Person of the Trinity, and Jesus is essential for salvation, then the doctrine of the Trinity is essential as well. In other


words, it would have been impossible to preach about the only Jesus that can save, without a belief in the Trinity.


Already discussed in previous posts were the eternality, omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence of the Son. Attempts at refutation have been made via arguments against these divine attributes by focusing on the Human Nature of the Son in his incarnation, and consequently, irrelevant conclusions have been drawn. This was seen from Searchingone1033's summary of the book of Acts which wasn't all that substantial. Concerning the belief that Jesus is a man, I affirm this. Jesus is a man. He is not a *mere* man, but He is a man nonetheless.


We must make the distinction between the Son who has been the Son from all eternity, and Jesus who is the Son incarnated. They are not two distinct persons or beings, but Jesus is the Son clothed in humanity. Jesus is the One Person with Two Natures. There was a time when the Son had but one nature of deity. When the nature of humanity was added, then the Son was incarnated as Jesus, the Word was made flesh ([John 1:14](#) ).


Now to supplement the above information with additional proofs of Christ's Deity:




• Jesus claimed he was God!

In [John 5:18](#)  the Jews understood precisely Jesus' words when He said that God was His Father. They said that in claiming this he made himself **"equal with God."**


In [John 10:30](#)  Jesus made the statement saying, **"I and my Father are one"** which the Jews understood as a claim of deity since they picked up stones to stone Him because He being a man **"made himself God"** (vs. 33).



Concerning the forgiving of sins, it was the scribes who saw Jesus as blaspheming by forgiving sins because **only God** could forgive sins ([Mark 2:5-7](#) ). His giving this authority to the apostles doesn't negate his being God—in fact it stands to reason that only God could give such authority.



When Jesus stood trial and was adjured under oath to answer whether or not he was the Son of God his reply was, **"I am"** then He proceeded to tell high priest that he would see Him (the Son of Man) coming in the clouds of heaven sitting at the right hand of power. This was perceived as blasphemy by the high priest and he rent his priestly garment and condemned Jesus to death ([Mark 14:60-64](#) ). No doubt the high priest saw this as a claim of deity.



Then of course there is Jesus' famous claim in [John 8:58](#)  when he said **"Before Abraham was I am."** Once again we see the Jews picking up stones to kill him. Immediately our attention shifts to [Exodus 3:14](#)  where Yahweh told Moses to tell the people **"I am that I am"** had sent him. The Hebrew phrase is "ehyeh asher ehyeh" and was translated in the Septuagint as "*egō eimi ho ōn*"— Jesus' statement in [John 8:58](#)  was, "*prin Abraam genethai egō eimi.*"


















• I AM Passages

[John 8:58](#)  is one of many I AM statements that Jesus made which can be compared to I AM statements which Yahweh made in the Old Testament, specifically the book of Isaiah. Aside from the above mentioned verse, the Septuagint renders another Hebrew phrase "*ani hu*" as "*egō eimi.*"



In [John 4:26](#)  Jesus says to the woman at the well, “*I that speak unto thee am he*” (*egō eimi, ho lalōn soi*) while a parallel can be found from Yahweh’s statement in [Isaiah 52:6](#)  when He said, “*I am he that does speak, behold it is I*” (*egō eimi autos ho lalōn pareimi*).





Jesus’ words in [John 13:19](#)  where He says, “*that you may believe that I am*” (*hina pisteusēte hotan genētai hoti egō eimi*) are reminiscent of Yahweh’s words in [Isaiah 43:10](#)  where He said, “*that you may know and believe and understand that I am*” (*hina gnōte kai pisteusēte kai sunēte hoti egō eimi*).


Directly connected to the above Isaiah passage and perhaps the most telling I am statement is [John 8:24](#)  where Jesus said to the Jews, “*If you believe not that I am you will die in your sins*” (*hoti egō eimi, apothanēsthe en tais hamartiais humōn*). This fits perfectly with Yahweh’s statements concerning believing and understanding that he is the “I AM” and beside him there is no savior ([Isaiah 43:10-11](#) ).

Due to the limited space I will not be able to give a full account of all the parallels and usages of “*egō eimi*” in the LXX and NT, but I will give a reference of all significant passages (*some simply draw parallels without the use of *egō eimi**). Besides the abovementioned there is also: [Isaiah 41:4](#) ; [43:1-3](#)   ; [5:5](#) ; [25](#) ; [45:18](#) ; [46:4](#) ; [51:12](#)  & [John 6:20](#) ; [8:28](#) ; [18:5-6](#)      .













• OT Passages about Yahweh Applied to Jesus

The apostle John quotes [Isaiah 6:9-10](#)  which was about Yahweh and applied the passage directly to Jesus in [John 12:38-41](#) . After quoting Isaiah John offers us his God-Breathed interpretation of the passage and says, “*These things said Isaiah when he saw HIS glory and spoke of HIM.*” The context of the chapter shows the HIM to be none other than Jesus! Thus John tells us in the simplest of terms that Jesus is Yahweh!









Likewise, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all apply [Isaiah 40:3](#)  where it is said to “*prepare the way for Yahweh*” and “*make straight a highway for God*”, to the ministry of John the Baptist who came before Jesus to prepare the way for Jesus ([Mark 1:7](#) ; [Luke 3:16](#) ; [John 1:27](#) ).

And what I feel is probably the most compelling passage is [Romans 10:13](#)  which applies Joel’s words that “*whosoever shall call upon the name of Yahweh shall be saved,*” directly to Jesus.

• Titles of Yahweh Applied to Jesus

There are also the titles of Yahweh in the OT that are applied to Jesus in the New Testament that must be considered. Those titles are: “*Lord of Lords*” and “*First and Last.*” In [Deuteronomy 10:17](#)  & [Psalm 136:3](#)  Yahweh is called the “*Lord of lords*”—likewise in [1Timothy 6:15](#) , [Revelation 17:14](#) , & [19:16](#)  Jesus is called the “*Lord of lords.*” Also, in [Isaiah 44:6](#)  & [48:12](#)  Yahweh is called “*the First and the Last*—Jesus as well is called “*the First and the Last*” in [Revelation 1:11](#) , [17](#)  ; [2:8](#) ; [22:13](#) .

• Jesus receives Worship

The Bible shows us Jesus being worshipped again and again without correction or apology. From childhood ([Matthew 2:2](#) , [11](#) ) to adulthood, Jesus is worshipped. He received worship from a leper in [Matthew 8:2](#)  and from Jairus in [Matthew 9:18](#) . He was worshipped by the disciples in [Matthew 14:33](#) ; [28:17](#) ; [Luke 24:52](#) , the mother of Zebedee’s children in [Matthew 20:20](#) , Mary

Magdalene and the other Mary in [Matthew 28:9](#). Jesus was worshipped by the man possessed with the legion of demons in [Mark 5:6](#) as well as the man who was born blind in [John 9:38](#). We even see the angels worshipping Jesus in [Hebrews 1:6](#).

Now contrast this with Peter being worshipped in [Acts 10:25-26](#) where he immediately corrects the man by saying, “*Stand up, I myself am also a man,*” or Paul and Barnabas renting their garments and not allowing the Greek to sacrifice to them in [Acts 14:11-15](#) claiming that they were “*men of like passions.*” The apostle John fell down to worship an angel/messenger in [Revelation 19:10](#) and this angel said to him, “*see thou do it not!*” It is clear then that Jesus must be God in order to receive the same worship afforded to God alone. And to solidify this fact we see the Lamb and God receiving the exact same worship in [Revelation 5:13-14](#). We know that Jesus is the Lamb ([John 1:29](#)) so if he were not God then God would have shared worship with a lowly creature.

• Jesus Shares Glory with the Father

Yahweh said in [Isaiah 42:8](#) that he would not give His glory to another or his praise to graven images. Again in [Isaiah 48:11](#) he explicitly states that He will not give His glory to another. We have already seen that Jesus is worshipped and to add to this Jesus Himself said in his famous prayer to the Father in [John 17:5](#), “*Father, glorify me with the GLORY I HAD WITH YOU before the world existed.*”

This verse speaks volumes... For one it tells us that Jesus possessed the SAME GLORY as the Father. Secondly, it tells us that the Son existed before the world existed. Thirdly, it tells us via the imperfect tense of Jesus’ possession of this glory, that He had it as far back as can possibly be conceived. In other words, the action of Jesus’ “having” this glory was a continuous action in the past, thus there was never a time when he came into possession of this glory. It was ALWAYS HIS!!!

Space won’t allow any more than I have already presented, but I have barely scratched the surface in regard to what Scripture says concerning the Person of Jesus or his Hypostatic Union.

*****Jesus did not need to be saved!*****

Searchingone1033 claimed that Jesus needed to be saved like any other man. Well the scriptures testify unanimously that Jesus came to save people from their sin ([Matthew 1:21](#)). Jesus had no sin to be saved from as [2Corinthians 5:21](#) (who knew no sin); [Hebrews 4:15](#) (without sin); and [1Peter 2:22](#) (who did no sin) so plainly tell us. [Hebrews 9:14](#) tells us that Jesus offered himself **without spot** to God.

[*Note: I purposely exceeded the 1500 word limit so as to keep things somewhat fair. Searchingone1033 has violated the parameters of the debate format many times up to this point and I have allowed this without asking that he be disqualified. For this reason I feel that I am entitled to a few extra words in my presentation of the Son.*]

Christadelphian: Point 3 Counter Rebuttal

Tuesday, August 29, 2006

[Searchingone1033 -- Point 3: Counter Rebuttal](#)

POINT 3: The Person of the Son

Predictably, my opponent had no answer for the wealth of information I provided on what the apostles **actually taught** as essential doctrine. He **claims** to affirm Jesus is a man, but he **actually** affirms that Jesus is a '**God-man**'. The real issue is that the apostles **only** taught that Jesus was a man, **never** that he was a 'God-man'.

My opponent believes that he does not have to prove the apostles 'explicitly taught the Trinity as defined by the Nicene-Constantinopolitan & Athanasian creeds', yet that is the exact definition he has undertaken to defend.

He falsely claims that his only task 'is proving the Trinity is indeed **Biblical**', but he has failed to define exactly what he means by 'Biblical', and this is not what the Creeds he profess actually say. It appears that my opponent believes that **any** doctrine is 'Biblical' if it is derived from a number of verses which someone has put together. This would make the doctrines of purgatory and praying to saints 'Biblical'.

My opponent's real task is not to prove that the doctrine is 'Biblical' in this loose and vague sense, but that it is **essential to salvation**, since this is what the creeds he professes explicitly state.

He has been unable to provide any evidence at all that it is impossible to preach 'the only Jesus that can save' without 'a belief in the Trinity'. As I have shown, the apostles preached repeatedly about the **man** whom God **appointed** (Jesus Christ), but never preached the Trinity, and baptized thousands of people who had no knowledge of this belief. This contradicts my opponent's claims directly, which is why he failed to address it.

My opponent imagines I have never said Christ is our saviour, when in fact I have. The point I have made is that he does not save us **of himself**, but as the agent of God

The apostles taught explicitly that Christ is the **agent** by which **God** saves ([Romans 6:23](#)^L, [Titus 3:5-6](#)^L, [Galatians 3:15](#)^L, [Hebrews 13:20-21](#)^L), including by justification ([Romans 3:24-26](#)^L; [5:1-2](#)^L), sanctification ([Hebrews 10:10](#)^L), and glorification ([2 Thessalonians 2:12](#)^L).

It was claimed that God's application of the word 'saviour' to Himself means that none but God can be called 'saviour', but we find men used as God's agents to save are called 'saviour' ([Judges 2:16](#)^L, [18](#)^L; [3:9](#)^L, [15](#)^L 'The Lord raised up **a saviour**', 31; 10:1; 13:5), just as Christ is.

My opponent's main arguments consisted of the following:

* In [John 5:18](#)^L the Jews believed Christ was saying he was equal with God: Christ corrected them by saying '**the Son can do nothing from himself**', and 'I can do **nothing of myself**' ([John 5:18](#)^L, [30](#)^L). See also [John 14:28](#)^L ('My Father is greater than I'), and the fact that the apostles taught that he **is** the servant **of God** ([Acts 3:13](#)^L, [26](#)^L 'his servant Jesus', 'God raised up **his servant**', [Acts 4:27](#)^L, [30](#)^L 'your holy servant Jesus').

* The use of 'THEOS' in [Titus 2:13](#) and [2 Peter 1:1](#): Aside from noting the fact that the grammar in both places is ambiguous (readers, check standard Trinitarian Bible translations and commentaries), I shall simply quote my opponent back to himself:

'it is not enough that the Father is called God, the Son is called God, and the Holy Spirit is called God. **The title in and of itself does not necessitate** that each person being called God is the one true God, **nor does it irrefutably prove the Trinity.**

Christ said the same ([John 10:33-36](#)).

* 'I and my father are one': Christ proves this is no claim to deity, saying in [John 17:20-23](#) that he is praying that his disciples 'may be one **just as we are one**'.

* Christ can forgive sins: That Christ gave authority to the apostles to forgive sins proves that you don't have to be God to forgive sins (my opponent claims that only God could give authority to men to forgive sins, but provided no evidence for this, nor did he prove that a man with such authority from God could not give it to others).

* 'I am': The loudest appeal was made to the Greek text of [Exodus 3:14](#), which as my opponent helpfully told us **does not** say 'EGW EIMI' (Christ's words), but 'EGW EIMI **HO WN**' (which Christ did not say); numerous Bible translations and commentaries (all Trinitarian), qualify Christ's 'I am' statements with the relevant words implied in the Greek in each place, recognising that there is no use of a 'Divine title' here.

* The trial: Christ was asked if he was the son of God, and answered 'I am', proving that his only claim was to be the **son of God**, not to be God; that the high priest saw this as blasphemy is irrelevant, since it is not described as blasphemy under the Law - but if Christ had **actually** claimed to be God explicitly, so many times in his ministry, why was this accusation **never** raised at his trial by **any** of the witnesses?

* The glory: It was alleged that Christ must be God since God said that He would not share His glory with another, but Christ shares that same glory with his disciples in [John 17:22](#) ('The glory you gave to me I **have given to them**')

* God's titles applied to Jesus: This only proves that Christ is God's representative (in [Exodus 23:20-21](#) an angel is given the name of Yahweh when he acts as God's agent, and in [Acts 7:30](#) Stephen says that when 'Yahweh' spoke to Moses in the burning bush, it was really an angel); the claim was made that [Romans 10:13](#) applies Joel's words to Jesus, but Jesus isn't even referred to in [Romans 10:13](#)

* Jesus receives worship: the Greek word translated worship simply means to bow down, and does not necessarily refer to worship of someone as God; it is used when a man in Christ's parable bows to another man ([Matthew 18:26](#)), and used when Christ says he will make the enemies of his servants bow at their feet ([Revelation 3:9](#))

I agree with my opponent that Christ never sinned (I have never said otherwise), but this doesn't change the fact that the apostles predicate Christ's work of salvation on his being a man identical to those he came to save, who really died, and needed salvation from death (Hebrews 5: 'Christ offered both requests and supplications... to the one who was able to **save him from death** and he was **heard**

because of his devotion').

It should be noted that Christ also had to be justified ([1 Timothy 3:16](#)), sanctified ([John 10:36](#)), and glorified ([John 7:39](#); [12:16](#), [Acts 3:13](#)), meaning he had to be saved through the same process as those he came to save.

Questions I want answered:

- * If such statements as these Creeds are binding on all Christians, then why not other doctrinal statements made by other church councils, which contain equally 'Biblical' statements?
- * Why does the Bible say it is essential to know the Father is the only true God, not the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?
- * Why does no single passage in the Bible describe God as three persons?
- * Why would a doctrine which is allegedly essential for salvation not be taught by the apostles or declared explicitly in Scripture?
- * Where does the Bible say that the doctrine of the Trinity is essential for salvation?
- * Why does the Bible say it is essential to believe that Jesus is a man, not that Jesus is God?
- * Why did the apostles baptize thousands of people without teaching them the Trinity, or even that Jesus is God?
- * Why do the apostles repeatedly say that the saving work of the atonement was based on Jesus being a man, not on Jesus being God, or a 'God-man'?
- * What evidence is there that the Greek and Hebrew words for 'he' can refer to more than one person?
- * In [Matthew 11:11](#) and [Luke 7:28](#), Christ says that of those who have been born of a woman, there was none greater than John the Baptist - Scripture says that Christ was born of a woman ([Matthew 1:26](#), [Galatians 4:4](#)), so who is greater, John the Baptist or Christ?
- * Did Jesus die, or did only Jesus' body die?
- * Can God die?
- * God cannot be seen by men ([1 Timothy 6:16](#)), so when men saw Jesus, who did they see?
- * Why did the apostles use none of the arguments for the Trinity, nor any of the quotes, which my opponent does?
- * What arguments and quotes **did** the apostles use to convince people of the Trinity?
- * Why could my opponent only find two verses in the entire Bible which apparently call Jesus 'THEOS'?

Contrary to my opponent's claims, of all the posts and links I have provided the moderators reviewing my posts as I made them objected to only one, which I edited immediately. Even if I had breached the rules 'repeatedly', it would not justify him doing the same.

Trinitarian: Point 3 Closing Statement

Wednesday, August 30, 2006

[Prophetnick77 -- Point 3: Closing Statement](#)

Point 3: The Person of the Son




Let me begin by stating that I unapologetically stand by my use of extra words in my last post, but because my opponent has cried foul I'll limit this post to 1200 words.

OK... So we are back to claiming that I have to prove creeds. This has been maintained throughout and as I said in my very first post:

*"Before beginning this debate Searchingone1033 asked me what kind of Trinitarianism I hold to and I told him that I hold to orthodox Trinitarianism as affirmed in the Nicene-Constantinople Creed and the Athanasian Creed. **The question was then asked if I would be arguing based on these creeds and my response was "no."** I explained that I would be arguing my point based on the inspired Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek Scriptures."*

I've held true to my word. My task was to debate my position on the 4 agreed upon points. So far I've done this. If the Trinity can be proven (which it has been) to be Who and What God is then it follows that it's essential to salvation. But once again, I don't need to defend the creeds.

I will now define my use of the word Biblical. "Biblical" refers to that teaching which is inherent in scripture and brings harmony to the text and our theology. The Trinity by this standard is clearly Biblical since nothing has ever been set forth to contradict or refute it. Searchingone1033's problem seems to be the extra-Biblical language employed by the creeds, but as Robert Letham said, *"This was necessary because heretics misused the Bible to support their erroneous ideas."*^[1] In other words, both the orthodox and heterodox were using the same words to describe different things, therefore the orthodox needed to provide more precise definitions of what the Bible taught so the heretics couldn't twist it.

It was said that I had no answer for the "wealth of information" provided in Searchingone1033's arguments, but is this the case? As I stated, there was nothing of substance in disproving the Trinity therefore I presented an affirmative position that nullified all arguments against the Trinity. Once again, Jesus is a man, yes—a God-Man. To say that the apostles taught that Jesus was merely a man is ridiculous in light of their praying to Jesus ([Acts 7:59](#) ; [1Corinthians 1:2](#) ) and their worship of Jesus (see last post), and their calling Jesus God ([John 20:28](#) ). Even secular reference is made to this fact (see Pliny the Younger, Epistles X.96)

I'd like to correct the claim that I said Yahweh applying the title "Savior" to Himself meant that no one other than God could be **called** "Savior." The claim was that only Yahweh is able to save, He alone is the Savior. He did after all say that there is NO SAVIOR BESIDE HIM. Of course we are referring to the salvation of our souls and the conferment of eternal life. Something the men in Judges could not do.

Jesus never corrected the men in John 5 in fact to say that He could do nothing of Himself only showed the essential unity of the Father and the Son. Jesus' statement that the Father is greater was a reference to function, not ontology. Regardless of what my opponent would have you believe, functional

subordination is conducive to Trinitarianism. And Jesus' being a servant in no way detracts from His being God. [Philippians 2:5-8](#) so eloquently explains the humiliation of the Son (cf. [Heb. 2:7](#), [9](#)).

The Granville Sharp rule is anything but ambiguous. It's an irrefutable rule of grammar with absolutely no exception. And if my only proof of Jesus' deity was based upon this rule then maybe I'd have reason to worry, but it has been clearly shown that the title "God" in one of a multitude of proofs.

Searchingone1033 is guilty of equivocation concerning the word "one" in [John 10:30](#) and [John 17:20-23](#). Clearly the contexts are completely different and the word "one" is used differently. But let's imagine that Jesus did mean a unity of purpose and will in John 10... How would that hurt the Trinitarian position?

I'd note that HO ŌN is the present participle of EGŌ EIMI thus Jesus' saying "I AM" is in keeping with the text. But that ignores the Isaiah parallels.

Concerning the Glory issue I'll offer A.T. Robertson's note:

"And the glory (kagō tēn doxan). Literally, "And I the glory," with emphasis on "I." It is the glory of the Incarnate Word (Bernard), cf. Joh. 1:14; Joh. 2:11, **not the glory of the Eternal Word mentioned in Joh. 17:24.**" [2]

Searchingone1033 actually helped the Trinitarian position by mentioning the Angel of Yahweh. Clearly when read in context there is no mistaking that the Angel of Yahweh is indeed Yahweh Himself. Many have concluded this to be the pre-incarnate Christ and with good reason. I can't possibly cover all the passages so I'll point readers to some references: [Genesis 16:7-13](#); [21:12-18](#); [22:11-18](#); [31:11-13](#); [Exodus 3:1-22](#); [13:21-22](#) cf. [14:19-20](#); [Numbers 22:34-35](#) cf. [22:38](#) & [23:12](#); [Judges 2:1-4](#); [6:12-23](#); [13:3-23](#).

If Searchingone1033 wants to argue that Jesus wasn't worshipped then on what grounds would he conclude that God the Father was? There are simply too many examples of Jesus being worshipped to write them off as people merely "bowing down" to Him. I'd also note that the "Lord" in [Matthew 18:26](#) was clearly referring to the Father (vs. 35). [Revelation 3:9](#) is the exception, not the rule.

Answers to Questions

1. **Irrelevant** (Creeds ain't the issue)
2. [John 17:3](#) places Jesus on the same level of "essentiality" as the Father.
3. Single passages do—[Matthew 28:19](#).
4. It was taught by the apostles as seen in their benedictions and doxologies ([1Corinthians 13:14](#); [2Thessalonians 3:5](#); [1Peter 1:2](#); [Jude 20-21](#)).
5. The necessity of the Trinity for salvation is the logical conclusion drawn from identifying God as Triune.
6. John refuted a Gnostic heresy (Docetism) that denied Jesus came in the flesh—they had no problem

with His Deity.

7. The apostles did teach that Jesus was God ([Acts 20:28](#)) and they baptized in Jesus' name [authority] ([Acts 2:38](#), [8:12](#), [16](#), [10:48](#), [19:5](#)) using the Trinitarian formula He prescribed ([Matthew 28:19](#)).

8. The apostles say no such thing, but Jesus would have needed to be a man to atone for sin since blood was necessary ([Leviticus 17:11](#)).

9. I'll answer the question with a question – What evidence is there that the Greek and Hebrew words for “he” cannot refer to One Being?

10. Jesus is greater ([Colossians 1:15-18](#)).

11. Bodies are the only thing that die, but the debate isn't 'soul sleep' it is the Trinity.

12. No, God cannot die (nor did He).

13. Yes, God can be seen by men ([Genesis 32: 30](#); [Exodus 24:11](#); [Judges 13:22](#))—No, the Father cannot be seen by men ([John 1:18](#); [6:46](#); [1John 4:12](#), [20](#).)

14. **Irrelevant** (Perhaps there was no argument against it)

15. **Irrelevant** (Who says the people needed convincing?)

16. I used 2 verses ([Titus 2:13](#) & [2Peter 1:1](#)) that are irrefutable grammatically via the Granville Sharp rule. I can list plenty stating that Jesus is God ([Isaiah 9:6](#); [John 1:14](#), [18](#); [20:28](#); [Romans 9:5](#); [Philippians 2:6](#); [1Timothy 3:16](#) (TR); [Hebrews 1:8](#); [1John 5:20](#))

Notes

[1] Letham, Robert, *The Holy Trinity: In Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004) p. 2.

[2] Robertson, A.T., *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, [John 17:22](#) (E-Sword Bible Software).

Moderator Comment

Thursday, August 31, 2006

Moderator Comment

We have now come to the end of part three of our four point debate. We will now be starting the last section the person or being of the Holy Spirit. Searchingone1033 will have the opening argument and Prophetnick77 will have the first rebuttal.

Also, at this time I would like to invite both participants if they wish to make one summary statement consisting of 2500 words with no external links or rebuttals by either party. Because Searchingone1033 had the opening argument at the start of the debate, Prophetnick77 will have the first summary statement.

Summary statements are not to be presented as arguments only a recap of stated beliefs on each of the four points of the debate.

Friday, September 01, 2006

Moderator Correction

Correction, Prophetnick77 will have the opening argument in this fourth and final point in our debate. Searchingone1033 had the opening arguments in one and three and Prophetnick77 had the opening argument in points two and four. Sorry for any confusion.

Trinitarian: Point 3 Closing Statement

Saturday, September 02, 2006





Prophetnick77: Summary Statement

Readers, so far you have seen me argue affirmatively for the doctrine of the Trinity from a scriptural standpoint. Any reference I have made to creeds for the most part has been to acknowledge that the debate has gotten off topic and needed to be brought back to the God-Breathed scriptures. Now let me say that I fully affirm every statement that these creeds make, but I don't need them to prove the doctrine of the Trinity. The Bible is certainly sufficient for this task

Since this post is a summary and not actually part of the arguments, I want to take the time to finally comment on the creeds. I think that Searchingone1033 in arguing against them is not only missing the point of this debate, but the point of the creeds themselves. The creeds in question were drafted as statements of faith in response to heresy. They were defensive declarations that reaffirmed the already accepted doctrines of the Church. Had the teachings of Arius and later the Pneumatomachians (a.k.a. Macedonians) been the normative views of God then there would have been no controversy. More precise definitions would not have been necessary but once again as Robert Letham said, *"This was necessary because heretics misused the Bible to support their erroneous ideas."*

Philip Schaff noted in the introduction to his *History of the Christian Church*,

"Every important dogma now professed by the Christian church is the result of a severe conflict with error. The doctrine of the holy Trinity, for instance, was believed from the beginning, but it required, in addition to the preparatory labors of the ante-Nicene age, fifty years of controversy, in which the strongest intellects were absorbed, until it was brought to the clear expression of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed. The Christological conflict was equally long and intense, until it was brought to a settlement by the council of Chalcedon." [1]

And truthfully speaking, we don't need to rely on Letham or Schaff to know these things—the fact is that the earliest Christians embedded Trinitarian "creeds" into scripture in the form of salutations and benedictions ([2Cor. 13:14](#) ; [1Pet. 1:2](#) ) , as well as doxologies or compact doctrinal statements asserting the deity of Jesus ([Rom. 9:5](#) ; [Phil. 2:6-11](#) ) and to argue that this isn't the case is to ignore the very Word of God. We need to remember that the New Testament was not bound together in one book the way we have it now, and had it been, a good number of the people to whom it would have been given were illiterate; therefore Christians would sing hymns or recite short phrases which were passed along orally from the apostles to the churches.

Now having gotten that off of my chest, I'd like to point out that as it stands I haven't been able to present all of the relevant data that I would have liked to because of the word limits, and believe me, there is much more that I could present—but what has been presented so far has not been refuted. Sure, we have seen my opponent say things like, "this isn't what that really means" and then offer alternatives that aren't consistent with the evidence he excludes.

Likewise, you have seen me ignore some of his points of argument, not because they were too strong to be dealt with—on the contrary—I ignored them because they were either off topic or unsubstantial. Truth be told, I have wasted much of my word limit addressing arguments that I would have just as soon

ignored, and correcting caricatures of my actual arguments that I never should have had to in the first place—but such is the nature of debate and this is an ugly fact that I was aware of entering into this dialogue.

It has been made clear from my posts and more importantly scripture that there are Three Persons who possess all of the essential attributes of Deity—The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. All Three Persons are Eternal, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, and Ever-Present. We’ve seen attempts to say this isn’t so, but scripture disagrees. We’ve seen the humanity of the Son in his incarnated state focused upon while his deity is purposely ignored so as to make it appear that the Bible presents a finite Son, a created being separate from the Father. But once the scriptures are viewed as one homogenous whole, we see that this is anything but true.

I was accused of stringing together random verses of scripture to form doctrines that didn’t exist within the pages of the Bible, when the fact is that I have examined the Bible from beginning to end and systematically arrived at the doctrine of the Trinity. I feel it necessary to explain my methodology here.

First of all I’m a theist. The reason I’m a theist is expressed in [Romans 1:19-20](#) which basically states that God’s eternal power and divinity are clearly seen in His creation. So as a theist I obviously believe in a God, but there are a number of things out there vying for my devotion, adoration, and worship so I was faced with the decision of which God is the right God. I have come to believe in the God of Judeo-Christianity, Yahweh because of His Word.

What I mean is this... out of all the alternative “gods” there are to worship and believe in, this is the one I have chosen because out of all the scriptures or holy writings (e.g. Qur’an, Vedas, Book of Mormon, Science & Health with Key to the Scriptures, etc.) that have allegedly come from all of these other gods, the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek scriptures of Judeo-Christianity are the only ones that stand up to the claim of divine authorship via the accuracy and fulfillment of predictive prophecy, internal consistency, etc...

So now I am forced to approach the scriptures with the supposition that because of their divine authorship they cannot lie and by consequence cannot contradict themselves, because God who is their source cannot lie ([Heb. 6:18](#)). Can an infinitely perfect God testify to having been seen and not having been seen at the same time and in the same sense? Of course not! This would violate the law of non-contradiction and God cannot contradict Himself therefore His Word cannot contradict itself.

So while the Bible tells me in more than one place that no man has ever seen God or can see God and live ([Ex. 33:20](#); [John 1:18](#); [6:46](#); [1John 4:12](#)) it also tells me that God has indeed been seen by human eyes and these men have survived ([Gen. 32:30](#); [Ex. 24:11](#); [Jud. 13:22](#)). Thus I’m left to reconcile an apparent contradiction in scripture that was inspired by a God who cannot contradict Himself. The only way this is possible is with a Trinitarian theology.

A polytheistic theology is clearly out of the question because the scriptures from cover to cover unabashedly pronounce that there is one and only one God in all of existence ([Deut. 4:35](#), [6:4](#); [Is. 43:10-11](#), [44:6](#), [8](#), [45:5-6](#), [14](#), [21-22](#), [46:9](#); [Mal. 2:10](#); [Mk. 12:32](#); [Rom. 3:30](#); [1Cor. 8:6](#); [Eph. 4:6](#); [1Tim. 2:5](#); Jam. 2:19). A Unitarian theology allows the contradiction to stand and offers no sufficient explanation. A Trinitarian theology brings harmony to the text because it allows for multiple Persons to share One Nature of Deity. Hence, all Three Persons are equally God without violating monotheism, yet one or even two of the Persons can claim to have never been seen, while

another can have been seen, and both statements are true.

This is one small example out of many—another being the use of plural pronouns in [Genesis 1:26](#) (cf. [Gen. 3:22](#); [11:7](#); [Is. 6:8](#)). Now as I briefly commented on in my closing rebuttals to Points #1 and #2 the Trinitarian has no problem explaining such an apparent aberration of language, yet the Unitarian view forces the text to say that God consulted the angels in creation and as we have seen, irrelevant texts that do not use plural pronouns were cited in support of this idea (i.e. [1Kgs. 22:19-22](#); [Job 1:6-12](#); [2:1-6](#)). The Trinitarian view rightly notes that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all active in creation, which agrees perfectly with [Genesis 1:26-27](#), not to mention the passages of scripture where the Hebrew text speaks of “Creators” ([Eccl. 12:1](#)) and “Makers” ([Ps. 149:2](#); [Is. 54:5](#)) in reference to the One God Yahweh.

It is this same method of that I consistently use to interpret every word of scripture. Scripture cannot be “theopneustos” (God-Breathed, [2Tim. 3:16](#)) and contain contradictions. It just doesn’t work that way. Therefore you have seen me argue in favor of the Trinity based upon this supposition that the Bible is true and God cannot lie. If the Bible tells me that there is only One Being in existence that possesses the essential attributes of deity ([Isaiah 43:10](#)), and then turns around and shows me that there are Three Persons who possess these attributes and also share One Name ([Matt. 28:19](#)), then I am forced to arrive at a Trinitarian conclusion. These are some of the facts that I mentioned in my opening post and continued in Point #1 of this debate.

When the topic turned to the Father in Point #2 you saw me present a scripturally sound and logically irrefutable proof for the eternity of the Son based upon the eternity and immutability of the Father. In fact the case was so strong that in the subsequent rebuttal, it was asked that it be held until Point #3!

To review the argument, The Father is God ([Mal. 2:10](#)) --> The Father is Eternal ([Ps. 90:2](#)) --> The Father is Immutable ([Mal. 3:6](#)). If these statements are true then logic demands that the Father has always been the Father. Likewise they demand that the Father must have always had a child otherwise the title “Father” is meaningless. Even in the symbolic sense of the title this still demands that **something** or **someone** existed alongside the Father from all eternity. Since the Son created all that exists and without Him was not anything made that was made ([John 1:3](#); [Col. 1:16-17](#)) then it follows that the Son has been the one who was with the Father from all eternity. He pre-existed everything else that would be able to even be considered a child of God.

The pre-existence of the Son was also demonstrated in Point #3 by showing the use of the imperfect tense of [John 17:5](#) in terms of the Son possessing glory with the Father from before the foundation of the world. Likewise this was shown from my closing rebuttal to Point #1 by mentioning the imperfect tense and its use in [John 1:1](#).

Searchingone1033’s closing rebuttal to Point #2 offered a response to the effect that the Father’s fatherhood was yet future and he based this upon [2Samuel 7:14](#) and [Hebrews 1:5](#) which is a quote of [Psalm 2:7](#) and [2Sam. 7:14](#) while neither text negates John’s statements; neither do they negate the pre-incarnate Christ existing as God’s supernal Wisdom in Proverbs 8. The crux of the issue is this—even if Searchingone1033’s argument were sufficient to refute my position, it still offers no explanation for the how the Father can be eternal, immutable, and the Father without a Son. In other words, refuting my position (which obviously has not happened) does not prove Searchingone1033’s.

I’d love to offer a rebuttal to his points but this is not the format for doing so.

From where I'm standing there are some very fundamental issues that haven't been addressed, and they are:

1. The abovementioned concerning the Father having a Son from all eternity.
2. The use of plural pronouns for a God that Searchingone1033 believes to be one person.
3. The criteria by which Searchingone1033 asserts that the Father is a person.
4. The criteria by which Searchingone1033 denies that more than one person can share one essential nature.

On a more peripheral issue, I'd like to know what Hebrew, Greek, or even English language references would support his grammatical claims that personal pronouns such as "he" can't refer to one being and why this one being cannot exist in three inseparable persons.

And then there is the issue of the logical fallacies such as the loaded questions he asked in his last response concerning the arguments the apostles used to prove the Trinity or why they didn't use the quotes I use to prove the Trinity. The questions assume that the apostles had to argue with people concerning the Trinity or that they had to convince people of the Trinity—this is an unproven assumption. Also, the apostles did use the quotes I use—the only thing is that they weren't quoting—they were the original speakers... I'm the one quoting!

Already mentioned were the consistent red herrings concerning the creeds and now more recently the 'soul sleep' question that was asked. I'd love to get into the state of Jesus soul and spirit after the death of his body but that is not the topic of debate. But we can be confident that the body is the only thing that dies on anyone. Natures certainly don't die.


In closing I'd just like to reiterate that the Tri-unity of God has been set forth and supported with scripture.

The first point of debate was whether or not the Trinity was a sound Biblical doctrine. It has been shown to be exactly that via my arguments concerning the attributes of deity inherent in the Three Persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) as well as the divine functions in Creation, Salvation, and Indwelling. The titles "God" and "Lord" were the icing on the cake.

The second point was the Person or Being of the Father. I set forth an affirmative position on the Father's personality as well as his eternal fatherhood via his eternally immutable nature. This went unrefuted even with the two references quoted against it.

The third point was the Person of the Son. I showed from Jesus' own claims and His audiences understanding of them that He was God. I also briefly showed the "I AM" parallels between Yahweh and Jesus in Isaiah and John. This was topped off with Yahweh's titles as applied to Jesus and Old Testament passages speaking of Yahweh applied to Jesus. Overwhelming evidence was shown that the Son was indeed worshipped by his followers and secular history corroborated this fact, and it was written off as a mere "bowing down" before Jesus. Hardly compelling enough to convince one that Jesus was not worshipped. And finally, I answered all the relevant questions that my opponent demanded I answer

(saying, “Questions I WANT Answered” is a demand).

The fourth point of debate on the Holy Spirit will prove to be interesting. Until then I leave you with one of the Trinitarian benedictions of the apostle Paul, *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen”* ([2Cor. 13:14](#) ).

Notes

[1] Schaff, Philip, *History of the Christian Church, 8 vols.* (Peabody, MA: Hendrikson, rpt. 2006). Vol. 1, p. 10.

















Trinitarian: Point 4 Opening Statement

Thursday, September 07, 2006

[Prophetnick77 -- Point 4: Opening Statement](#)


Point 4: Who or What is the Holy Spirit?


In response to the question asked of Point 4 I must answer that the third Person of the Trinity is WHO the Holy Spirit is and God as to His essential nature is WHAT the Holy Spirit is.

Now as has been sufficiently demonstrated in previous posts, the Holy Spirit is by nature God as evidenced by His being in possession of all of the attributes of Deity, i.e. Eternality ([Hebrews 9:14](#) ) , Omnipotence ([Isaiah 40:12](#) ) , Omniscience ([1Corinthians 2:10-11](#) ) , Omnipresence ([Psalm 139:7-18](#) ) . The Holy Spirit is also called God ([Acts 5:3-4](#) ) as well as Lord ([2Corinthians 3:17](#) ) . The Holy Spirit Creates ([Genesis 1:2](#)  ; [Job 26:13](#)  ; [33:4](#) ) , Regenerates ([Titus 3:5](#) ) , Gives Life ([2Corinthians 3:6](#) ) , Justifies ([1Corinthians 6:11](#) ) , Sanctifies ([1Peter 1:2](#) ) , Resurrects ([Romans 8:11](#) ) , Indwells Believers ([2Timothy 1:14](#) ) , and Searches the Heart ([1Corinthians 2:10](#) ) . His Deity is firmly established beyond refutation.


Since this is true then my main task in this post is to set forth the personality of the Holy Spirit. I will judge this according to the definition I laid out for the term “person” in my opening to Point 1. This is the same criteria I used to establish the Father's personality in Point 2 (i.e. intelligence, rationality, and consciousness.)

The Holy Spirit has a Mind and Knowledge (intelligence)

And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. ([Romans 8:27](#) )

For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. ([1Corinthians 2:11](#) )

The Holy Spirit Reasons (rationality)

For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; ([Acts 15:28](#) )

The Holy Spirit is Self-Aware (consciousness)

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, **the Holy Ghost said**, Separate **me** Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. ([Acts 13:2](#) )

This should be sufficient to prove that the Holy Spirit is a Person, but I'll continue to build the case—at this point though I'd like to state that any denial of the Holy Spirit's personality according to this criterion logically necessitates denying the personality of anyone who possesses these traits.

Thus far we haven't been told the method my opponent has been using to determine the personality of

the Father, other than perhaps the use of personal pronouns applied to Him. As I have mentioned repeatedly, whatever criteria is used to assert the Father's personality can be used to prove the Holy Spirit's as well. If personal pronouns are the test, or even a part of the test, then the Holy Spirit passes.

In [Acts 13:2](#) (quoted above) the Holy Spirit refers to Himself as "me" (Gk: moi) and also "I" ("I have called" – Gk: proskeklēmai). Likewise in [John 15:26](#) and [16:13](#), the Holy Spirit is referred to by the masculine pronoun "He" (Gk: ekeinos). Thus we have a personal Spirit.

We must also take into account that the Holy Spirit has emotions—for example, The Holy Spirit Loves ([Romans 15:30](#)) and can be Grieved ([Isaiah 63:10](#); [Ephesians 4:30](#)). Emotions are personal characteristics, not impersonal.

To add to the evidence I would mention that the Holy Spirit Speaks ([2 Samuel 23:1](#); [Acts 8:29](#); [1 Timothy 4:1](#); [Hebrews 3:7-8](#); [Revelation 2:7](#)). He can be Lied to ([Acts 5:3](#)), Resisted ([Acts 7:51](#)), Tested ([Acts 5:9](#)), and Blasphemed ([Matthew 12:32](#)). Once again, these are all personal characteristics and the fact that the Holy Spirit can be blasphemed is further proof of His deity.

As if the case hasn't been built enough, we can see the personality of the Holy Spirit in His many functions. Functionally the Holy Spirit Witnesses ([Acts 5:32](#), [1 John 5:7](#)), Glorifies Jesus ([John 16:14](#)), Teaches ([John 14:26](#); [15:26](#)), Makes Intercession ([Romans 8:26](#)), Anoints ([1 John 2:27](#)), Appoints ([Acts 20:28](#)), and Convicts the world of sin ([John 16:8](#)). Surely these are not impersonal acts.

I believe that at this point an airtight case has been made for the personality of the Spirit so now I'll move on to the objections I expect my opponent to make, and offer a preemptive refutation. Truthfully, I have to do this just to use up the word limit since the personality of the Holy Spirit is so easily established.

I expect to see an argument stating that the Holy Spirit is merely another term for the Father or is simply the Father's "power" or "energy." The latter argument nullified in the above treatment, but the first argument merits some attention. That the Holy Spirit is a distinct Person from the Father is clear from many passages of scripture.

Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth. ([Psalm 104:30](#))

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. ([John 14:16-17](#))

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (Joh 14:26)

Now clearly in each of these passages it is the Father who sends the Spirit showing that they are two distinct Persons. We also see Yahweh AND His Spirit sending the Messiah in [Isaiah 48:16](#) which says, "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this: From the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time that it was, there am I; and now the Lord GOD hath sent me, and His spirit." We see the definite distinction between the Father and Holy Spirit in [Matthew 3:16-17](#) at the baptism of Jesus where the

Father speaks from heaven as the Spirit descends upon Christ.

Other passages to take note of are 1Corinthians 12:4-6 and [Ephesians 4:4-6](#). These verses show clear distinctions between the three Persons of the Trinity, which obviously includes the distinction between the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The next argument I would expect to see from Searchingone1033 would be methodologically similar to his argument against the deity of the Son. If you noticed, he ignored passages referring to Jesus' deity to focus instead upon passages that referred to His humanity. On this point I would expect to see passages that make the Holy Spirit seem to be impersonal focused upon while those which show His personality are ignored. This usually comes via arguments like:

1. "The Holy Spirit can't be a person because he was poured out on people."
2. "People are filled with the Holy Spirit therefore he is not a Person."
3. "The Holy Spirit is a gift, and persons aren't gifts."
4. "The Holy Spirit can be quenched and persons can't be quenched."

These types of arguments are common and easily refuted.

1. [Joel 2:28](#) (3:1 MT) says that the Yahweh will "pour out" (Heb: Eshpoch) his Spirit on all flesh. David said in [Psalm 22:14](#) "I am "poured out" (Heb: Nishpachti) like water." Both verses use the same root word "shaphak" meaning poured out. No one would deny the personality of David based on this, so it doesn't make sense to deny the personality of the Spirit based upon this either.

2. [Ephesians 3:19](#) speaks of believers being "filled (Gk: plērōthēte) with all the fullness of God." Likewise, Jesus is said to "fill (Gk: plērōsē) all things" in [Ephesians 4:10](#).

3. [Ephesians 4:8](#), [11](#) speak of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers as "gifts"—no one would doubt the personality of these individuals based on this.

4. The word "quenched" (Gk: sbennute) used in [1Thessalonians 5:19](#) is used of men in the LXX. The Lord spoke of an army of men being "extinct" (Gk: esbesthēsan) and "quenched" (Gk: esbesmenon) in [Isaiah 43:17](#), while Ezekiel was told to take up a lamentation for Pharaoh, king of Egypt ([Ezekiel 32:2](#)) and tell him that God would "extinguish" (Gk: sbesthēnai) him (vs. 7). Unless "men" and "Pharaoh" are not persons, this argument is invalid.

Of course this isn't an exhaustive list of all such arguments, but it is representative of what I expect to see. Rest assured, others like it are just as easily refuted and of just as little substance. I'd also point out that as Searchingone1033 has consistently moved away from what the scriptures say about the Trinity and moved toward what the later Christian creeds stated, then I expect to see some type of argument about the Holy Spirit not being mentioned as God or a Person in the earliest creeds—but I will stay true to form and keep my arguments based upon the Word of God.

Christadelphian: Point 4 Rebuttal

Sunday, September 10, 2006

[Searchingone1033 -- Point 4: First Rebuttal](#)

Point 4: Who or What is the Holy Spirit?

Readers, the previously unsuspected fourth member of the Trinity is the woman called 'God the Wisdom'.

Wisdom speaks, cries, utters her voice, and does so in public, where she can be seen ([Proverbs 1:20](#); [2:2](#); [8:1-3](#)), has daughters, a house, and maidens ([Proverbs 9:1-3](#), [Matthew 11:19](#)), proving that wisdom is a person.

Wisdom is **omnipresent** because she indwells all believers ([Exodus 28:3](#); [31:3](#); [36:2](#), [Deuteronomy 34:9](#), [1 Kings 3:28](#), [Job 38:36](#), [Proverbs 2:10](#), [Luke 2:40](#), [Acts 6:3](#), [Ephesians 1:17](#), [Colossians 3:16](#), [James 1:5](#)), wisdom **can be sinned against** ([Proverbs 8:36](#)), and wisdom is **omnipotent** because she **created the heavens and the earth** ([Psalm 136:5](#), [Proverbs 3:19](#)), all of which proves that wisdom is God.

We all know this isn't true. Wisdom isn't a person, and wisdom isn't God. It doesn't matter how many passages we find which attribute these qualities to wisdom, the fact remains that wisdom is an attribute, not a person, and certainly not God.

How do we know this? How can we tell, given the huge amount of personification of wisdom which we find in the Bible? It's easy readers, the simple fact of the matter is that the Greek and Hebrew words for 'wisdom' are nouns which mean exactly that – 'wisdom'. You can look in any lexicon you like, and you will not find that the Greek or Hebrew nouns for 'wisdom' mean 'a person' (for the meanings of the Greek adjective and noun, go [here](#)). It doesn't mean 'a person'. It is a noun which means 'wisdom'.

It's exactly the same with the Greek and Hebrew words for 'spirit'. It doesn't matter how much the spirit is personified in the Bible, the fact is that the Greek and Hebrew nouns used for the spirit **do not** mean 'person'. You can check this for yourself with a reputable lexicon which quotes historical sources (see [here](#) for the Greek). You can see for yourself that 'person' is not within the semantic domain of the word. It means a lot of things, but 'person' is not one of them. It can refer to a spirit being such as an angel, pagan spirit being, or demon (and **only** these), but does not mean 'person' of itself. In the phrases 'Holy Spirit' and 'spirit **of** God', clearly none of these are being described.





My opponent can present all the passages in which the spirit of God is personified, he can make all the claims he wants about the spirit being called 'God' and 'Lord' (it isn't), he **cannot** assert that the word has a meaning which is not contained within its lexically attested semantic domain. It would be like claiming that the word 'orange' really means 'person', just because you found a book in which an orange was consistently personified.

My opponent's methodology is entirely backwards. He has tried to compile evidence that the Holy Spirit is really a person, whilst failing completely to even check for any evidence that the Holy Spirit is **not** a

person, when a simple reading of the lexical meaning of the relevant word would have told him this.

My opponent wants to know how I can tell that the Holy Spirit is not a person, even though it is described in personal terms. My answer is simple:

- * The Greek and Hebrew words used for the Holy Spirit never mean 'person'
- * The Holy Spirit is described consistently as an attribute of God ('the spirit **OF** God'), and an attribute is of course not a person
- * Following on from this, an attribute of **a person** is not **the person themselves** – the wisdom **OF** God is not God, the grace **OF** God is not God, the wrath **OF** God is not God, all of these are attributes **OF** God (not persons and not God), and the same applies to the Holy Spirit, which is the spirit **OF** God

Since the Holy Spirit itself is an attribute of God (referred to consistently 'the Spirit **of** God'), and explicitly **the agent by which He works** ([Job 26:13](#)  'by His spirit', [Zechariah 4:6](#)  'by My spirit', [1 Corinthians 2:10](#)  'by His spirit', [Ephesians 3:16](#)  'by His spirit'), we should expect to see it personified, and we should expect acts which God carries out attributed to the Holy Spirit.

The very fact that the **Holy Spirit** is said to be sent **by** God proves that the Holy Spirit and God are **two separate entities**. Note that, the Bible identifies **the Holy Spirit** as one entity, and **God** as an entirely separate entity.

The Scriptures are personified in the same way as the Holy Spirit (they are said to speak, indwell, comfort, foresee things, prophesy, teach, instruct, reprove, admonish, build up, exhort, bless, sanctify, and save, etc), and yet we know that they are neither a person, nor are they God, because the Greek and Hebrew nouns used for the word 'Scripture' simply do not mean 'person' or 'God'.

My opponent made very few other claims to substantiate his position, so I can deal with the remainder briefly:

- * Of the counter arguments he anticipated, I would in fact use almost none of them, but I do want to correct something he said. In the example he gave, David speaks of himself as being **figuratively** poured out, a Hebrew phrase which actually means 'exhausted'. Nor does he say he is poured out on anyone. But the Holy Spirit **is literally** poured out, and is literally poured out **on** people, and visibly so (the dove on Christ, the tongues of fire on the apostles).
- * My opponent could find only one verse could be found from which he could claim that the Holy Spirit is called 'God', but on inspection we find that the verse in which the phrase 'Holy Spirit' occurs does not even contain the word 'God'.
- * The claim was made that use of the masculine Greek word EKEINOS to refer to the Holy Spirit proves that the Holy Spirit is a person, and is male. My opponent appears ignorant of the fact that Greek noun declensions are not necessarily indicative of the things to which they refer. The Greek word for 'spirit' used of the Holy Spirit is **neuter**, and the Hebrew word for 'spirit' used of the Holy Spirit is **feminine**, but my opponent would reject the idea that this proves the Holy Spirit is an 'it' or a woman.

My opponent continues to employ the same logical fallacy to which he has appealed throughout this debate, the fallacy of the undistributed middle (definition [here](#)).

In this case, he has presented the following arguments:

1: God has qualities X, Y, Z

2: The Holy Spirit has qualities X, Y, Z

3: Therefore the Holy Spirit is God

1: Persons have qualities X, Y, Z

2: The Holy Spirit has qualities X, Y, Z

3: Therefore the Holy Spirit is a person

Not only has my opponent committed this logical fallacy, his entire process of argumentation is flawed. He rejects the idea that essential doctrine is to be identified as what the apostles taught explicitly, claiming that essential doctrine is to be derived by uninspired inferences from a range of verses scattered throughout the Bible (I have never said 'randomly', as he falsely claims).

I have asked repeatedly for Biblical evidence which says we should interpret the Scriptures in this way, and have received no answer. I am asking again.

My opponent demonstrates confusion over the relevancy of the creeds to this debate. I shall explain:

* The fact that the earliest creeds not only have no reference to the Trinity but include faith statements which contradict it, is historical evidence that the Trinity was a doctrine absent from the Christian community until a later date

* I have never asked or expected my opponent to make his case from the creeds, but I have asked him repeatedly to defend the creedal definition of the Trinity from Scripture

My opponent initially attempted to relate the Trinitarian creeds to Scripture, but has in the last few posts moved away from this, acknowledging they make statements which the Bible does not make, and presenting a view of God and Christ which contradicts the creeds.

The Bible asserts the total **subordination** of the son to the Father, the Athanasian creed asserts the total **equality** of the son with the Father, but my opponent holds a different view to **both of these**, believing that the son was subordinate to the Father as a man, but equal to the Father as God. Neither the Bible nor the Athanasian creed makes any such distinction.


My opponent has claimed I have 'consistently moved away from what the scriptures say about the Trinity and moved toward what the later Christian creeds stated'. This false charge, for which he provides no evidence whatever, is easily refuted by a reading of my posts. My references to the creeds occupy a mere fraction of my total word count, and all of the arguments I have made for my understanding of God and Christ have been made from Scripture.

Trinitarian: Point 4 Counter Rebuttal

Monday, September 11, 2006

[Prophetnick77 Point 4: Counter Rebuttal](#)

Point 4: Who or What is the Holy Spirit?


It seems that my opponent is not at all familiar with Wisdom Christology, which I have actually made reference to in previous posts (see closing of Point 1; closing rebuttal to Point 2 and summary statement). The Wisdom of Proverbs is God's supernal Wisdom—this is none other than the pre-incarnate Son, thus we don't have a 4th person of the Trinity, (which is obviously impossible)—this point doesn't hinder my position at all. Remember, Jesus is said to be the Wisdom of God ([1Corinthians 1:24](#) )

Next, an appeal was made to the Greek and Hebrew nouns for "Spirit" not meaning "person"—this was NOT my claim. I clearly set forth the criteria for personality and that is: **1. Intelligence, 2. Rationality, 3. Consciousness.** I have been consistent throughout with holding to this standard thus to argue based on the semantic domain of the noun is nothing more than straw man in that my original argument was not based on the meaning of the nouns for Spirit. And of course, lexical definitions do not always bring out the full meaning of a word—context and usage do.

I'd point out that angels and demons have personality. They are intelligent, rational, and conscious. Searchingone1033 still hasn't stated his criteria for determining the personality of the Father. To do so would render his argument invalid because whatever criteria he uses can be used to show the personality of the Spirit—the argument is self-refuting.

Next we're told that *"it doesn't matter how much the Spirit is personified in the Bible"* and in the very next paragraph it is admitted via an analogy of an orange that Spirit is *"consistently personified."* Well that's just it... The Spirit is **ALWAYS PERSONIFIED** in scripture. We have no examples in scripture where the Holy Spirit is not presented as a Person; therefore it would be foolish to conclude that He was anything other than a Person! This isn't the case with other personifications.

It was asserted that my methodology is backwards because I compiled evidence showing the personality of the Spirit and not evidence showing the His non-personality. I'm not really sure how my methodology is backwards here. All persons have certain attributes, scripture presents the Holy Spirit as a Person; therefore we see the Holy Spirit with these attributes. My conclusions follow from the premises. And obviously I can't compile evidence of a negative—I have to first establish what the Holy Spirit **IS** to know what He **ISN'T**.

It was said that an attribute is not a person and the Wisdom of God is not God. This is merely question begging in that it assumes what has yet to be proven, namely that God is only one person. It also ignores Wisdom Christology and any relevant Ancient Near Eastern literature on the subject. This also fails to acknowledge that God's Word is an essential attribute, yet the Word is God ([John 1:1](#) ) . Searchingone1033's argument doesn't account for the parallels between God's Word and Wisdom. I'd love to go off on a tangent and delve more into this topic, but the point of debate is the Holy Spirit, not Wisdom.

Also, some irrelevant conclusions were drawn. It was said that the Grace of God and the Wrath of God are not God and are not persons. True as that may be, it has no bearing on either Wisdom of the Holy Spirit being God or Persons. Grace and Wrath are not seen doing the things that God alone does, nor are they consistently personified as the Spirit is.

It was said that the Holy Spirit is a separate entity and the Bible describes God and the Holy Spirit as separate entities. This is incorrect as has been shown repeatedly. The Bible describes the Father and the Holy Spirit as sharing one name. The Bible describes the Father and the Holy Spirit as sharing the essential attributes of deity. The Bible shows the procession of the Spirit from the Father. They are described as distinct Persons without doubt, but not as separate entities.

An argument was then made that the scriptures are personified in the same way as the Holy Spirit. This is nothing more than a false analogy in that the Holy Spirit is ALWAYS spoken of as a person while the scriptures are not.

Once again, the Spirit's being poured out in no way detracts from His personality. Whether or not David was figuratively poured out is beside the point—Paul was as well ([Philippians 2:17](#))—and so was the suffering servant of [Isaiah 53:12](#). Point being, persons can be poured out.

[Acts 5:3-4](#) has been addressed in previous posts. Searchingone1033's denial of the passage is obvious.

It appears that the point was completely missed in my reference to "ekeinos" being used in for the Holy Spirit. It had nothing to do with the gender of the Holy Spirit, but rather the fact that this **PERSONAL PRONOUN** was used to refer to the Holy Spirit. This seems to be the criteria that my opponent used to decide upon the personality of the Father, although we can't be sure since he has not told us what his standard is.

More charges of illogical syllogistic reasoning surface. I was accused of committing the fallacy of the undistributed middle but up until this point I haven't presented my position syllogistically although I can do so easily, with the same result:

God alone is Eternal
The Holy Spirit is God
Therefore the Holy Spirit is Eternal

God alone is Omnipotent
The Holy Spirit is God
Therefore the Holy Spirit is Omnipotent

God alone is Omniscient
The Holy Spirit is God
Therefore the Holy Spirit is Omniscient

God alone is Omnipresent
The Holy Spirit is God
Therefore the Holy Spirit is Omnipresent

All Persons are Intelligent

The Holy Spirit is a Person
Therefore the Holy Spirit is Intelligent

All Persons are Rational
The Holy Spirit is a Person
Therefore the Holy Spirit is Rational

All Persons are Conscious
The Holy Spirit is a Person
Therefore the Holy Spirit is Conscious

Each conclusion is justified from the premises. Placing this in syllogistic form hasn't altered the conclusion in any way.

Another straw man argument came in the form of charging me with rejecting the idea that essential doctrine is to be identified as what the apostles taught explicitly—this is obviously not the case. The apostles explicitly taught the deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The conclusion drawn from this is the Trinity. My opponent seems bent on having an exact passage or verse to say something the way he would like it said—this ain't gonna happen. We have to take scripture as it is and systematically derive doctrine.

Searchingone1033's statements concerning the creeds this late in the game are laughable. As anyone keeping up with these posts can plainly see, the creeds have been his focus. He has made consistent appeals to the creeds and the language used in the creeds in nearly every post. To say that I'm somehow confused over their relevancy is ridiculous. The point I have been making is that although I do agree with them, they are completely irrelevant because we have the Bible to make the case for the Trinity! Later creeds are not at all necessary no matter how true they are! And for the record, I have backed off of nothing; I took one proposition from the Athanasian Creed in my opening to Point 1 and cited the scriptural support for it. This of course was in response to its being brought up originally by Searchingone1033.

The Bible asserts a functional subordination of the Son to the Father. Not an ontological inequality or Subordinationism. I have demonstrated this in Point 3. The language of the Athanasian Creed clearly is in reference to the equality of substance (i.e. nature/essence) and allows for the doctrine of functional subordination. The lack of understanding on the part of my opponent has no bearing on the language of the creed. And I would note yet another straw man argument. My position is NOT that the Son is subordinate to the Father as a man—my position IS that the Son is subordinate as a Son, which He has been from all eternity, even before the incarnation and the addition of a human nature. The substantial inferiority of the human nature to the divine nature is a given.

And finally, anyone reading the posts can see for themselves the creedal red herrings. This has been Searchingone1033's theme throughout. From my opponent's response to my arguments on the Holy Spirit, I am confident that they were too strong to merit any kind of refutation. All the evidence was relegated to saying that the Holy Spirit is merely personified. Not exactly what we would consider compelling stuff. Perhaps if it could be shown that the Holy Spirit was ever spoken of as anything other than a Person, then maybe there could be some consideration of this argument. But since this isn't the case, we won't consider it. I wonder how it would be received if I said, since the Father is always spoken of in personal terms, possesses all of the attributes of personality, and acts like a Person, then that must

be a personification. Chances are I would be laughed at... Now you know how I feel.

Note: This is my final post--May the Triune God Yahweh bless each and every reader!

Christadelphian: Point 4 Closing Statement

Friday, September 15, 2006

[Searchingone1033 -- Point 4: Closing Statement](#)

Point 4: Who or What is the Holy spirit?

Readers, the best part about having an imaginary friend is the fact that no matter what questions are asked about your friend, you always know the answer. When people ask you questions about your imaginary friend, you can't find the answers in a book, you can't find the answers by asking other people, you can't dig them up with archaeology, or prove them with objective evidence. The only place you can find the answer is in your own head. Why? Because you made up your original friend. He's a product of your imagination.

What we have here in this debate is the exact same situation. For example, I point out that Jesus says that the Father is greater than himself, and my opponent claims that Jesus was **functionally** equal to the Father, but subordinate to the Father as a son.

Where did my opponent get this information from? Not from the Bible, because it makes no such distinction anywhere, and nor does Jesus in the passage I presented, in which he says very simply and plainly that his Father is **greater** than him. Like the person describing an imaginary friend, my opponent took his claim straight out of his own imagination.

Defenders of the trinity are forced to continue making things up in order to try and support it. When challenged with the Scriptures, they make something up.

They can't show you where the Bible says that only Jesus' body died, because the Bible doesn't say that. They can't show you where the Bible says Jesus is only functionally subordinate to God, because the Bible doesn't say that. They can't show you where the Bible says that Jesus' human nature was added to his Divine nature in the 'hypostatic union', because the Bible doesn't say that.

Where did they get all these ideas? Like the person with an imaginary friend, they just made them up. That's why they can talk about the 'hypostatic union' in all kinds of intricate detail, even though there isn't a word of this detail in the entire Bible. When you made up the idea yourself, you can add all these details, because it's your imaginary friend.

My opponent didn't understand that David and Paul were **figuratively** poured out, not **literally** poured out in the sense of being 'distributed'. People can be **figuratively** poured out in the sense of being exhausted (David), or offering themselves to God (Paul), but not **literally** poured out in the sense of being distributed. Yet the Holy Spirit **was literally** poured out in the sense of being distributed, and it was even **visibly seen** to be so, proving the Holy Spirit is not a person.

I am familiar with Wisdom Christology, especially with the fact that it is **not taught in the Bible**. Held by a number of the Early Christian Fathers' from the 2nd century AD onwards, it was later rejected by 4th century Trinitarians due to a number of problems. One of these was that the wisdom of Proverbs 8 (to which my opponent has appealed), is specifically **a woman**, and not a man (thus clearly not speaking of Jesus Christ), and another was the fact that the wisdom of Proverbs 8 is specifically said to have been **a**

creation of God. This fact was the reason why, by the 4th century, it was the **Arians** who were arguing Wisdom Christology, whereas the Trinitarians rejected it.

On the issue of equality, my opponent falsely claims agreement with the Bible and creeds. Do they describe Christ as ‘functionally subordinate’ or not? [You judge.](#)

It was claimed that ‘definitions do not always bring out the full meaning of a word—context and usage do’, which is a misunderstanding of lexicons. Lexical definitions **do** always bring out the full meaning of a word. What they do **not** do is inform the reader of which **specific** meaning of a word is intended in any given text. My opponent has attributed to the Greek and Hebrew words for ‘spirit’ a meaning it simply does not have. It is used of angels and evil spirits, but my opponent can hardly claim that the Holy Spirit is an angel or an evil spirit. Further, when it is used of an angel or an evil spirit, the words used are ‘**a** spirit’, whereas the Holy Spirit is never described as ‘**a** spirit’.

It was claimed falsely that I was representing my opponent as saying that the Greek and Hebrew words for ‘spirit’ actually **mean** ‘person’. I actually pointed out that he was **treating** the nouns as if they have this meaning, though he acknowledged they do not have this meaning.

My opponent changed his original argument from EKEINOS, now claiming that it is not the gender of the word which is relevant here (which was his previous argument), but the fact that the personal pronoun is used. He seems to have thought that personal pronouns necessarily indicate personhood, but of course the word ‘it’ is a personal pronoun, and no one would describe a rock as a person, though it uses a personal pronoun (‘it’).

My opponent failed to address my identification of his use of the fallacy of the undistributed middle, and then presented several examples of the logical fallacy of begging the question.

Contrary to my opponent’s claims, the Holy Spirit and God are described as separate entities. In numerous passages of Scripture we have **God** and the **Holy Spirit** distinguished from each other (see [here](#)). They are not distinguished as separate **persons**, but as separate entities. Note that to the Trinitarian, the word God includes persons, so if you have a passage speaking of God **and** the Holy Spirit, then you have a passage distinguishing the Holy Spirit **from the persons of God**.

My opponent helpfully reminds us that his argument has **not** been based on the semantic domain of the noun. I agree! This is a fundamental flaw in his argument. What argument for the meaning of a word takes **no notice whatever** of the actual **semantic domain** of the word? My opponent is once more making things up as he goes along, without even checking **the meaning of the word**.





Yes, my opponent has certainly been consistent in arguing for personality simply from the three attributes of intelligence, rationality, and consciousness, but I have already pointed out that this is an entirely false argument, since you cannot ascribe **literal** intelligence, rationality, or consciousness to a word which speaks of an **impersonal entity** such as the Greek and Hebrew words used for ‘spirit’ describe. You might as well ascribe them to an orange, as I already pointed out.

My opponent claims that I acknowledged that the Holy Spirit is consistently personified in the Bible. I acknowledged no such thing, and in fact denied it. The Holy Spirit is not personified anywhere in the entire Old Testament, and is personified in only a handful of passages in the New (my opponent was able to find about half a dozen).

My opponent asks me how I determine the personality of the Father, and my answer is simply that the Father is described explicitly as **the only true** God. A god, **by definition**, is a person. I don't have to try and define the Father as a person based on His attributes, the fact that He is God **means** that He is **necessarily** a person, because a god is, **by definition**, a person. This is an argument which my opponent simply **cannot** make for the Holy Spirit, because as he has acknowledged, the 'spirit' is **not**, by definition, a person.

Readers, how do we know that the president of the United States is a person? Do we check to see if he has intelligence, rationality, and consciousness? How absurd, of course we don't. We know that he is a person because the president of the United States is, **by definition**, a person. We know also that the president of the United States is a human being, and a human being is, **by definition**, a person. My opponent is using a totally alien means of determining personhood.

My opponent misrepresented me as faulting him for not presenting evidence that the Holy Spirit is not a person. In fact, I faulted him for looking for evidence to support his presupposition, and not checking to see if there **existed** any evidence contradicting his presupposition. He didn't even check the semantic domain of the relevant Greek and Hebrew words, which is the very **first** thing he should have done.

My opponent falsely claims that the Holy Spirit is **always** personified, and **never** described in impersonal terms. The Greek and Hebrew words used for the Holy Spirit never mean 'person'. The Holy Spirit is described consistently as an attribute of God (referred to consistently 'the Spirit of God'), and explicitly **the agent by which He works** ([Job 26:13](#)  'by His spirit', [Zechariah 4:6](#)  'by My spirit', [1 Corinthians 2:10](#)  'by His spirit', [Ephesians 3:16](#)  'by His spirit'). An attribute is of course not a person, an attribute is, **by definition**, impersonal.

Christadelphian: Point 4 Summary Statement




Monday, September 18, 2006

[Searchingone1033: Summary Statement](#)

Readers, we've finally discovered that my opponent's Trinitarian theology is the product of him attempting to reconcile Scriptures which he considers would be contradictory without the conclusions he draws.

My opponent is confused by the passages which say that God cannot be seen, and the passages which say that He has been seen, and has to resort to a clumsy chain of reasoning in order to address what he sees as an otherwise irreconcilable contradiction.

The Bible makes it clear that God uses agents to represent Him (such as the angels), and that these agents bear His Name, and are spoken of synonymously with Him.

For example, in [Exodus 23:20-21](#)  an angel is given the name of Yahweh when he acts as God's agent, in [Genesis 32:27-30](#)  Jacob wrestles with an angel who tells him he has wrestled with God (and Jacob says he has seen God face to face), and in [Acts 7:30](#)  Stephen says that when 'Yahweh' spoke to Moses in the burning bush, it was really an angel. This is how God could be 'seen' – by an agent who was representing God.

This entirely Biblical solution to my opponent's problem has not occurred to him, and he resorts to his own inferences and extrapolations as a result. Why not accept the explicit teaching of the Scriptures instead?

My opponent has claimed to rely on the explicit teachings of the apostles, but in fact he has not. For example, he cannot find a passage where the apostles teach Christ is **God**, so he finds a passage in which Christ is described in such a way as **he infers** Christ is omnipotent, which he then **extrapolates** to claim that Jesus is God.

He has had to employ this combination of inference and extrapolation (appealing to the logical fallacy of the undistributed middle), every step of the way in the making of his case, and then combine all these faulty conclusions into a doctrine never taught by the apostles.

The fact that he has had to do this proves that he could find no passages in the Bible teaching the trinity, or else there would be no need for this extended chain of reasoning – he could simply show me the relevant passages.

I haven't had to rely on personal inferences and then try to make sense of the mess they cause, because I have relied on the explicit teaching of the Bible. I can accept the explicit teaching of the apostles without trying to modify, amplify, or qualify their words with conclusions I have extrapolated from my own personal inferences.

A summary of the Biblical teaching follows.

The Father

* Christ declared that it is eternal life to know **the Father** as the only true God ([John 17:3](#))

* The apostles repeatedly taught that God is one person, **the Father**

* [Acts 2: 3](#), [1000](#) are baptized with the knowledge that God is **the Father**, and that Jesus Christ is 'a **man clearly attested to you by God** with powerful deeds, wonders, and miraculous signs **that God performed among you through him**'

* In the Divine throne room visions of Exodus 24, Ezekiel 1, Daniel 7, Acts 7, and Revelation 4-5, God is shown as **one person**, not three

The apostles did not simply teach that there is one God, they taught explicitly that there is **one God**, the **Father**:

[1 Corinthians 8:6](#) yet for us there is **one God, the Father**...

Since the apostles taught that there is **one God**, who is **the Father**, and since my opponent has agreed the Father is **one person** ('The Father is **A Person**'), then the **one God** is **one person**, the **Father**. Note that Christ is distinguished **from** God, not included in 'God'.

Scripture states explicitly concerning God that 'The Lord our God is one Lord' ([Deuteronomy 6:6](#), [Mark 12:29](#)), and that '**he** [one person] is one, and there is no one else besides **him** [one person]' ([Mark 12:32](#)), never describing God as 'three in one'.

In [Genesis 1:26](#) the plural pronouns 'us' and 'our' are used, but in verse 27 the noun and verb are in the **singular**, indicating that **only one person** is involved in the act of creation of man and woman, thus 'God created mankind in **his** own image, in the image of God **he** created them, male and female **he** created them'.

Likewise in [Genesis 2:8](#), '**he** placed the man **he** had formed', [Genesis 2:22](#), 'the Lord God made a woman from the part **he** had taken... **he** brought her', [Genesis 5:1-2](#), '**he** made them... **He** created them male and female... **he** blessed them'. Christ described the creation of man and woman as the act of **one person who was not himself** ([Matthew 19:4](#), 'he made them male and female').

Readers, what you understand by '**he**'. One person, or more than one person? In Hebrew, Greek and English, '**he**' means '**one person**'. Check standard grammars to settle the point for yourself.

Let the readers note that my opponent was utterly unable to answer this question, responding only with a question of his own (which I have already answered twice).

He asked me if I can show that '**he**' cannot refer to 'one being', or one being with many persons, which is a complete blind, since personal pronouns count **persons**, not beings, as I have already said. Even if there was one being consisting of **fifty persons**, that one being would still have to be referred to with a **plural personal pronoun** ('they', 'them', 'we', etc), since **more than one person** is being referred to.

The Son

The apostles taught explicitly that Christ is the **agent** by which **God** saves ([Romans 6:23](#) 'the gift of **God** is **eternal life in Christ Jesus**', [Titus 3:5-6](#) 'renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom **He** [God] poured out on us in full measure **in Jesus Christ our Savior**', [Galatians 3:15](#) 'in **Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham would come** to the Gentiles', [Hebrews 13:20-21](#) 'God... working in us what is pleasing before him **through Jesus Christ**'), including justification ([Romans 3:24-26](#); [5:1-2](#)), sanctification ([Hebrews 10:10](#) 'we have been made holy ['sanctified'] **through the offering of the body of Jesus**'), and glorification ([2 Thessalonians 2:12](#)).

The apostles predicate Christ's work of salvation on his being **a man identical to those he came to save**, and **really died** (my opponent was unable to explain how Christ died). Christ also had to be justified ([1 Timothy 3:16](#)), sanctified ([John 10:36](#)), and glorified ([John 7:39](#); [11:4](#); [12:16](#), [Acts 3:13](#)), meaning **he had to be saved** through the same process **as those he came to save**.

Christ has the authority to judge men not because he is God, but because he is **a man** whom **God has appointed** with this authority ([John 5:22](#), [27](#); [17:1-3](#), [Acts 10:42](#); [17:31](#)). Christ explicitly attributed the creation to **one person** who was **not himself** ([Matthew 19:4](#)).

Christ is not omniscient, he stated explicitly that there was knowledge he did not have ([Mark 13:32](#)). Christ's knowledge has clearly been limited from his life in earth up to and including his current life in heaven ([Luke 2:52](#) 'Jesus **increased** in wisdom', [Hebrews 5:8](#) 'he **learned** obedience', [Revelation 1:1](#) 'The revelation of Jesus Christ, **which God gave to him**').

Christ is not omnipresent, he told his disciples he would leave them and return later ([John 13:33](#), [36](#); [14:2-3](#), [18](#), [28](#); [16:7](#)), and the fact that he actually left and it was said by angels that he would return in the future ([Acts 1:9-11](#)).

In [Matthew 18:20](#), Christ says that he is present when two or three are gathered in his name, which places a condition on his presence (if he was omnipresent he would be there regardless of who was gathered in what name). Paul says the same of himself, and does not say that Christ is literally present, only the **power** of Christ ([1 Corinthians 5:4](#) 'When you **gather together** in the name of our Lord Jesus, and **I am with you in spirit**, along with **the power** of our Lord Jesus').

The Bible says there was a time when God's fatherhood of Christ was still future ([2 Samuel 7:14](#)), and the time that God **became** the father of Christ ([Hebrews 1:5](#)).





Thus there was a time when God **was not** the father of Christ, and there was a time when God **became** the father of Christ. Thus there was a point in time at which Christ was brought into existence, since in order to be a literal father a person must cause a son to **come into existence** when previously **they did not exist**.

Christ is not co-equal with the Father ([John 5:19](#), [30](#) 'the Son **can do nothing from himself**', 'I can do **nothing of myself**', [John 14:28](#) 'My Father is **greater than I**'), and the apostles taught that he is the **servant of God** ([Acts 3:13](#), [26](#) 'his **servant** Jesus', 'God raised up **his servant**', [Acts 4:27](#), [30](#) 'your **holy servant** Jesus').

The later Trinitarian distinction that Christ is ontologically equal but functionally subordinate is made nowhere in Scripture (which declares an **unqualified subordination**), nor in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds (which declare an **unqualified equality**).

My opponent occupies a curious middle position between the Scriptures and the Athanasian Creed, insisting on a subordinationism which is only 'functional', a distinction made nowhere in either the Scriptures or the Athanasian Creed.

The Holy Spirit

The Greek and Hebrew words used for the Holy Spirit never mean 'person'. The Holy Spirit is described consistently as an attribute of God (referred to consistently 'the Spirit **of** God'), and explicitly **the agent by which He works** ([Job 26:13](#)  'by His spirit', [Zechariah 4:6](#)  'by My spirit', [1 Corinthians 2:10](#)  'by His spirit', [Ephesians 3:16](#)  'by His spirit'). An attribute is of course not a person, an attribute is, **by definition**, impersonal.

Regardless of the (scant), personification of the spirit, the fact is that the Greek and Hebrew nouns used for the spirit **do not** mean 'person'. You can check this for yourself with a reputable lexicon which quotes historical sources.



My opponent has attributed to the Greek and Hebrew words for 'spirit' meanings they simply do not have. These words are used of angels and evil spirits, but my opponent can hardly claim that the Holy Spirit is an angel or an evil spirit. Further, when they are used of an angel or an evil spirit, the words used are 'a spirit', whereas the Holy Spirit is never described as 'a spirit'.

In numerous passages of Scripture we have **God** and the **Holy Spirit** distinguished from each other, not as separate **persons**, but as **separate entities**. Note that to the Trinitarian, the word God **includes persons**, so if you have a passage speaking of God and the Holy Spirit, then you have a passage distinguishing the Holy Spirit **from the persons of God**.

The very fact that the **Holy Spirit** is said to be sent **by** God proves that the Holy Spirit and God are **two separate entities**.

The Trinity: Essential Christian Doctrine?

Did the apostles **teach** the Trinity as an essential Christian doctrine?

* [Acts 2: 3](#) , [000](#)  are baptized with the knowledge that God is **the Father**, and that Jesus Christ is 'a **man** clearly attested to you **by God** with powerful deeds, wonders, and miraculous signs **that God performed among you through him**'

* Acts 3: The apostles teach that Christ is 'the servant of God', that '**the God of our forefathers**, has glorified **his servant Jesus**', distinguishing Jesus from God

* Acts 4: The apostles attribute all creation to God as **one person**, and refer to Jesus not as God but the servant of God.

* Acts 5: The apostles teach that **God** raised **Jesus** (again distinguishing Jesus from God), and say that **God** exalted **Jesus**, raising him to the right hand of **God** (distinct from Jesus), preaching to everyone that Jesus was **the Christ** (not God)

* Acts 7: Stephen preaches Jesus is the son of man (not 'God'), distinguishes between God and Christ,

and says that he **saw** Jesus and God as **two separate beings**, with Jesus on the right hand of **God**.

* Acts 8: People are baptized after hearing 'the good news about the **kingdom of God** and the name of **Jesus Christ**', not that Jesus is God

* Acts 10: A household is baptized after the apostles preach that Jesus is 'the one **appointed by God**', and say that Jesus could perform miracles 'because **God** was **with him**', not because he was God

* Acts 11: Peter defends his baptism of Gentiles who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (**not the Trinity**), but does not have to defend neglecting to teach that Jesus is really God

* Acts 13: Christ is repeatedly distinguished from God, and the good news is that '**God** brought to Israel a Savior, **Jesus**' (not 'Jesus is God')

* Acts 17: God is repeatedly identified as one person ('He'), a person other than Christ, who made the world, and is 'going to judge the world in righteousness, by **a man** whom **he designated**', identifying Jesus as **a man** who is **the agent of God**, not God Himself

My opponent dismisses these with the claim that there is no evidence that the apostles **had** to teach people the trinity. This begs the question in an extraordinary way. At Pentecost, Peter had to **start** by convincing people that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he had risen from the dead, yet my opponent wishes us to believe he was speaking to Jews who already believed in the Trinity?

Absurd – there would have been no reason to teach that Jesus was the Messiah and had risen from the dead, if these Jews already believed in the Trinity.

Why did the apostles **never make arguments of my opponent**? Why did they use none of the passages of Scripture my opponent uses? My opponent claimed that they were speaking the words which would later become New Testament Scripture, but we don't find these words teaching the Trinity. Nor does this answer why the apostles did not use any of the Old Testament passages of Scripture to which my opponent appeals. Nor does it explain why the apostles used none of the arguments my opponent uses.

The fact is that the apostles never taught the doctrine of the Trinity at all. As I have shown, later Christians admitted the apostles never taught Jesus is God, but could not agree why. The reason is that they did not believe in it.

The Scriptures teach that it is an essential doctrine to believe that there is one God, who is one person, the Father. My opponent has acknowledged that Scripture teaches it is a heresy to deny that Jesus is a man, and that the apostles taught that it is essential doctrine to believe that Jesus both was, and still is, a man.

Nowhere in the entire Bible is there a single passage teaching that the Trinity is an essential doctrine.