

# A Look at the Trinity Doctrine

By Ken Fortier

## INTRODUCTION

Over the years I have had many confrontations with those who dogmatically challenge me on why I tend to stay away from using the term “Trinity” when talking about the workings of God in sending His Son, Jesus, to be the one to save us from our sins, and how He does that.

Usually the one I’m in discussion with introduces the term Trinity; and I usually come back by saying I don’t like using that term for the simple reason that there is so much opinionated baggage attached to it that all it does is take away from what one finds said in the Bible. I say that because of my studies on the Trinity and on the many contradictions made by those trying to explain what that word means. Sad to say that leads to much confusion among my fellow Christians. (We will address that in this Treatise.)

My study on this topic started shortly after I was confronted by someone who objected to my using the term Trinity. He asked me why I would use such a term to describe the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Naturally, I (stupidly) tried to explain what it meant; not realizing that I was simply parroting what I was taught and, in so doing, found myself making contradicting statements. He caught all of them, and told me I should do a study on the topic. (I don’t remember his name or what religious belief he belonged to.)

I turned first to the Bible, and that didn’t actually help me to explain the doctrine of the Trinity that I was taught. Further questioning a couple of those whom I looked up to I was told to read Augustine’s treatise *On the Trinity*. So, I did — what a read: 15 books in one volume! It should be sufficient to say that it took me a long time to read and study it. What struck me first was reading His preface to the treatise, and what he said about his writings: ***“Do not follow my writings as holy Scripture. When you find in Holy Scriptures anything you did not believe before, believe it without doubt; but in my writings you should HOLD NOTHING FOR CERTIAN.”*** Okay, Augustine says that what he writes is just his opinion; not a doctrine one must believe. I have to admire his candor/attitude about his lengthy treatise.

As I read his treatise it seemed to be very believable. After I had finished it and then thought and contemplated about it more and more, it struck me in a way similar to what an earlier writer had to say about Plato’s writings: Cicero (106–43 BC), commenting on Plato’s writings, says, ***“I have perused Plato with the greatest diligence and exactness, over and over again; but know not how it is, while I read him I am convinced; when I lay the book aside and I begin to consider by myself of the soul’s immortality, all conviction instantly ceases”*** (Cited by Perowne, J.J.S., “Immortality,” preface, chapter 7, page 45, on Cicero’s *Tusculan Questions*).

Thusly, I would recommend anyone to read Augustine’s treatise *On the Trinity* and think on it as you verify it with what the Bible has to say. But when doing so, realize that it is JUST HIS OPINION, NOT DOCTRINE one must believe.

Man's many conclusions may often sound convincing, or appear to conform to scripture, but a careful study of what is actually said in the scriptures would reveal that various conclusions don't really agree with what is in the Bible at all. Many of man's ideas are generally inconsistent and do not agree with all of scripture because their foundation isn't on the Word of God — instead, they are based upon faulty exegesis or using esegesis. That is why the inconsistencies are seen. But when we bow and accept what the Bible reveals we see that everything conforms to the Word. Like a picture puzzle with every piece in place, it all fits perfectly! We only get that perfect picture when scripture is in agreement with itself. If it does not, then the interpretation we have formulated is not God's interpretation, it is man's! God does not contradict Himself in scripture. When you get your directions directly from scripture, you can be sure that you are on the right path. Neglecting this, you are on the wrong path, and thus you have no real exegetical destination. Simply put, there are no contradictions when God's Word is understood precisely the way it is written. And when you compare scripture with scripture, the spiritual with spiritual (1st Cor. 2:13) and it all fits together like pieces in a completed picture puzzle, then you know you have come to the truth of God's Word. Likewise, when we hear someone teaching the gospel and we want to find out if what he says is true, the only way to do that is to test his words by God's Word. We can call it "trying the spirits" to see just who is giving biblical exegesis, and who is using esegesis to make a conclusion based upon their own interpretations.

Or as **2nd Timothy 2:15** puts it — "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing<sup>1</sup> the Word of Truth".

And not to forget **Proverbs 1:7** — "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise Wisdom and instruction."

It takes a more noble heart to receive correction (as the more noble Bereans: Acts 17:11) of the truth from scripture. And God is the only one who can give a person the truth and that through His holy spirit.<sup>2</sup> Clinging to man made traditions in the face of scripture is not the path of the faithful Christian. When we compare scripture with scripture there is no contradiction in God's Word. Contradictions only come when we try and force God's word to say something it doesn't say. Sloppy and/or unrighteous esegesis is not a virtue, and there is no reason to minimize it as insignificant in our walk with God.

The real truth of course is that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, free or slave, male or female, for all believers are children of God, one holy people, one body of Christ and all belong to one Church! Both are in "one" Olive tree, not two! There was one Old Testament with Israel, and there is one New Testament with Israel. One name whereby man may be saved, one acceptable time when He took away the sins of Israel — on the cross! It is not a future event; it is a past event — according to scripture! So it gets back to that age old question. The question is not one of interpretation; the question is who we are going to believe: God, or our teachers?

1. To make straight and smooth, to handle aright, to teach the truth directly and correctly.
2. Comparing spiritual with spiritual.

## **My defense**

“I sincerely believe that every teaching and practice in the church should be checked against what the Scriptures have revealed and carefully scrutinized. I also believe that it is not a sin to ‘challenge’ our beliefs and practices; it may be more likely to be sinful NOT TO challenge these things. I also keep in mind that “some will depart from the faith” because of their own preconceived ideas and/or “wrestling” of the Scriptures. However, there will always be many who will never truly know what constitutes the faith because they never bother to seek it, or to challenge what they presume to be ‘the faith’.”

The above was stated by brother Al Maxey during one of his debates. While these words are not my own, I add my name saying that I have said the very same things at various times over the last four decades while I’ve been studying to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

## **A word of caution**

In this Treatise you will notice that we stress some things and use strong language to press the point we want to make. In many instances we will look and dig deeply into many of the words the Scriptures use to reveal the teachings (doctrines) the inspired writers gave us. We will attempt to present this Treatise in words, we hope, that the average reader will understand, even though we use theological terms in many parts of it.

This Treatise was not written to be a defense of the Trinity Doctrine; rather, it was written to show all the objections to that Doctrine — and there is a lot to be shown! It was not easy, to say the least, for it required a lot of time and research. It will be up to you, the reader, to consider if it has a valid conclusion.

Be that as it may, this Treatise is an opinion, and we are not alone in saying this. The Trinity argument is mainly moot, to tell the truth. I firmly believe in the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit of God. Like the apostle Paul, we also say, “*I think also that I have the spirit of God*” (I Corinthians 7:40), and, we like to add, “dwelling in me.” We believe all Christians should be able to say this, wholeheartedly! We, so far, are convinced that the “Trinity Doctrine” is not a part of the Gospel message of Jesus, nor is it taught by any of the writers of the New Testament. Thusly, we don’t believe it is necessary for one’s salvation to believe in the Trinity Doctrine or not, and many scholars agree with us in saying this.

Ken Fortier

## Part One:

**Who is Jesus the Christ?** This is the question that was debated at the Nicean Council of 325 AD.

*“It pleased the Father that **IN** him should **ALL** fullness dwell”* (Col. 1:19). Just what does that mean? This statement was in the forefront of the Nicean Council, which we will get to shortly.

Let’s also consider the following explosive remarks of Jesus:

**John 10:27-30** *“My sheep hear my voice.... My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.”* Think...what did Jesus mean by saying that he and the Father were one? Was it that they were both united in their goals, and of the same mindset?

**John 14:6-10** *“I am the way, the truth and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you should have known my Father also: and from henceforth you **KNOW** him and have **SEEN** him.....he that has **SEEN** me has **SEEN** the Father; and how do you then say, show us the Father? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The **WORDS** that I speak unto you I speak **NOT OF MYSELF: but the Father that DWELLS IN ME does the works.**”* The mighty works that Jesus did were not of his own doings, **but of the Father working through and in him.**

Jesus spoke in a very “enigmatic manner” to the people of Israel in his ministry of revealing his Father (the Almighty Deity) to them. John records Jesus as saying:

**I am not doing the things you see me do!** John 5:17, 19, 30, 36, 8:28, 29, 9:4, 10:25, 32, 37, 14:10, 11, 31, 17:4

**I am not saying the things you hear me say!** John 7:16-18, 8:28, 29, 38, 12:49, 50, 14:24, 31, 16:15

**I am not the one you see when you look at me!** John 12:45, 14:7, 9

**I am not the one you know when you know me!** John 8:19, 14:7, 9, 16:3

**I am not the one you receive when you receive me!** John 13:20

**I am not who you acknowledge when you acknowledge me!** 1 John 2:23

**I am not the one you deny when you deny me!** 1 John 2:22, 23

**I am not the one you love when you love me!** 1 John 5:1

**I am not the one you believe in when you believe in me!** John 12:44

**I have come in someone else’s name!** John 5:43, 12:28, 17:6

One should remember that Jesus is called “Emmanuel” – God with us. His Father is the one doing everything Jesus admitted in the above statements!

Jesus could righteously say:

**I am the image of that someone else!** (Ascribed by Paul to Jesus. Colossians 1:15, 19, Heb. 1:3)

Paul gives the ultimate testimony as to the “**image of God**” seen in Jesus, “**who is the image of God**” (2 Cor. 4:4); and that “...**He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation**” (Col. 1:15). Then Paul tells us “**For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in him**” (Col. 1:19). Hebrews, the whole of chapter one, gives an excellent statement of God’s unique firstborn Son; even the angels were to worship him!

“Early theologians were greatly influenced by Greek philosophy in their interpretation of the ‘image of God.’ They saw an individual as a spirit being living in a physical body. This Greek dualism was the background out of which the early Christian theologians drew their understanding” (*Holman Bible Dictionary*, p. 688). That was not Jesus!

The best way to determine the true "image of God" is to discern the nature of Jesus Himself. What were the *qualities of His life* which made Him God-like, so that when one saw *Him* one saw the *Father*? Today we may truly realize this special quality within ourselves by being "conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). The Hebrew word for "image" in this passage is *tzelem*, and in the Greek it is *eikon*, which refers to the nature or essence of a person, and not necessarily the physical form. Jesus was endowed with all of the characteristics of God: love, compassion, righteousness, truth, knowledge, etc.; qualities that we as Christians should be filled with – God-like, for we as Christians are called to be Sons of God (John 1:12; Rom. 8:14, 19; Php. 2:15 and 1 John 3:1, 2).

**What is said about Jesus:** He had a dual nature and was unique in many ways! But he also was a man just like you and I in **ALL THINGS!** Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:15; this is critical to understand! Considering the following:

Do (or did) you grow physically? — So did Jesus. Luke 2:40, 52  
Do you know joy? — So did Jesus. Luke 10:21  
Do you feel sorrow? — So did Jesus. Matthew 26:37  
Do you ever weep? — So did Jesus. John 11:35  
Do you ever get weary? — So did Jesus. John 4:6  
Do you ever sleep? — So did Jesus. Luke 8:23  
Do you ever get thirsty? — So did Jesus. John 4:7  
Do you ever get hungry? — So did Jesus. Luke 4:2  
Have you ever been tempted? — So was Jesus. Luke 4:2  
Do you have to work? — So did Jesus. Mark 6:3  
Can you know poverty? — So did Jesus. Luke 9:58  
Have you ever been spit upon? — Jesus was. Mark 14:65  
Have you ever been rejected? — So was Jesus. Luke 9:22  
Have you ever been mocked, or been made fun of? — Jesus was. Matthew 27:29  
Has a friend ever betrayed you? — Jesus was betrayed. Matthew 26:47-50  
Have you ever been deserted by all of your friends? — So was Jesus. Matthew 26:31  
Do you sometimes bleed? — So did Jesus. John 19:34  
Will you someday die? — So did the Christ Jesus. John 19:30  
Do you ever pray? — So did Jesus. Mark 1:35; John 11:41-42, 17:1-26

Do you ever feel forsaken by God? — So did Jesus. Matthew 27:46  
Do you have a God? — So did Jesus! John 20:17; Eph.1:17;

God told Moses that He would raise up a man like him and that the people should listen to all that he was to say. Acts 3:22 tells us “For Moses truly said unto the fathers, ‘A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall you hear in all things whatsoever he shall say to you.’” (See also Deut. 18:15)

## **I AM WHO I AM?** (See Part Six also!)

This has been one of the most famous verses in the Hebrew Bible to propagate that Jesus is God in the flesh. The King James version of the Bible translates the OT Hebrew as “I Am that I Am” and uses it as a name for God. But is that the real name God gave to Moses in Exodus 3:14? And what has it to do with Jesus?

**Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν**, “**I am the One being**” in the Greek Septuagint, and Philo, and Revelation or, “**I am The Existing One**”. By coincidence this same expression occurs in John 1:18 – “**ὁ ὢν**” translated as “the one being” in the bosom of the Father has declared Him. (“bosom” meaning “lap” in our American English). However, the **Latin Vulgate**, *ego sum qui sum*, “I am who I am” has become the theological expression for the name of the Supreme Being, and **it is the originator of that expression**.

**Except you believe that I am (who I claim to be) you shall die in your sins!** (John 8:24-27 — See the greater context of John’s Gospel.)

Read John 8:24 in the NIV and KJV of the Bible, in context, to see how they have rendered the “I am” in the context of the whole chapter and other places in the Bible. Jesus’ statement pertains to the context of the whole chapter which does not mean “I am (who I am)”; rather, He was saying “I am” (who I claim to be – the Son of God). See John 8:54, which says “**If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.**” Yes, Jesus just said that he was the “Son of God!”

Maybe one should consider the following things in this context as well:

### **Matthew 16:15-17** (New King James Version)

He said to them, “*But who do you say that I am?*” Simon Peter answered and said, “*You are the Christ, the **Son of the living God.***” Jesus answered and said to him, “*Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*” Yes, Jesus states he is the **SON OF GOD, and not the “I AM!”** Here is a question for one to contemplate upon at this time: “If the Father **DWELLS** in Christ, why does He refer to the Father as **in heaven?**”

Jesus reinforced Peter’s answer by telling Peter **His Father in Heaven** had given Peter that knowledge. We have both the Father and Son saying he is **the Son of God**. Yet there are some who use the phrase, “I Am Who I AM” to say that God himself came to earth as Jesus – a view that is unbiblical! Jesus never made **believing he is God the Father** a requirement for being a member of His Church. Why would men?

With all the references of Jesus the Christ speaking of the Father being greater than him, sending, giving, teaching, and showing him, it should be clear to all what the source of power is. The witness that Jesus the Christ testified of the Father being in him, and he in the Father, and the statement he made saying that “I and my Father are one” shows them to be inseparable **EXCEPT** for that matter of the Crucifixion: The man, Jesus, had never been separated from the Father until he said, “**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**” Consider these passages of Scripture:

### **Acts 3:22**

“For Moses said ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you’.” (See also Deut. 18:15, 18, 19; Acts 2:30, and 7:37.)

### **Isaiah 9:6**

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” (Think: Jesus is also called “Emmanuel” – God with us – **for the Father was dwelling in Him.**)

In context Jesus is saying he is the “**I AM**” — **the Christ sent from God: the Son of God.** There had been many people before Jesus and after him that claimed to be the Jewish Messiah (the anointed one or the Christ). The Jews under the foot of the Romans would have been overjoyed to have him be the real one as they saw a conquering hero that would free them and restore their homeland and kingdom. They didn’t believe him! What they had failed to realize was that the Messiah would come as a suffering servant to be the “Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world”. But in no way did the Jews expect the Messiah to be **God Himself! In fact, they were after him for calling himself the “Son of God” — thusly making himself “god”. (Read again — John 14:10!)**

## **A deceptive translation**

### **John 1:1-2 (KJV)**

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

**Let’s look more closely at this verse:** (Greek terms inserted where appropriate.)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God/τὸν θεόν, and God/θεός was the Word. This one was in the beginning with the God/τὸν θεόν.”

**τὸν θεόν** is translated as “of God” by most translators, except in this and a few other cases. Word for word translation is “**the Deity (only).**” Both of these terms are in the Accusative case: [The **Accusative** case shows limits: “τὸν θεόν” means “the Deity (only)”. The **ὄν declension** of the Greek is very important in translating τὸν θεόν. In our Modern American English it means “the Deity (only)” – the “subject,” the “Word,” referenced in the verse means it is limited to “the only God”.

The KJV, and most other Bible versions, disregard the “definite article” that appears before God, i.e., “Theon/θεὸν.” Also one should notice that the word “God” in reference to the “Word” is Theos/θεός, which simply means “Deity.” The word “GOD” is Theon/θεὸν which shows it to be the one whom the “Word” was “WITH.”

**Let me be clear about one thing: there are some verses that are very hard to explain, and the Trinity doctrine just makes them harder and more controversial. Let’s look at the Creed that came out of the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD:**

## **The Athanasian Creed line numbered**

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith; Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
2. And the catholic faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;
3. Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance
4. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son and another of the Holy Spirit.
5. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.
6. Such as the Father is, such is the Son and such is the Holy Spirit.
7. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated.
8. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible.
9. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal.
10. And yet they are not three eternal, but one eternal.
11. As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.
12. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty;
13. And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty.
14. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God;
15. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God.
16. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord;
17. And yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.
18. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord;
19. so are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say: There are three Gods or three Lords.
20. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten.
21. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten.
22. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.
23. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

24. And in this Trinity none is afore, nor after another; none is greater, or less than another.
25. But the whole three persons are co-eternal, and co-equal.
26. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.
27. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.
28. Furthermore it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.
29. For the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man.
30. God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and made of the substance of His mother, born in the world.
31. Perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.
32. Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, and inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.
33. Who, although He is God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ.
34. One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God.
35. One altogether, not by the confusion of substance, but by unity of person.
36. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ;
37. Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead;
38. He ascended into heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty;
39. From thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
40. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies;
41. And shall give account of their own works.
42. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire.
43. This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.

A brief example of the confusion this ‘creed’ displayed is shown in the following numbered lines from the so-called “line-numbered Athanasian Creed:”

Line 10. The Father is eternal: the Son eternal: the Holy Spirit eternal.

Line 22. The Son is of the Father alone: not made; nor created; but begotten.

Eternal = begotten?! (We’re going to need a rubberized dictionary to make those mean the same thing!) Line 10 is contradictory to Line 22 - confusion reigns!

Line 25. And in this Trinity none is before or after another: none is greater or less than another.

Jesus said, “I go unto the Father: **for my Father is greater than I**” (John 14:28). Was Jesus telling the truth here? And if so, does the Athanasian Creed tell us the truth?

And these confusing statements...

Line 7. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Spirit uncreated.

Line 12. As also there are not three uncreated: nor three immeasurable: but one uncreated, and one immeasurable.

Huh? So there are TWO that ARE created, and TWO that ARE measurable??

More confusion...

Line 12. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty;

Line 13. And yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty.

If one is almighty, there is no need for the others. If one needs the others, that one is not almighty. What about line 12 above? This Creed is inconsistent, to say the least!

Line 17. So the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Spirit Lord.

Line 18. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord.

Line 19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord.

Line 20. So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, there are three Gods, or three Lords.

**[????????? Tell me, now, who is it that is the author of confusion?]**

And how does a “Trinitarian” explain this statement of Jesus? “*But of that day and hour no one knows...but my Father only*” (The 2nd and 3rd persons of God don’t know?)

### **Two questions:**

- 1) What divine powerful attribute did the Son give to the Father, if any?
- 2) If the Holy Spirit is a ‘separate and distinct person’, what divine powerful attribute can it give to the Father that the Father doesn’t already have?

## **The original Apostle’s Creed**

BELIEVE in God almighty, and in Christ Jesus, his only Son, our Lord; Who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary; Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried; And the third day rose from the dead; Who ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father; Whence he comes to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit, The holy church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, the life everlasting.

### **Something else to consider**

The revelation of the Trinity actually was carried over from Grecian thought and philosophy and was put into “Christianity” by Tertullian around 216 AD, (as well as others) and was made a dogma of the Church in 325 AD at the Nicean Council; and then added to at Constantinople in 381 AD, **and the following councils:** and then more confusion was created in trying to define it by later leaders of Christianity. (We will examine this in a later part.)

Jesus never intended for God to be viewed differently than the One and Only God of the Israel! In fact, Jesus makes this clear on several occasions: In John 4:22, Jesus said the Jew's were correct in their worship of God! In Mark 12:29-34, Jesus reaffirms the Jew's understanding of the Deut. 6:4, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." Speaking to a Jew, and knowing his understanding of this passage, Jesus told him he was "not far from the kingdom of God." Jesus was the manifestation of that One God, 1 Tim. 3:16. He was the image of the invisible God, Col. 1:15, Heb. 1:1-3. Not the second person in or of that God. All the fullness of the Godhead (Deity) dwelt **in** Jesus! Col. 2:9. Not Jesus dwelling **IN** the Godhead as some "second person."

It took the efforts of the "Church" in the years from 381-1517 and beyond, to put to death *many who* did not believe the Trinity to get "Christianity" to where it is today — That is, in places where the Doctrine of the Trinity is believed by the majority of "Christians."

In Tertullian's day, 160-220 AD, this was not the case!

*"...the **majority** of believers, are **startled** at the dispensation (of the three in one) on the ground that their very rule of faith withdraws them from the world's plurality of gods to the one only true God;...they are constantly throwing out against us that we are preachers of two gods and three gods, while they take to themselves pre-eminently, the credit of being the worshippers of the One God."* (Against Praxaes, Tertullian, 160-220 AD, believed to have been written about 216 AD. Emphasis added.)

The Greek Orthodox Church gives great significance to Tertullian, calling him the Father of Latin Theology and the Father of the Trinity. Yet in his day he went **AGAINST THE MAJORITY** by believing the Trinity! The majority were **startled** by such teaching!

The greatest significance of these words by Tertullian is that he was not in Israel when he made this statement! He was from Carthage, North Africa! And the majority of the believers Tertullian spoke of would NOT have been Jews! Thus the early church preached and taught its believers in the One True God! The early Church's view of the Godhead was the same as the Jew's! The One True God was made known in Jesus who was made to be Lord and Christ by God (Acts 2:36)!

Thus we do NOT find the Trinity revealed by **What is said about Jesus, What Jesus said about Who He was**, nor by **What Jesus said about the supposed other "persons,"** i.e., a Trinity of Gods — He said nothing!

**So how, when and where was the Trinity Revealed in the Old and New Testaments?**

**A very important part to understand!**

Do sheer numbers make a doctrine true; as in millions of people and centuries of 'tradition'? Of all the people in the world before the flood, only Noah's family was saved: a very, very small fraction of the population. Remember, Jesus Christ declared that the way is straight and narrow, and few there are that find it (Mathew 7:14)!

**Romans 5:12-21** (New King James Version) — Death in Adam, Life in Christ

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as through **one man** sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. <sup>13</sup> For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

<sup>15</sup> But the free gift *is* not like the offense. For if by the **one man's** offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the **one man**, Jesus Christ, increased to many. <sup>16</sup> And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. <sup>17</sup> For if by the **one man's** offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the **One, Jesus Christ**. <sup>18</sup> Therefore, as through **one man's** offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through **one Man's** righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. <sup>19</sup> For as by **one man's** disobedience many were made sinners, so also by **one Man's** obedience many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> Moreover the law entered that the offense might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased much more, <sup>21</sup> so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

In Romans 5:12-21 we see that Paul compares Adam and Christ. He calls both of them “**man**” and describes the actions of both and the results. Adam’s disobedience caused death, Jesus’ obedience gives life. God is showing us cause and effect of the actions of two “**men**”. They have to be exactly the same for these comparisons to have any worth.

“What is this view saying,” you ask? We are saying Jesus had to be exactly like pre-fall Adam to prove God’s creation — that a **man** with free will could live a sinless life — and Jesus proved it by his sinless life! (See Hebrews 4:15, 9:28)

If Jesus wasn’t a man like all other men, Paul the Apostle couldn’t have said what he said in I Corinthians 15, specifically verses 17 and 18: “**and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is useless, you are still in your sins. Then also the ones having fallen asleep in Christ perished.**” Perished is the Greek term “apolonto” (past tense), a form of “apollumi” which means destroyed, perish, die, pass away. Read the context of 15:12-34. Not to have a resurrection would mean that when someone died, they would remain dead forever. Thankfully, Christ Jesus was raised from the dead! And so will believers!

What we were told to understand regarding the Trinity is, first of all, that we cannot really grasp the entire truth of it with our finite, mortal minds. It is just too complex and immense to comprehend! There is a little truth to that, but we find that the entirety of Scriptures must be referenced to find what God wants us to know about this issue (and all other issues also!). Words have meanings, regardless of the way they are used. In the Scriptures we find that a great number of its teachings are spiritual in nature, and that one must have God’s spirit within us to enlighten us, just as Paul states in I Cor. 2:9-14 and Romans 8:5-17: (Literal translations)

“But as it is written: ‘eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But God has revealed (the things) to us through his spirit. For the spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. **For what man knows the things of a man except the man’s spirit which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except God’s spirit.** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit from God, in order that we may know the things freely given to us by God. Which things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but in words taught of the spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual things. But a natural man does not receive the things of God’s spirit, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know (the things) because they are spiritually discerned.” (Notice the mention of **TWO** spirits — God’s and man’s! I Cor. 2:9-14.)

Then in Romans, Chapter 8, verses 5–8, Paul tells us that

“For the ones according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh, but the ones according to the spirit mind the things of the spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the spirit is life and peace. Therefore the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for to the law of God it is not subject, neither indeed can be.”

However, Paul goes on to tell us in verses 9–11 that

“But you are not in flesh but in spirit, since God’s spirit dwells in you. But **if** anyone has not Christ’s spirit, one is not of him. But if Christ’s spirit is in you, on the one hand the body is dead because of sin, on the other hand the spirit is life because of righteousness. But **if** the spirit of the one having raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one having raised Christ Jesus from the dead will quicken also the mortal bodies of you through the indwelling of his spirit in you.”

...

In addition to this Good News Paul tells us in verses 14–17 that

“For as many as are led by God’s spirit, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of slavery again for fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, by which we cry: Abba, Father. The spirit itself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God. And **if** children, also heirs; heirs on one hand of God, on the other hand joint heirs of Christ, since we suffer with him in order also that we may be glorified with him.”

Yes, the Apostle Paul tells us that God’s spirit itself bears witness with **our spirit** (the one God created in us), that we are the children of God, **if** we have really put on the spirit of Christ to control our **own spirit**. (Notice the highlighted **IFs** in the above quotes from Paul.)

Notice again the many instances of the word “spirit” in the above quotes. Then take note of the verses following: there is **ONLY ONE SPIRIT**, a holy spirit — God’s spirit, which he shares with Christ Jesus and those who believe in Him.

1 Cor. 6:17. “But he that is joined unto the Lord is **one spirit**.”

1 Cor. 12:13. “For by **one spirit** are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into **one spirit**.”

Eph. 2:18. “For through him we both have access by **one spirit** unto the Father.”

Eph. 4:4. “There is one body, and **one spirit**, even as you are called in one hope of your calling;”

Php. 1:27. “Only let your conversation be as it becomes the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in **one spirit**, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”

This **one spirit** is the Father’s spirit that he gives to all believers. There are certain “mysteries” that we can only scratch the surface on understanding, but we have faith that one day, when we “know as we are known”, it will all make sense.

Read the following and see what Jesus said to his Father in prayer. It not only concerned his Apostles, but also everyone who believes what they have taught us in the scriptures of the New Testament.

#### **Jesus Prays for His Disciples in John 17:6-18** (the Apostles)

“I have manifested your name to the men whom you have given me out of the world. They were yours, you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they have known that all things which you have given me are from you. For I have given to them the words which you have given me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. And all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to you. Holy Father, keep through your name those whom you have given ye, **that they may be one as We are**. (vss. 6-11)

Jesus is asking His Father to make the Apostles **one as they are one**: in other words, just as Christ and the Father are **in each other**, Jesus wants the Apostles to be **in each other** — see **John 14:6-11**. Is Jesus asking the Father to make them GODS? Absolutely not!

#### **Jesus Prays for All Believers** (John 17:20-26)

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in me through their word; **that they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me, and I in you; that they also may be one in US**, that the world may believe that you sent me. And the glory which you gave me I have given them, **that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and you in me**; that they may be made perfect **in one**, and that the world may know that you

have sent me, and have loved them as you have loved me. Father, I desire that they also whom you gave me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which you have given me; for you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known you, but I have known you; and these have known that you sent me. And I have declared to them your name, and will declare it, **that the love with which you loved me may be in them, and I in them.**”

I can't see how anyone can read this and not understand that Jesus is asking the Father to give us the same anointing He gave him. That is how we can have the mind of Christ and allow His spirit to guide us. That is exactly what happened in Acts. They were doing God's will instead of man's will in Jesus' name. *Can you say that you have God's spirit dwelling in you? YOU SHOULD!*

Think on the following three verses and try to understand the use of “**ALL IN ALL**”, and correlate what it means in relationship to what is brought out in this Treatise.

1Cor. 12:6 – And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which works **all in all**.

1Cor. 15:28 – And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be **all in all**.

Eph. 1:23 – Which is his body, the fullness of him that fills **all in all**. (The ‘body’ is the Church; i.e., the ‘assembly’ of Christians!)

#### **Jesus Defends His Self-Witness** (John 8:13-18, New King James Version)

“The Pharisees therefore said to Him, ‘You bear witness of yourself; your witness is not true.’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am one who bears witness of myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness of me.’”

Then in John 8:53-54, Jesus really speaks in plain language anyone can understand! The Pharisees asked Jesus: “Are you greater than our Father Abraham, who died? And the prophets died. Jesus answered: if I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honored me; of whom you say that he is your God.”

As you can see from Jesus' response, he is actually saying that he is “the Son of God,” and knows where he came from! Not only that, but Abraham rejoiced to see his day, and was glad — which indicated to the Pharisees that he was, as John 1:1-3 reported, was with God, his Father, before the creation of the world.

#### **I John 5:20**

“And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we

may know **Him** who is true; and we are in **Him** who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. (Who is the “Him” that is true? – God the Father!)

.....

## A conclusion on Part One

There are people that believe the Scriptures alone show us what God has revealed, and those that don't; and there are people from both sides that twist the scriptures to their own destruction.

Many will disagree of course, but if one believes only what is revealed in the Scriptures one can easily reach their conclusions on any topic. I would say that the ones disagreeing **ONLY** reached their beliefs because their pastors, teachers, bible reference books, bible annotations, culture etc. (i.e. “tradition”), **told you** that a Trinity of Gods exists, however, that there was only **ONE GOD**.

Growing up as a Roman Catholic I was first taught the idea of the trinity probably in classes before First Communion and certainly by Confirmation. I believed that then because I had no thoughts that it wasn't true. When I got older, I looked it up for myself, and couldn't find it taught in Scripture. After extensive study of the topic I was fairly positive it wasn't the absolute truth. Thusly, I consider it important enough for everyone to consider what the Bible and History has to say. The next parts of this Treatise will continue to bring evidence to bear on what I found in contradiction to that dogmatically spoken doctrine **and put it in the realm of opinion**.

**Using words of a scholarly Christian man:** “I'm sure there are genuine Christians who will read this and be sure that my opinion of this is heresy. Some will even see my opinion about opinions as heretical. But that is the very point of this Treatise. Serious Christian people will go to the Bible they mutually and totally trust and come out with honest differences of opinion; and I'm open to them in love.”

“I believe our emerging non-believing world is looking for true followers of Jesus who hold clear and strong opinions while refusing to burn each other at the proverbial stake. It is in how we respond to the opinions of others that we have an amazing opportunity to love each other and point others to Jesus. In opinions may we truly exercise liberty and always love.” Al Maxey.

## PART TWO:

### THE ONE GOD UNDIVIDED

I believe it should be of utmost concern to those who follow Jesus the Christ to really seek to understand and know who God is, and Jesus' role in salvation. Doing that is much more important than propagating an inconsistent Trinitarian concept of the one and only Almighty God. It is my hope that what follows will help one grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior as revealed to us in the Bible.

#### God in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament Scriptures we find over 9,800 times where God is spoken of as being absolutely the only God! (Scripture quotes are from the Septuagint — the Old Testament Scriptures.)

Not only that, but the words “Father” and “Spirit” are also found in the Old Testament in direct reference to the only One Almighty God who created everything that is seen by us. **Father:** in reference to the One and Only God is found in Deut. 32:6; Is. 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 31:1,9; Mal. 2:10. **Spirit:** in reference to the One and Only God is found over 85 times — examples, Gen. 1:2; 6:3; Ps. 139:7; Isa. 40:13; 48:16; 61:1; Joel 2:28-29. It must be said that the God of the Old Testament people believed that the **One and only God was their Father who was a spirit!**

We also find that the terms **No one else** is used to describe God in Deut. 4:35,39; 1 Kings 8:60; Isa. 45:5, 6, 14, 18, 22; 46:9; 47:8, 10 and Joel 2:27.

Then there is the term **Alone** in reference to God which is found in Deut. 32:12; 2 Kings 19:15; Neh. 9:6; Job 9:8; Ps. 83:18; 86:10; 136:4; Isa. 2:11, 17; 37:16; 44:24 and 63:3.

God is also called the **Holy One** in 2 Kings 19:22; Job 6:10; Ps. 71:22; 78:42; 89:18; Isa. 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:17, 20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19, 23; 30:11, 12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 40:25; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14, 15; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9, 14; Jer. 50:29; 51:5; Eze. 39:7; Hos. 11:9; Hab. 1:12 and 3:3.

Not a single one of the verses referenced (and indicated) can possibly be used to bolster a Trinitarian 3-in-1 doctrine. However, there are 12 verses that Trinitarians seem to use to back up that doctrine — Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; 19:24; Psalms 2:7; 45:6, 7; 110:1, 4; Isaiah 6:8; 44:6; and 48:16. These 12 verses, they say, seem to indicate a plurality in God, and in only three of the 39 books of the Old Testament — versus over 9,800 verses indicating a singular of the Almighty God. Let us look at them:

Genesis 1:26, 27. *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”*

As one can read, God created mankind to have dominion (rulership) over all creatures that inhabit the earth. The word “God” here is “Elohim,” a plural term meaning “mighty ones,” when used in a sentence with plural verbs like “us” and “our.” However, when used with “singular” verbs it denotes just **one** “mighty one.” We know from other verses in the Bible, especially John 1:1-3, 14, that the Word gave up his Deity to take on the form of man. It is very conceivable that “Elohim” used with plural verbs in the above verses of Genesis meant both our one and only Almighty God and the Word who became flesh to dwell among us, i.e., Jesus the Christ of the New Testament. According to the Apostle John we know that it was the Word who became Jesus that created all things that were made, both visible and invisible. Genesis 1:26 does not indicate in any sense that there are a trinity of “persons” in the Godhood.

In addition, the Hebrew word for “image” in this passage is “*tzelem*,” which refers to the nature or essence of a thing and not necessarily the physical form. Similarly, the word for “likeness” in this passage is “*demut*,” which is used to indicate a simile, not an exact replication of actual form. Thus, the verse is not suggesting that man resembles God in physical appearance (head, arms, legs, feet, etc., for God is a spirit), but that the resemblance is with regard to aspects of God’s essential nature. Even then, it is only a “likeness,” *not* total equality. For example, the passage seems to imply that part of the “likeness” and “image” is with regard to rulership over creation, and yet man’s authority, though greater than the rest of creation, is lesser than God’s. It is only in the *image* or *likeness* of, not equal to. “Neither of the words imply that persons are divine. They were endowed with some of the characteristics of God. There is a *likeness* but not a *sameness*” (*Holman Bible Dictionary*, p. 688).

**Genesis 3:22.** “And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of **us**, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:” Those who accept the Trinity Doctrine attempt to use this verse because of the appearance of the term “us.” The use of “us” here refers to the term “Elohim,” which includes the “Word” who is also a “Mighty One.” See comments above.

Genesis 11:7. In this case we must include the context, 11:5-8. “5) *And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.* 6) *And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.* 7) *Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.* 8) *So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.*” See the comment after Genesis 3:22 concerning the term “us.” Also, the word “Lord” in verses 5, 6 and 8 is “Yahweh,” the “self existent one” – God Almighty (*El Shaddai*) in English.

In **Gen. 19:24** we find, “*Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the LORD from out of heaven.*” Two “Lords” – NO! Deut. 6:4 and Eph. 4:5 tell us plainly, “ONE Lord,” and that ONE LORD is “Yahweh!” Just before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, he revealed himself in human form to Abraham (A “theophanie”. See Gen. 18:1-33). The Athanasian Creed states (Lines 14-18) “*So the*

*Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; and yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord; and yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord.”* (Why all the self-contradicting and confusing words?)

Psalms 139:7-12 tells us: *“Where shall I go from your spirit? And from your presence where shall I flee? If I should ascend into the heaven, you are there; if I should go down into the grave, you are at hand. If I make take up my wings at dawn, and I should encamp into the ends of the sea, even there your hand shall guide me, and your right hand shall hold me. And I said, surely darkness shall trample me; even night was illumination for my luxury; for darkness will not be made darkness with you; and night as day shall be given light; as its darkness, so also its light.”*

Most people view Heaven as being the “home” of God. Even though, we know He cannot be restricted to any one location in that He is a Spirit that is everywhere! 1 Kg 8:27 says, *“And now, O Lord God of Israel...shall the heaven and the heavens of the heavens be sufficient for you...”*; and Jer. 23:24 says, *“I am a God being near, says the Lord, and not a God at a distance. Shall any be hid in secret, and I not see him, says the Lord, no. Is it not that I shall fill the heaven and the earth, says the Lord.”* Yes, God is a spirit; there is no getting around that! **Jesus states that “God is a spirit”** (John 4:24). God is present everywhere, at all times; yesterday, today and tomorrow! And there is only ONE SPIRIT and that is God’s own spirit. (See I Cor. 6:17, 12:13; Eph. 2:18, 4:4 and Php.1:27).

**Isaiah 44:6** says, *“Thus says God, the King of Israel, and the one rescuing him, the God of Hosts. I am first, and I am after these things; besides me there is no God.”* Can one say that there are two “Gods” here? Absolutely not! The King of Israel and the God of Hosts are one and the same Almighty God! In the greater context of Isaiah (Chapters 43 and 44) God is saying that He is the ‘King of Israel’ and that He gave up on Israel and Jacob but will redeem them as the ‘God of Hosts’. Searching what Isaiah had to say about **the One and only God** we find that he speaks many times of God as the Redeemer (see Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 44:6, 24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7, 26; 54:5, 8; 59:20; 60:16 and 63:16). In fact, Isa. 63:16 suggests that He is their Father and in 64:8 Isaiah directly states of God that **“You are our Father.”**

**Psalm 110:1 & 4** were a future prophecy to be fulfilled when this Psalm was written and points to the anointed one, Jesus; which we will get to in this Treatise. One can see the fulfillment in Hebrews 1:13, 4:14 and 5:1-6.

For 4,000 years those who worshipped Him and trusted Him had no hint, no surmise or no suggestion that he was other than the single, unitary God He declared Himself to be.

Moses speaks to the people of Israel in Deuteronomy 6:4-8 saying, *“Hear O Israel! The LORD our God is one LORD. And you shall love the LORD your God with your entire heart, and with you entire being, and with your entire power. And these discourses, as many as I give charge to you today will be in your heart, and in your being. And you*

*shall assist your sons with them, and you shall speak of them sitting down in your house, and going in the way, and lying in bed, and arising. And you shall affix them for a sign upon your hand, and it shall be unshaken before your eyes.”*

Isaiah 43:10-11 records God saying, “*Know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD.*”

The term “LORD” in the above two passages is “Yahweh,” the self-existing being. Before Him there was no God formed; therefore, there is no other like Him!

Yes, the Old Testament is emphatic that there is ONLY ONE ALMIGHTY GOD who is Israel’s ONLY FATHER and is the ONLY SPIRIT who is everywhere at all times. For those studying the Old Testament it should stir their hearts that there is no such a thing as the Trinity Doctrine that is propagated by philosophical reasoning’s. Actually, that theory rests upon the philosophical reasoning of verses cited from the New Testament books of the Bible, mainly the Gospel of John: but John never mentioned any “trinity” of Gods.

Any student of the Bible who really thinks about the issue would agree that the doctrine of the Trinity is **incomprehensible**. Trinitarians are quick to tell us that since we cannot possibly understand the majesty and glory of the ALMIGHTY GOD, we thusly cannot possibly understand his nature and being. Read this:

**“It is humanly impossible to aptly explain the ‘ONE GOD,’ the Biblical Triune God, for He is Spirit. Thé Creator, Savior, Redeemer Spirit of His entire universe, according to His written Word — the whole truthful context of the Bible. Therefore, from our finite human perspective, it would be futile to attempt a detailed analysis of His Omnipotent, Omniscient Personage. We can only accept by faith that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are three distinctly separate Personhoods, (not different gods,) yet they are inseparable; therefore they are One: Heb. 11:6; Mt. 28:19; Jn. 4:24. Should we try to comprehend this incredible Triune mystery with our limited mental capacity, we would either end up with dangerous, unbiblical distortions of the True Biblical Godhead or lapse into complete insanity as so many others, who have dared to define their Almighty Spiritual Creator in human terms”** ( [www.freeme2.co.za](http://www.freeme2.co.za)).

The above quote is incorrect and ridiculous, for the most part. The Creator has *explicitly* revealed himself through His Word as the ONLY ALMIGHTY BEING, the powerful SPIRIT, having no equal, no one before Him, and no successor. He is Yahweh (YHWH) by name and God (Deity) by title. He is not three distinctly separate persons as the above quote states.

Jaroslav Pelikan,<sup>1</sup> Sterling Professor of History at Yale University, who is called “The Doctrine Doctor,” is quoted saying: “*You are not entitled to the beliefs you cherish about such things as the Holy Trinity without a sense of what you owe to those who worked this out for you. ... To circumvent St. Athanasius on the assumption that if you put me alone*

*in a room with the New Testament, I will come up with the doctrine of the Trinity, is naive.”<sup>2</sup> This renowned Scholar is telling us the Trinity cannot be found by a study of the New Testament. He is admitting that it is not a teaching of clear Biblical statements. Rather, the Trinity is a **doctrine of inference**. That is mainly why the Trinity doctrine has such self-contradicting and confusing words – philosophy at work!*

Larry Poston, writing for Christianity Today, who looked into why the average age of Christian conversion was 16 years old whereas the average age of Muslim conversion was 31. His explanation in part was: “*The Muslim is not asked to give credence to allegedly irrational concepts such as the Trinity, the Incarnation. . . . If one does consider it essential that concepts such as the Trinity be explained before conversion, are the common presentations of these teachings adequate?*”<sup>3</sup> Can anyone have a rational explanation of an “irrational” concept? While I would appreciate a rational explanation of the Trinity doctrine, I surely don’t expect anyone to be able to present it – even the Athanasian Creed calls it “incomprehensible” (See lines 8 and 11 of the Creed).

Poston is not the only Trinitarian seeking answers on this subject. For instance: “*A fruitful cause of error in ancient and also modern times is owing to an attempt to explain or illustrate this [Trinity] doctrine, forgetting that it is a mystery to be received on faith, which cannot, from its own nature, be rendered intelligible to man’s intellect.*”<sup>4</sup> Then there is Mr. Richards, speaking on the Voice of Prophecy Radio Broadcast, who similarly said this about the Trinity: “*[It] is basic in our faith. . . . None of us can understand it. It’s a divine mystery, but gloriously true.*”<sup>5</sup> It is much easier for children to accept things that they don’t really understand than a thinking rational adult.

## **Notes:**

1. **Jaroslav Jan Pelikan**, December 17, 1923 – May 13, 2006, was a Trinitarian and a scholar in the history of Christianity, Christian theology and medieval intellectual history at Yale University. He wrote more than 30 books; among them is the five-volume set, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*.

2. *Christianity Today*, Mark A. Noll, “The Doctrine Doctor,” Sep. 10, 1990, p. 26.

3. Larry Poston quoting *Beach vs. Hickey on the Trinity*, quoting G. C. Knapp, pp. 60, 61.

4. *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology*, p. 765.

5. The Voice of Prophecy radio broadcast, H. M. S. Richards, speaker, Los Angeles, Dec. 20, 1958.

## Part Three

### Quotes from Scholars and Authority sources

Author and theology professor, James White, writes: “We hang a person’s very salvation upon the acceptance of the doctrine ... No one dares question the Trinity for fear of being branded a ‘heretic’ ... We must know, understand, and love the Trinity to be fully and completely Christian” (*The Forgotten Trinity*, 1998, pgs. 14-15). Before saying that, He says: “The doctrine is *misunderstood* as well as *ignored*. It is so misunderstood that a majority of Christians, when asked, *give incorrect and at times downright heretical* definitions of the Trinity” (Ibid. pg. 16, emphasis in original).

*The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults* states: “The dogma of the Trinity is the central dogma of Catholic faith. Only with belief in it can one grasp and explicitly believe other central Christian teachings.” ... “It is impossible to believe explicitly in the mystery of Christ without faith in the Trinity ... Nor could one grasp the meaning of eternal life, or of the grace that leads to it, without believing in the Trinity, for grace and eternal life are sharing in the Trinitarian life” (Donald Wuerl, Ronald Lawler, Thomas Lawler and Kris Stubna, editors, 2005, pg. 150).

In the book, *Catholicism*, the Roman church’s position is that belief in the Trinity is a necessity for salvation: “Whoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Unless he keep this Faith whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this: we worship one God in Trinity.” (George Brantl, editor, 1961, pg. 69).

“The doctrine of the Trinity is the basis of our Christian faith. Because the doctrine of the Trinity cannot be fully understood, it requires the Holy Spirit to direct our minds to believe” (Randy Smith, *Theological “ism”s, A Layman’s Reference Guide to Selected Theological Terms*, 1999, p. 90, quoted by Patrick Navas, *Divine Truth or Human Tradition?* 2007, pg. 21).

Notice this amazing statement from *A Handbook of Christian Truth*: “The mind of man cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. He who has tried to understand the mystery fully will lose his mind; but he who would deny the Trinity will lose his soul” (Harold Lindsell and Charles Woodbridge, 1953, pgs. 51-52).

The German Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner admits, “The dogma of the Trinity is *an absolute mystery* which we do not understand even after it has been revealed.” (*The Trinity*, 1986, pg. 50, emphasis in original).

Edmund Fortman, a Jesuit scholar, Trinitarian and author, confesses: “The doctrine of the Triune God is mysterious in its origin and its content ... It is a doctrine that revolves about a mystery that has fascinated and challenged the minds of men down the centuries ... Today it is being challenged by many as unintelligible and irrelevant to modern man

in its traditional formulation and presentation” (*The Triune God: A Historical Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, 1972, pgs. 25-26).

Author and theology professor Harold Brown writes: “It has proved impossible for Christians actually to understand the doctrine or to explain it in any comprehensive way. The doctrine of the Trinity ... surpasses our human ability to understand and that must be respected as a divine mystery” (*Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church*, 2003, pg. 128).

Theology professor Louis Berkhof states: “The Church confesses the Trinity to be a *mystery beyond the comprehension of man*. The Trinity is a mystery, not merely in the Biblical sense of what is a truth, which was formerly hidden but is now revealed; but in the sense that man cannot comprehend it and make it intelligible” (*Systematic Theology*, 1996, pg. 89).

Millard Erickson, a professor of theology at Southwest Baptist Theological Seminary, writing on the Trinity: “This doctrine in many ways presents strange paradoxes ... It is a widely disputed doctrine, which has provoked discussion throughout all the centuries of the church’s existence. It is held by many with great vehemence and vigor. These consider it crucial to the Christian faith. ... Yet many are unsure of the exact meaning of their belief. It was the very first doctrine dealt with systematically by the church, yet it is still one of the most misunderstood and disputed doctrines.” (*God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity*, 1995, pgs. 11-12).

**These are surprising statements about the Trinity—”an absolute mystery,” “beyond the comprehension of man,” “mysterious in its origin and its content,” “impossible for Christians actually to understand,” “unintelligible,” “incomprehensible mystery,” “misunderstood,” “presents strange paradoxes” and is “widely disputed.” Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 14:33 that “*God is not the author of confusion*”? If scholars, theologians and religious authorities admit that we cannot understand such a doctrine, doesn’t that tell us something may be seriously wrong when it comes to that belief? When and where, and by whom, was this teaching revealed?**

*New Bible Dictionary*: “The term ‘Trinity’ is not itself found in the Bible. It was first used by Tertullian at the close of the 2nd century, but received wide currency and formal elucidation only in the 4th and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries” (1996, “Trinity”). It also states that “the formal doctrine of the Trinity was the result of several inadequate attempts to explain who and what the Christian God really is . . . To deal with these problems the Church Fathers met in 325 (AD) at the Council of Nicaea to set out an orthodox biblical definition concerning the divine identity.” Surprisingly, it wasn’t until 381 (AD), “at the Council of Constantinople, the divinity of the Spirit was affirmed” (ibid.).

**The doctrine of the Trinity wasn’t manufactured until long after the Scriptures were completed and the apostles dead in their graves. It took theologians centuries to sort out what they believed and to make and force a doctrine one must believe in concerning a philosophical idea that our ONE Almighty God is a Trinity!**

A.W. Tozer, in his book *The Knowledge of the Holy*, states that the Trinity is an “incomprehensible mystery” and that attempts to understand it “must remain forever futile.” He admits that churches, “without pretending to understand,” have nevertheless continued to teach this doctrine (1961, pgs. 17-18). He concludes: “The fact that it cannot be satisfactorily explained, instead of being against it, is in its favor.” (pg. 23). [HUH?]

*The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, in its article on the Trinity, concedes that the Trinitarian concept is **humanly incomprehensible**: “It is admitted by all who thoughtfully deal with this subject that the Scripture revelation here leads us into the presence of a deep mystery; and that all human attempts at expression are of necessity imperfect.” (1988, pg. 1308). [What “Scripture revelation” teaches the Trinity?]

Cyril Richardson, professor of church history at New York's Union Theological Seminary, though a dedicated Trinitarian himself, said this in his book *The Doctrine of The Trinity*: “My conclusion, then, about the doctrine of the Trinity is that *it is an artificial construct . . . It produces confusion rather than clarification*; and while the problems with which it deals are real ones, the solutions it offers are not illuminating. It has posed for many Christians *dark and mysterious statements, which are ultimately meaningless*, because it does not sufficiently discriminate in its use of terms” (1958, pp. 148-149). . . . Previously, he stated that “Much of the defense of the Trinity, as a ‘revealed’ doctrine, is really an evasion of the objections that can be brought against it.” (pg. 16)

*A Dictionary of Religious Knowledge* that, “Precisely what that doctrine is, or rather precisely how it is to be explained, Trinitarians are not agreed among themselves.” (Lyman Abbott, editor, 1885, “Trinitarians”)

*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* acknowledges that “‘trinity’ is a second-century term found nowhere in the Bible, and the Scriptures present no finished Trinitarian statement.” (1988, Vol. 4, Article on “Trinity,” pg. 914). It also states that “church fathers crystallized the doctrine in succeeding centuries.” (Ibid.)

*The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* tells us, “The formal doctrine of the Trinity as it was defined by the great church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries is not to be found in the NT.” (Paul Achtemeier, editor, 1996, “Trinity”.)

*The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* states: “Today, however, scholars generally agree that there is no doctrine of the Trinity as such in either the OT or the NT . . . It would go far beyond the intention and thought-forms of the OT to suppose that a late-fourth-century or thirteenth-century Christian doctrine can be found there . . . Likewise, the NT does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Trinity” (Richard McBrien, general editor, 1995, “God,” pgs. 564-565).

*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in its article on the Trinity, explains: “Neither the word Trinity nor the explicit doctrine appears in the New Testament . . . The doctrine developed gradually over several centuries and through many controversies . . . It was not

until the 4th century that the distinctness of the three and their unity were brought together in a single orthodox doctrine of one essence and three persons” (1985 edition, *Micropaedia*, Vol. 11, pg. 928).

*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* points out that “primitive Christianity did not have an explicit doctrine of the Trinity such as was subsequently elaborated in the creeds of the early church.” (Colin Brown, editor, Vol. 2, 1976, “God,” pg. 84).

Historian and science fiction writer H.G. Wells, in his noted work *The Outline of History*, points out, “There is no evidence that the apostles of Jesus ever heard of the trinity — at any rate from him.” (1920, Vol. 2, pg. 499).

Martin Luther, the German priest who initiated the Protestant Reformation, conceded, “It is indeed true that the name ‘Trinity’ is nowhere to be found in the Holy Scriptures, but has been conceived and invented by man.” (Quoted in *The Sermons of Martin Luther*, John Lenker, editor, Vol. 3, 1988, pg. 406).

*The Oxford Companion to the Bible* states: “Because the Trinity is such an important part of later Christian doctrine, it is striking that the term does not appear in the New Testament. Likewise, the developed concept of three coequal partners in the Godhead found in later creedal formulations cannot be clearly detected within the confines of the canon.” (Bruce Metzger, Michael Coogan, editors, 1993, “Trinity,” pg. 782)

Professor Charles Ryrie, in his book, *Basic Theology*, writes: “Many doctrines are accepted by evangelicals as being clearly taught in the Scripture for which there are no proof texts. The doctrine of the Trinity furnishes the best example of this. It is fair to say that the Bible does not clearly teach the doctrine of the Trinity ... In fact, there is not even one proof text, if by proof text we mean a verse or passage that ‘clearly’ states that there is one God who exists in three persons.” ... “The above illustrations prove the fallacy of concluding that if something is not proof-texted in the Bible we cannot clearly teach the results ... If that were so, I could never teach the doctrine of the Trinity” (1999, pgs. 89-90).

Millard Erickson, research professor of theology at *Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary*, writes that the Trinity “is not clearly or explicitly taught anywhere in Scripture, yet it is widely regarded as a central doctrine, indispensable to the Christian faith. In this regard, it goes contrary to what is virtually an axiom of biblical doctrine, namely, that there is a direct correlation between the scriptural clarity of a doctrine and its cruciality to the faith and life of the church.” ... “In view of the difficulty of the subject and the great amount of effort expended to maintain this doctrine, we may well ask ourselves what might justify all this trouble” (*God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity*, 1995, pg. 12). He also states that the Trinity teaching “is not present in biblical thought, but arose when biblical thought was pressed into this foreign mold. **Thus, the doctrine of the Trinity goes beyond and even distorts what the Bible says about God**” (Ibid. pg. 20). He later points out: “It is claimed that the doctrine of the

Trinity is a very important, crucial, and even basic doctrine. If that is indeed the case, should it not be somewhere more clearly, directly, and explicitly stated in the Bible? If this is the doctrine that especially constitutes Christianity's uniqueness . . . how can it be only *implied* in the biblical revelation? . . . For here is a seemingly crucial matter where the Scriptures do not speak loudly and clearly." . . . "Little direct response can be made to this charge. It is unlikely that any text of Scripture can be shown to teach the doctrine of the Trinity in a clear, direct, and unmistakable fashion." (Ibid. pgs. 108-109)

Shirley Guthrie, Jr., professor of theology at Columbia Theological Seminary, writes: "The Bible does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity. Neither the word 'trinity' itself nor such language as 'one-in-three,' 'three-in-one,' one 'essence' (or 'substance'), and three 'persons,' is biblical language. The language of the doctrine is the language of the ancient church **taken from classical Greek philosophy.**" (*Christian Doctrine*, 1994, pgs. 76-77).

Theology professors Roger Olson and Christopher Hall explain part of the puzzle in their book, *The Trinity*: "It is understandable that the importance placed on this doctrine is perplexing to many lay Christians and students. Nowhere is it clearly and unequivocally stated in Scripture . . . How can it be so important if it is not explicitly stated in Scripture? . . . The doctrine of the Trinity developed gradually after the completion of the New Testament in the heat of controversy, but the church fathers who developed it believed they were simply exegeting divine revelation and not at all speculating or inventing new ideas. The full-blown doctrine of the Trinity was spelled out in the fourth century at two great ecumenical councils: Nicaea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD)." (2002, pgs. 1-2).

**We see from these last quotes, and other sources previously quoted herein, that the idea of a Trinity did not come from the biblical writers. Instead, as many of these sources openly acknowledge, the doctrine of the Trinity developed slowly with a lot of controversy over the span of several centuries. These quotations from respected and highly educated scholars and theologians should be of great concern to every Christian of all denominations found in the nations of the world!**

To end this part let me quote from the preacher of the **Cuba Avenue Church of Christ Alamogordo, New Mexico, Al Maxey**, in a letter I received from him on September 16, 2015. "I had a professor in graduate school that liked to say, 'If you can explain the trinity to the satisfaction of all concerned, you will be awarded an honorary Ph.D from every university in the world. In other words, such an explanation that satisfies all people is probably never going to happen.'" I definitely would agree with these words. And in no way is this Treatise written to explain the Trinity Doctrine. In fact, we put forth the facts that are against it. It is up to you, the reader, to come to your own conclusion. Is it from God, or is it man-made?

## Part Four

### The Debate over the nature of God

#### The Council of Nicaea and the Council of Constantinople

“Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea on May 25, 325 AD for political reasons as well as for religious ones. The issue came to be known as the Arian controversy. In the hope of securing for his throne the support of the growing body of Christians he had shown them considerable favor and it was to his interest to have the church vigorous and united. The Arian controversy was threatening its unity and menacing its strength. He therefore undertook to put an end to the trouble. It was suggested to him, perhaps by the Spanish bishop Hosius, who was influential at court, that if a synod were to meet representing the whole church both east and west, it might be possible to restore harmony. ... Constantine himself of course neither knew nor cared anything about the matter in dispute but he was eager to bring the controversy to a close, and Hosius’ advice appealed to him as sound.” (Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought*, 1954, Vol. 1, pg. 258)

**Arius**, a philosopher, priest and leader of a Christian belief on God’s nature from Alexandria, Egypt, taught that Christ, because He was the Son of God, must have had a beginning and therefore was a creation of God. His belief was if Jesus was the Son, the Father of necessity must be older. **This was not a fully developed “Trinitarian” belief.**

Opposing Arius was **Athanasius**, a philosopher and a deacon who was also from Alexandria. His argument, or better stated as a theory, **was an early form of the Trinity** wherein the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were one, but also distinct from each other.

The debate centered on which view the church council could agree upon, and ended up creating an even larger division among Christians who actually killed each other over the issue. The battle continued until 381 AD when another Council was called to settle the issue — but the battle continued even after that Council for a couple of centuries more. However, even afterwards, and evident today, there are a large multitude of Christians who don’t accept the Trinity dogma.

**Karen Armstrong** (born 14 November 1944), is a British author and commentator who is the author of twelve books on comparative religions. A former Roman Catholic nun, she rose to prominence in 1993 with her book, *A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, an international best seller that is now required reading in many theology courses. She has been called “a prominent and prolific religious historian” and described as “arguably the most lucid, wide-ranging and consistently interesting religion writer today”. She is in demand as a speaker on the Abrahamic tradition; in the last decade increasing interest in and debate surrounding Islamic issues has brought her even wider visibility.

Let's look at what she said about this issue from her book, *A History of God*, along with comments interjected by other scholars and commentators. I quote from Armstrong's book because it is the latest work of a scholar discussing History on this issue — **not because I agree with her, but because she confirms what other historians on this issue have brought to light.**

Armstrong explains in her book that “One of the first problems that had to be solved was the doctrine of God ... a new danger arose from within which split Christians into bitterly warring camps” (pg. 106).

“When the bishops gathered at Nicaea on May 20, 325, to resolve the crisis, very few would have shared Athanasius's view of Christ. **Most held a position midway between Athanasius and Arius.**” (Armstrong: pg. 110). The Council lasted 2 months and 12 days. This statement is in agreement with the statement on Wulfila's “creed” found on **page 70.**

As Emperor, Constantine was in the position of influencing the gathered Bishops and a supporter of Athanasius's theory if it could stop the controversy — even though he was not an actual Christian: he just wanted unity among all the people in the Empire. (The following year, 326 AD, is when he had both his wife and son murdered).

“Athanasius managed to impose his theology on the delegates ... with the emperor breathing down their necks ... The show of agreement pleased Constantine, who had no understanding of the theological issues, but in fact there was no unanimity at Nicaea. After the council, the bishops went on teaching as they had before, and the Arian crisis continued for another sixty years. Arius and his followers fought back and managed to regain imperial favor. Athanasius was exiled no fewer than five times. It was very difficult to make his creed stick.” (Armstrong: pgs. 110-111).

The controversy was at times violent and bloody. After the Council of Nicaea ended, historian Will Durant writes, concerning a particular period of time, that “Probably more Christians were slaughtered by Christians in these two years (342-3 AD) than by all the persecutions of Christians by pagans in the history of Rome” (*The Story of Civilization, Vol. 4: The Age of Faith*, 1950, pg. 8).

Professor Harold Brown writes: “During the middle decades of this century, from 340 to 380, the history of doctrine looks more like the history of court and church intrigues and social unrest ... The central doctrines hammered out in this period often appear to have been put through by intrigue or mob violence rather than by the common consent of Christendom led by the Holy Spirit” (*Heresies: Heresy and Orthodoxy in the History of the Church*, 2003, pg. 119). [An example of this will be shown on the next page.]

Professor Ryrie writes, “In the second half of the fourth century, three theologians from the province of Cappadocia in eastern Asia Minor [today central Turkey] gave definitive shape to the doctrine of the Trinity” (*Basic Theology*, p. 65). They put forth an idea that was beyond Athanasius' view: that God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit

were coequal and co-joined in one Being, yet also distinct from one another. These men, Basil, bishop of Caesarea, his brother Gregory, bishop of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus, were all “trained in Greek philosophy” (Armstrong, pg. 113), which undoubtedly affected their views and beliefs. (See “*Greek Philosophy’s Influence on the Trinity Doctrine*,” starting on pg. 14 of her book.)

Armstrong comments: “The Trinity only made sense as a mystical or spiritual experience ... It was not a logical or intellectual formulation but an imaginative paradigm that confounded reason. Gregory of Nazianzus made this clear when he explained that contemplation of the Three in One induced a profound and overwhelming emotion that confounded thought and intellectual clarity. ‘No sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illumined by the splendor of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish Three than I am carried back into the One. When I think of any of the Three, I think of him as the whole, and my eyes are filled, and the greater part of what I am thinking escapes me’.” (pg. 117). She concludes, “For many Western Christians ... the Trinity is simply baffling” (ibid.).

To give you an example of what went on between the Nicene and Constantinople Councils, let us look at a little History of that time period. The information we are going to show you have been, in the majority, taken from Roman Catholic sources: among them, Ludwig Pastor’s *History of the Popes*; the *Catholic Encyclopedia*; and the book endorsed by the well-known Cardinal Spellman, *The papal Princes*, published by Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1960. [There is a “bias” inherent in the following.]

Bishop Damasus (366–384 AD) obtained his reign in controversy and political intrigues. At this time in history, Arian teachings were the belief among the majority of Christianity. Bishop Liberius (352–366 AD) supported Athanasius who was against Arian teachings, but the Emperor Constantius was against Athanasius because the Eastern churches were Arians. Liberius was exiled by the Emperor legate who sided with the beliefs of the majority. Felix II was set up in his Liberius’ place, but no one in Rome wanted to be ruled by him. Damasus was a partisan of Liberius’ followers who created such a scene that Felix was expelled from Rome. Upon the death of Liberius two men were put forth to be the next Bishop of Rome: Damasus and Ursinus. Now things got tricky: two factions collided. The faction that had supported Felix now put their efforts to get Damasus elected who Damasus was against before. The other faction who had supported Liberius, the deacons and the laity, including Damasus, now put their efforts to get Ursinus elected. Both of these men were elected simultaneously in 366 AD. Damasus’ election was not held at Rome, but at San Lorenzo in Lucina in an atmosphere of rioting and bloodshed. These two factions had already fought each other previously and the violence and bloodshed was so terrible that the two Prefects (the secular rulers) of the city had to be called in to restore order.

This didn’t work and they were driven out of the city to the suburbs. Then a massacre was committed in the basilica of Sicininus: 137 people were killed and left in the basilica. To stop the disorder, Ursinus was banished to Gaul. After he returned again, he was exiled a second time. In 378 AD Ursinus was condemned and Damasus exonerated and declare the new Bishop of Rome. However, Ursinus continued to oppose Damasus for the next few years and attempted to revive his claim on Damasus’ death.

This whole process was climaxed with a riot which led to a three-day massacre and to the rare intervention by the new Emperor Valentinian I to uphold public order. Damasus prevailed, but only with the support of the Prefect of the city. History tells us that Damasus was accused of murder before a later Prefect, but his rich friends secured the intervention of the Emperor to rescue him. The reputation of both Damasus and the Roman Church was stained due to this election. The morals of the partisans of both parties in this case were non-existent, and their leaders, Damasus and Ursinus should have corrected them.

If either one of the two, Damasus or Ursinus, had “turned the other cheek” and stepped aside these riots and murders would not have happened. But, pride and their egos wouldn’t let them. A Christian was supposed to be humble and by his actions be a light to the world – this was not followed. In the early churches, bishops were elected or chosen by the other bishops, deacons and the members of the church. This is how the elections were also done at Rome at this period of time in history, and it is how the Apostles said it was to be done.

Before Damasus’ election he had friends in the Roman aristocracy and was well-liked by the powerful women of the elite. During this period of time, the masses of people had just recently converted to Christianity and looked at the veneration given to the martyr’s as a substitute for their worship of pagan gods. Damasus, to placate them, was energized in discovering the tombs of the martyrs, adorning them with precious marbles and monumental inscriptions. He composed these inscriptions himself which were full of Virgilian references. Note that Virgil was a pagan philosopher, not a Christian, but the people revered him anyway.

## **The Council of Constantinople**

Emperor Constantine died in 327 AD, but the controversy continued on without him. In 381 AD, just 46 years after the Council of Nicaea, Emperor Theodosius I (Great) called for the Council of Constantinople to begin. Gregory of Nazianzus, one of the three bishops from Cappadocia who was elevated to the Archbishopric of Constantinople, presided over the Council.

The council was attended by 150 bishops. It was mainly directed against the followers of Macedonius, who denied the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. To the Nicene Creed it added the clauses referring to the Holy Spirit — completing the Trinity theory. This was criticized and censured by Gregory of Nazianzus. In later years this criticism was hardly ever mentioned by the great majority of Bishops. In the end it achieved its special status when the council of Chalcedon met in 451 AD, at its second session and in its definition of the faith, linked the form of the creed read out at Constantinople with the Nicene form, as being a completely reliable witness of the authentic faith.

No copy of the council’s doctrinal decisions has survived. So what is presented here is from a letter of the Synod of Constantinople held in 382 AD, which expounded these doctrinal decisions in summary form: namely, along the lines defined by the council of Nicaea: the consubstantiality and coeternity of the three divine persons against the Sabellians, Anomoeans, Arians and Pneumatomachi, who thought that the divinity was

divided into several natures — and the putting on of humanity by the Word, against those who supposed that the Word had in no way taken on a human soul.

The council ended on July 9, 381 AD, and on 30 July of the same year, at the request of the council, the Emperor Theodosius II ratified its decrees by edict.

Gregory of Nazianzus (now the Archbishop of Constantinople) pushed the assembled bishops to adopt his view of the Holy Spirit. Historian Charles Freeman comments by saying, “Virtually nothing is known of the theological debates of the council of 381, but Gregory was certainly hoping to get some acceptance of his belief that the Spirit was consubstantial with the Father (of the same being, as substance denoted individual nature). ... Whether he dealt with the matter clumsily or whether there was simply no chance of consensus, the ‘Macedonians,’ bishops who refused to accept the full divinity of the Holy Spirit, left the council ... Typically, Gregory berated the bishops for preferring to have a majority rather than simply accepting ‘the Divine Word’ of the Trinity on his authority” (*A.D. 381: Heretics, Pagans and the Dawn of the Monotheistic State*, 2008, pg. 96).

Richard Hanson, a theology professor, tells us that the council’s doctrine “was to reduce the meanings of the word ‘God’ from a very large selection of alternatives to one only,” — resulting in the thought that “when Western man today says ‘God’ he means the one, sole exclusive God and nothing else.” (*Studies in Christian Antiquity*, 1985, pgs. 243-244).

Richard Hanson, along with his brother Anthony, both theology professors, writing about the addition of a verse in the first letter of John, 5:8, which came about in the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries to back up the Trinity Doctrine, said that “It was added by some enterprising person or persons in the ancient Church who felt that the New Testament was sadly deficient in direct witness to the kind of doctrine of the Trinity which he favoured and who determined to remedy that defect ... It is a waste of time to attempt to read Trinitarian doctrine directly off the pages of the New Testament” (*Reasonable Belief: A Survey of the Christian Faith*, 1980, pg. 171). In additional words, Anthony and Richard Hanson noted that the Trinity doctrine was the result of “a process of theological exploration which lasted at least three hundred years ... In fact it was a process of trial and error, in which the error was by no means all confined to the unorthodox ... It would be foolish to represent the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as having been achieved by any other way” (Ibid. pg. 172). They said that: “This was a long, confused, process whereby different schools of thought in the Church worked out for themselves, and then tried to impose on others, their answer to the question, ‘How divine is Jesus Christ?’ ... If ever there was a controversy decided by the method of trial and error, it was this one.” (Ibid. pg. 175).

### **The Adoption model:**

This model puts forth the idea that Jesus became the Son of God and Messiah in two distinct steps: 1) in the Father’s work by the power of the holy spirit to produce in the

virgin Mary a child that would be called the Son of God; 2) that at Jesus' baptism God formally adopted him as a son with his pronouncement from heaven and the giving of the holy spirit in a visible form — a dove — as a sign to all present, and as the power when Jesus proceeded to accomplish his ministry.

### **Arianism:**

This model was started when Arius, a priest of Alexandria, Egypt, advanced his formula at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century that put forth the idea that the Christ Jesus did not exist before the beginning of the Creation: instead, Christ himself was the beginning of Creation — “the first born of creation”, through whom everything else was created. His opponent was Athanasius, also of Alexandria, Egypt, a deacon in the church. He is credited for having laid the groundwork for the Trinitarian formula — even though it had not included the Holy Spirit as a part of it. Through much speculation and philosophical thought — even deadly battles — the final Trinitarian Creed was set in 381 AD at the Council of Constantinople.

### **Comments:**

One man that I know personally, Russell E. Boatman, was a minister with a distinguished career in Christian higher education. He held two baccalaureate and two master's degrees, graduating from Northwest Christian College, Eugene, Oregon, and Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma. He served as president of Minnesota Bible College, Minneapolis, Minnesota from 1945 to 1962, and as Dean/Dean Emeritus at St. Louis Christian College, Florissant, Missouri from 1962 to 1992. He served on the boards of numerous mission and service agencies. He wrote four books: *What the Bible Says About the End Times*, *What the Bible Says About the Church*, *What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit*, and *Beyond Death: What the Bible Says About The Hereafter*.

In his book, *What the Bible Says About the Holy Spirit*, he comments on the Doctrine of the Trinity. He confesses that **“Theological reflection at the level of the apostolic witnesses [the writers of the New Testament] may be reckoned as inspired of God. This is not necessarily true, if at all, of church councils. The latter is also true of current authors, the present writer included. Nonetheless, we venture a third and final argument, admittedly philosophical, supportive of a view that sees some distinction of persons within the sphere of deity philosophically tenable, if not essential.”** (pg. 97) He then goes on to present a philosophical argument for the Trinity Doctrine and ends up saying, **“The foregoing argument proves nothing, for it proceeds from the perspective of our limited human experience ... And it is in the realm of metaphysics we are now reasoning.”** (pg. 98)

Another important bit of evidence presented by Russell occurs on page 71-72 where he says: **“Priscillian, a Spaniard, added a ‘verse of Scripture’(?) to his copy of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5.”** That addition is now verse 8 in many Bible versions. Going on, Russell then says, **“Priscillian inserted the words: ‘For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit: and the three agree in one.’ From there the spurious text found its way into later Latin copies of the NT (e.g. revised Vulgate), as compatible with the theology developing within the Western church, and from there**

*into the KJV. In addition to being lacking in any Greek MS of antiquity it is lacking in all ancient language versions of the New Testament — Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Coptic, Arminian, Slavonian, etc.”* (And even Jerome’s Latin “Vulgate” version of the Bible in the 5<sup>th</sup> century didn’t contain it.)

In the next paragraph, he continues: *“Some two hundred years after the Spaniard Priscillian’s revision of 1<sup>st</sup> John 5:7, 8 became the official dogma of the Western church, a provincial synod in Toledo, Spain (589 A.D.) added the famous ‘filioque’ (‘and the Son’) nuance to the phrasing of the Nicene Creed. With this revision the creed now affirmed that the Holy Spirit not only ‘proceeded from the Father,’ but ‘from the Father and the Son.’ Thus the creed that tens of millions of devout and not so devout church goers recite as their ‘confession of faith’ now reads:”* — And then Russell goes on to exhibit what that Creed now says. He even puts forth a question after that: *“Is that what the Scriptures actually teach? And in so many words?”* His answer is “NO!”

Russell’s candor exhibits his astuteness as a theologian. He admits to the tortuous methodology used by theologians after all the Apostles of Christ were no longer living. He tells us that the whole issue of the Trinity started as a Christological issue and then progressed over time to what it is today — a doctrine not found in either the New or Old Testament Scriptures, but a product of philosophy. All of his books are well worth the effort to read them. He is very bold, and speaks plainly, even though it is theologically thought out — a thing most authors don’t do. However, as he told me in person, he remained “skeptically” a Trinitarian.

Thusly, I find it completely ridiculous to introduce a theory, or even give a thought of belief by the influence of a few leaders using their idea of God, to make a doctrine that has no backing from the Old or New Testaments. The idea of reading into the Scriptures their theories of the Almighty Supreme Being, and later “theologians” expounding upon those theories, makes a mockery of what “what is written,” and the many verses that the Apostles wrote condemning going “beyond what is written” and “what was taught from the beginning.” **This was a very compressed history of what happened back in the early centuries after the Bible was completed.**

There are many history books written that bring out what took place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century via “church” actions and intrigue that are available to those who wish to further their education on this topic.

We will take a longer look at the History of how this Trinity Doctrine came to pass in another part of this Treatise starting on **page 79.**

## Part Five

Before starting part five of this Treatise we want the reader to be open-minded enough to understand what we are attempting to explain. By this we hope that the reader will check the context of the verses we bring out, seeking the truth of the matter. It would help if one has a concordance like Young's or Strong's with a Greek/English dictionary of the words found in the Scriptures of the Bible. If one is ambitious enough, we offer to e-mail you a copy of "Elementary Greek Lessons" which gives one the basics of the Koine Greek Language spoken in the first Century. Our e-mail address will be given at the end of this Part. May God bless you as you "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

### The Holy Spirit

#### Section One

##### Point one:

As you see from Part Four, the Holy Spirit was not a part of the early Trinity Doctrine of the church. It wasn't a formulated teaching until 381 AD — and wasn't accepted at that time by the majority of the various sects of Christianity, and was still debated among various individuals across the Roman World for centuries more; and even today.

##### Point two:

The term "Holy Spirit" wasn't used in reference to God or Jesus "dogmatically" until around the start of the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the term "spirit" itself was not in use before then because it was the Latin term "spiritus" – used by very few Christians, if any: Greek was the universal language at that time. Today's use is wide-spread as an English language adoption of the Latin term, shortened to "spirit."

**Spirit:** An English adoption of the Latin *spiritus*, meaning in English, breath/wind – used to translate Greek *pneuma*, breath/wind, and Hebrew *ruach*, breath/wind.

None of these terms are precisely defined or used, but they all imply an analogy between something physical and something that is not physical. Therefore: 1) non-physical reality, an unseen force or influence.(example: wind/air movement/air pressure); 2) the invisible, variable atmosphere of thoughts and feelings that surrounds a person or group of people; 3) a current in that atmosphere, an invisible influence, understandable by the purpose or direction of its observable effects, (spirit of loving-kindness, spirit of truth, spirit of confusion, spirit of fear); 4) by attribution of effect to cause, a discarnate thing (holy spirit, unclean spirit, evil spirit, and as an adjective to many other terms).

**A very interesting explanation:** The following is taken from Russell E. Boatman's book, *What The Bible Says About The Holy Spirit*, pages 29, 30 and 31.

“One scarcely needs to be told that the study of the Holy Spirit is commonly viewed as confusing, and an understanding of the subject nigh impossible. It is of little wonder that this is so. The subject is shrouded in mystery. This is due in part to: 1. The awesomeness of the terms — holy, spirit, and ghost. ... 2. The vagueness of the basic vocabulary as to specific reference, that is, the variety of meanings common to the word spirit also contributed to the problems inherent in this study. The problem roots in all three classical languages which have contributed to the vocabulary of our English translation. ...”

“(1) **Wind.** Whatever one’s race or culture, men become aware early on of a vast invisible reality – a thing or force which surrounds us but cannot be seen or grasped. Only the effects of its presence can be discerned. Trees bend and sway. Objects are picked up, without hands, and are hurtled through space or sent tumbling across the landscape. One can feel the unseen force pressing against one’s body to a degree comparable to the observed effect upon various objects being moved about. But the thing itself seems to be without substance. In the language of the OT literature (Hebrew) it is called *ruah*. In the language of the NT documents (Greek) it is called *pneuma*. In Latin the word for it is *spiritus*. We speak of it as the wind.”

“(2) **Breath.** Mankind everywhere is likewise conscious of a somewhat similar thing within our bodies. Our chests rhythmically rise and fall. When we are “winded” from over-exertion or have had “the wind knocked out of us,” our lungs struggle to regain an ample supply of the unseen substance which surrounds us. We call the process breathing, hence speak of being out of breath when we are winded. In Hebrew, Greek and Latin alike the same word which is used with reference to the wind is used also to speak of the “breath” of breathing creatures.”

“(3) **Spirit.** The words which are used primarily to speak of the wind and secondarily of breath are used in both Testaments to speak also of a metaphysical entity. They are used in a theological sense with reference to supernatural beings of all kinds, and of the intrinsic nature of the supreme Being of the universe — Yahweh God, no less.”

**Comment:** Personally knowing Russell, and talking to him on many occasions, his “spirit”, i.e., the *influence and attitude* he had, greatly impressed upon me to “put on his spirit”, to use a phrase in the NT of “putting on the spirit of Christ”. Think on that! The NT writings often tell us that we “have been clothed with Christ”, have “put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27, NIV, KJV). We are to have Christ’s spirit IN us: “...if anyone does not have the spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ” (See Rom. 8:1–17.) This is one of the ways the term “spirit” is used in the Bible.

As Russell once said to me, “**Jesus compared the spirit to the winds that constantly blow, which left the impression that the operation of God’s spirit on each of us is just as varied as is the wind.**” (See John 3:3–12.) Jesus most likely spoke in Aramaic Hebrew, or even in Koine Greek, which was the “universal” language of His day. He would not have used the Roman or Latin term “spiritus”, for it was not a language his listeners would have been familiar with: in fact, this Latin term wasn’t generally used until Jerome used it as a Latin translation of the Greek *pneuma* and the Hebrew *ruah* when he produced the Latin Vulgate Bible. A few questions are required to be asked:

What does the term “spirit” mean? Why didn’t the authors of the various dictionaries define the meaning of “spirit” into our English language? Why introduce a foreign word into our English language when our English language is capable of defining foreign words (as it does the Hebrew and Greek terms.)?

Regardless of what most people think about the phrase, “Holy Spirit,” even believing that it is one of the three “persons” of the Trinity. The Bible, in many places, mostly refers to IT as Almighty God’s divine power (see Zechariah 4:6 and Micah 3:8). What may be very interesting is that Jewish scholars have always defined the Holy Spirit as being nothing but the power of the one and only supreme God of the Old Testament. Peter, in Acts 10:38, tells us that “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.” Paul, in Romans 15:19, tells us that God was working in Jesus “...through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the **spirit of God.**”

Even Roman Catholic scholars admit that “The OT clearly does not envisage God’s spirit as a person ... **God’s spirit is simply God’s power.** If it is sometimes represented as being distinct from God, it is because the breath of Yahweh acts exteriorly ... The majority of NT texts reveal God’s spirit as **something, not someone**; this is especially seen in the parallelism between the spirit and the power of God” (*The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1965, Vol. 13, “*Spirit of God*,” pgs. 574-576).

*A Catholic Dictionary* similarly acknowledges, “On the whole, the New Testament, like the Old, **speaks of the spirit as a divine energy or power**” (William Addis and Thomas Arnold, 2004, “*Trinity, Holy*,” p. 827).

Let’s look at the Greek term used for “power” — δυνάμεως = **power, strength**; act of power, miracle (miracle worker – I Cor. 12:28ff); supernatural power(s), the Power, God (Mt. 26:64, Mk. 14:62, compare Acts 8:10); ability, capacity, means (Mt. 25:15, II Cor. 1:8, 8:3); meaning, significance (I Cor. 14:11). [Note: δυνάμεως (dunameos) is the Greek term from which we get the English terms dynamite, dynamic and dynamo. All three of these terms depict “power”!]

Peter speaks of God and tells us: “His **divine power** has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the **divine nature** and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” (II Peter 1:3-4)

The Bible, as seen by the above quote from Peter, shows us that the divine power of God is expressed by his divine nature and that we can take a part in that nature and power of God through his spirit — the Holy Spirit: “holy” (ἅγιος) meaning “set apart, to or by God; consecrated;” (also means to be “morally pure, upright”.) As the Apostle John says, “And every man that has this hope in him **purifies** himself, even as he (Christ) is **pure.**” (See I John 3:1-3)

The power of the Almighty God (Yahweh) is His spirit — his Holy Spirit — through which He works. This is shown in the “incarnation” of Jesus in the womb of Mary. The angel God sent to tell Mary this news put it this way: “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with **God**” (τὸ θεῶν, i.e., *the Theon* – Greek, indicating the **Supreme** God – Luke 1:30). The angel told Mary that she would have a child. Then Mary asked, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” (Luke 1:34). The angel responded: “The holy spirit shall come upon you, and **the power of the highest** shall hover over you; therefore also the holy one being born of you, shall be called the son of God” (Luke 1:35 – Greek literal translation). It is God Himself who is the Father of Jesus, not the “Holy Spirit,” but by God’s spirit which is “holy” and powerful!

**Notice that the holy spirit is mentioned as the power of the highest — The Almighty God doing His work by His Spirit! It is HIS SPIRIT at work, not a separate “person” of a Trinity of Gods.** Each one of us has a “spirit”, so does God, although ours is in no way as powerful! The most that we can do with our spirit is to influence others to our way of thinking and actions, and that is a power many people use to gain status among their followers; think on that — both in the political and religious realm!

Looking in the Old Testament we only find the phrase “holy spirit” 3 times out of 383 times the Hebrew term “ruah” is used: 1) In Psalm 51:11 we find: “Cast me not away from **thy presence**, and take not **thy holy spirit** from me.” The phrase “thy holy spirit” is used in a parallelistic context as a synonym for God’s presence; 2) In Isaiah 63:10-11 we find the phrase twice: “But they rebelled and grieved **his holy spirit**: therefore he was turned to be their enemy. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying ... where is he that put **his holy spirit** in the midst of them?” 3) The next closest phrase we find speaking of the “spirit” is in Nehemiah 9:20 where it says, “Thou gave **thy good spirit** to them.”

Psalm 139:7-11 — NIV

Verse 7 shows that God’s spirit is a “synonym” for God’s presence. King David tells us:

<sup>7</sup> Where can I go from **your spirit**?  
Where can I flee from **your presence**?  
<sup>8</sup> If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.  
<sup>9</sup> If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  
if I settle on the far side of the sea,  
<sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me,  
your right hand will hold me fast.

In Zechariah 4:6 Yahweh (the Almighty God) is recorded as talking with Zechariah, and he writes: “This is the word of Yahweh unto Zerubbabel, saying: Not by power, nor by might, but by **my spirit**, said Yahweh of Hosts.”

At the start of Jesus’ ministry, right after he underwent 40 days in the wilderness being tempted by the Devil, “He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the

scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: (See Note on Isa. 61:1-2 at end of section four.)

’The **spirit of the Lord** is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
to proclaim the year of the **Lord’s favor.**’

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’” (Luke 4:16-21 NIV. Compare Isaiah 61:1-2.)

We could bring to light all the Old Testament verses to show that the “spirit” of God is not a separate person of a Trinity Doctrine, but is actually **God’s own spirit** — but that would be redundant and make this Article too long and burdensome to read. What the Old Testament has to say concerning the Holy Spirit is mainly **inferential**. Man has a tendency of reading into the Old Testament the doctrine of the Trinity which itself is the speculation of philosophical thinking that culminated in 381 AD at the Council of Constantinople. (See Part Four of this Treatise.)

## Section Two

### The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit

“Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. And so I tell you, every kind of **sin and slander** can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the holy spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.” (Matthew 12:22-32 NIV — see also Mark 3:7-11, 22-30 and Luke 12:1-10.)

Many people have tried to explain what this blasphemy consists of, which is really **sin and slander** directed against The Almighty **God’s holy spirit**. The Greek term βλασφημία — blasphemy — means “**speaking against God; speaking against (the power and nature of God), slander and/or insulting talk.**” That shouldn’t be too hard to understand for most people! YET, many people don’t know what blasphemy consists of and are fearful lest they unconsciously commit it.

As a note of concern, the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:30 says, “... And **grieve** not the holy spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.” This was spoken of and about the holy spirit which was given to all who committed their lives to the Christ Jesus. We should be cautious about speaking against the holy spirit in fellow Christians! What fellow Christians say may be the holy spirit leading them: we are admonished to test the spirit, but not to slander or insult their spirit. Read the following from Paul in I Cor. 12:1-13, it speaks of the workings of the holy spirit in Christians!

*“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I would not have you ignorant. You know that you were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as you were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by **the spirit of God** calls Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by **the holy spirit**. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. And there are diversities of ministrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, **but it is the same God which works all in all**. But the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit from. For to one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit; To another faith by the same spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of languages; to another the interpretation of languages: All these things are the works of one and the same spirit, and he gives them to each man, just as he determines. For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For **by one spirit** are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit.”*

Everyone should read and pay close attention to what the apostle Paul has to say about a Christian's life as lived through the holy spirit within them; which is really **God working in them!** While there is much more about the spirit of God revealed in the Bible, Romans 8:1-27 is a condensed explanation on what the works of God's spirit is for during one's life on this world. We are to be “sons of God” and thusly act as one!

Let's look closely at Romans 8:1-27. Notice that in verse 9 **God's spirit and Christ's spirit are one and the same spirit**. We know from other Scriptures that it was the Father (the Almighty God, Yahweh) that raised Jesus from the grave (see Acts 2:32, 4:10, 10:40, 13:30 and 13:37): Notice that verse 11 tells us that **“the spirit of him” who raised Jesus from the dead is the Almighty God**. In verse 14-17 Paul tells us that we are “sons of God” Himself, and that we are “heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ.” In other words, we are to be children of God's family just as Jesus **was and is!** Think seriously on this revelation! (Read Jesus' words about man being called “gods” — see John 10:30-36).

The above quotes and references give a strong indication of what the holy spirit is and the powerful influence it has on Christians in their lives; and what it accomplishes in one's current life on earth. Not only that, but it will cause us to live again after we have passed away — and make us immortal also (see I Cor. 15:12-58). Would anyone really want to grieve the holy spirit, much less blaspheme it?

While the Bible doesn't have all that much to say about the blasphemy against the holy spirit, it would seem that such a horrible sin with its consequences would have had much more explanation from the writers of Scriptures. But it doesn't. Many have mentioned a few other warnings as being **possibly related** to blasphemy (see Hebrews 6:4-8, 10:26-31; II Peter 2:20-22 and I John 5:16-17; and there is more that one could gather information or explanation from).

Here is a challenge for **you**: read all of the following Scripture verses, in context, and decide for yourself if the “holy spirit” is the third person of the Trinity or not. **You** must be convinced in your own mind — not the mind of anyone else! You are going to be looking at the words translated “blaspheme, blasphemy, reviling, curse, pierced through, to pierce, to sting, to cut into” in this challenge (depending on the Bible version used).

### **Old Testament Scriptures:**

II Kings 19:6, 22; Psalm 44:16; Isaiah 37:6, 23 and Ezekiel 20:27. The Hebrew word here is “Gadeph” – meaning to revile, to cut; translated “blasphemed.” In Isaiah 43:28 it is a derivative form of the verb translated as “reviling.”

“Naqab” — Leviticus 24:11, 16 (twice) as “blaspheme.” Six times as “curse” – Numbers 23:8, 28; Job 3:8, 5:3; Proverbs 11:26, 24:24. Twice as “pierce” – II Kings 18:23; Isaiah 36:6. “Pierced through” in Job 40:24 and Habakkuk 3:14.

“Na-ats” — meaning “to pierce, to sting.” Sometimes translated “blaspheme (II Samuel 12:24; Psalm 74:10, 18; Isaiah 52:5). See also II Kings 19:3 and Isaiah 37:3.

“Charaph” — signifying “to cut into” and is translated “blaspheme” in Isaiah 65:7.

### **New Testament Scriptures:**

Other than the three texts in the Gospels previously mentioned, there are other verses that have the terms “blasphemy, blasphemer, blasphemies and blasphemed.”

Matt. 15:19 (KJV), 26:57-65; Mark 2:7, 14:60-64; Luke 22:65; Acts 6:11, 13, 13:45, 18:6 and 26:11; Col. 3:8; I Tim 1:13, 20, 6:1; Titus 2:6; James 2:7; Rev. 2:9, 13:1, 5-6, 16:9, 11, 21 and 17:3.

NOTE: The following verses may be considered because they *appear* to say that forgiveness is *hopeless* concerning salvation. Rom. 1:18-32; Eph. 4:17-19, 30; I Tim. 4:1-2; II Peter 2:20-22; Heb. 3:14-16, 6:4-8, 10:26-31, 12:15-17 and Rev. 16:8-11.

In coming to your conclusion on the SIN of BLASPHEMY you should not oversimplify nor make it overcomplicated. Nor should you simply ignore it, or say it’s too confusing.

**OUR CONCLUSION** on this blasphemy issue: Other than the 3 passages mentioned in the lead quote on this issue, there is nothing definite that would spell out explicitly what this unpardonable sin consists of. We have our reasons to think that the Trinitarianism of the Nicene Creed is at fault in understanding Jesus’ warning of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Read the whole context of those three passages and consider the background from whence the warning came:

Jesus himself was accused by the religious rulers of Israel of blasphemy for saying he was the son of God (John 10:22-39 – Compare Psalm 82:6). Wasn’t Jesus in effect saying, “The Scriptures are clear that the Almighty God called human being gods, why are you so uptight when I say that I am God’s son?” Because of Jesus’ remarks he set

aside the claim that he was guilty of blasphemy. Consider that. Would you be guilty of blasphemy if you claimed to be a son of God? We say, **NO!** What do you say?

Ask yourself, “What is sin?” What does one have to say to be guilty of the unpardonable sin? Can anyone state precisely what a person would have to say or do to commit this sin? Many have put forth ideas of what it is, but — well, we will leave it there. It would take up too much space and still wouldn’t give us a precise answer. If you have an answer, send it to us at [ken@kenfortier.com](mailto:ken@kenfortier.com).

## Section Three

### Comments on the Holy Spirit of God in one’s life:

God, Christ and the holy spirit, along with our own spirit dwell within us. What are we to think on this? Are there four spirits (persons?) living in us? What do the following Scripture verses tell you of God Himself dwelling in us? **Consider the highlighted parts!**

Eph. 4:4-6 — “There is one body, and **one Spirit**, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, **One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**”

Rom. 8:9a — “But ye are not in the flesh, but **in the spirit**, if so be that the **spirit of God** dwell in you.”

Compare II Cor. 6:16 with I Cor. 6:19-20 — “And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God; as God has said, **I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God**, and they shall be my people. What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the **holy spirit which is in you**, which you have **of God**, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify **God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.**”

I John 4:12-16 — “No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, **God dwells in us**, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that **we dwell in him, and he in us**, because he has given us **of his Spirit**. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, **God dwells in him, and he in God**. And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love; and **he that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.**”

Rom. 8:9b-11 — “Now if any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And **if Christ be in you**, the body is dead because of sin; but the **spirit is life** because of righteousness. But **if the spirit of him** that raised up Jesus from the dead **dwells in you**, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies **by His spirit that dwells in you.**”

Gal. 4:6 — “And **because you all are sons**, God has sent forth **the spirit of his Son** into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

Eph. 3:16-19 — “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might **by his spirit in the inner man**; That **Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith**; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Almighty God the Father, Jesus His Son and their holy spirit all dwell in us! In previous places in this Treatise we brought out the evidence of **Christ’s spirit in us** that the Apostle Paul spoke of in I Cor. 2:9-14 and Romans 8:5-17. Let us now add to this with the following Scriptures:

**God dwelling in us!** I John 4:12 & 15-16 — “No man has seen God at any time. If we love one another, **God dwells in us**, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that **we dwell in him**, and **he in us**, because he has given us of **his spirit**. And we have known and believed the love that God has to us. God is love; and **he that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.**”

I John 3:24 — “And he that keeps his (God’s) commandments **dwells in him**, and **he in him**. And hereby we know that **he abides in us, by the spirit which he has given us.**” Notice that God dwells in us, and we with God, **by the spirit he gave us!** Compare this with I John 4:14 — “And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, **God dwells in him, and he in God.**”

What are we to think of these Scriptures? Really, are there three “persons,” three “spirits,” dwelling within us, along with our own spirit? Is it possible that the teaching given a majority of Christians concerning the dogmatic creed of a “Trinity” (3 in 1) is the thing that produced a splitting of the One Almighty God into three individual “persons”?

Acts 2:38-39 contains two promises that are very important to understand: the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit — not just to those who heard the message on that day, but “unto as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.” In Acts 5:32 Peter reiterates this by saying, “We are witnesses of these things; and so is the holy spirit whom God gives to all them that obey him.”

We leave this for you to think upon ...

### **Galatians 5:16-23**

“This I say then, Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that you cannot do the things that ye would. But if you be led of the spirit, you are not under the

law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

### **I Corinthians 6:19-20**

“What? Know you not that your body is the temple of the holy ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (KJV)

**Note:** The term “holy spirit” does not appear anywhere in the Old Testament Scriptures: However, “his holy spirit” occurs twice in Isaiah 63:10-11 as an adjective referencing “Yahweh” — The Almighty Supreme Being Himself! In the New Testament the term “Holy Spirit” does not appear in the following epistles: Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, James, II John and III John. Also it does not appear in the book of Revelations.

One of the most important things you should have gotten out of this part of the article is that the phrases, the holy spirit, the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, the one spirit, God in you, Christ in you, God dwelling in you, Christ dwelling in you, etc., are all the same reference to the Almighty God’s spirit — the “spirit” that permeates us, making us “sons (and daughters) of God.” The next part of this article will add crucial Scriptural evidence to back up the totality of what you have already read.

## **Section Four**

Before we get into this section, let us unequivocally state that we firmly believe in the Father, the Son and the holy spirit. In this section we will present what we believe the Bible has to say about God’s holy spirit. The word “God” will be used sparingly as we try to distinguish who is being mentioned in various verses and passages; that is, **is it talking about the Father or the Son?** It is of the utmost importance that one realizes that the word “God” is the Greek term **θεος** (“Theos” – a transliteration which uses English letters to spell the word), which, historically and biblically, simply means “Deity” in our English language. We could bore you if we were to present the long history of *how* the generic term “God” came to be used as universal as it is today — and we are stuck with it, sadly!

However, let me say that the first use of the English word “God” appears in the first sentence of the first book of the Bible, Genesis 1:1. It should be noted that the Hebrew term is “Elohim” which is a *plural noun* meaning “*Mighty Ones*” (Gods) when used with

*plural verbs* in the sentence. For an example Genesis 1:26a says, “And God said, Let **us** make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness...” The word “God” is the *plural noun* “Elohim” and the *plural verbs* are “**us** and **our**.” We would be remiss if we didn’t include the fact that when “Elohim” is used with *singular verbs* in a sentence it means “*Mighty One*.” In fact, every time “God” is used in the first and second chapters of Genesis it is the Hebrew term “Elohim.” Also a fact is that Elohim is used over 2,000 times in the Old Testament, and in some instances the word “gods” (a plural word) is used to translate them. **Even Jesus mentions Elohim as a plural (gods) when quoting Psalm 82:6 in John 10:34-35.** But that is enough for now — on with the article. I will use the word “Almighty” in the place of “God” when it is referring to the Father.

**Just what is the Holy Spirit? A simple answer** is that it is the *essence* of the Almighty’s nature and mind. “Essence” means the core nature or most important qualities of a person or thing. Remember, “God is a spirit” (John 4:24), and one cannot see a “spirit.” We can say that the spirit is the **essence** of the mind of the Father and the Son, just as **our essence** is the working of **our spirit in our own being**.

But how does the Almighty’s spirit come to us? Again, a **simple answer** is that it *emanates* from the Almighty. “Emanate” is a verb and means to come from something or someone and sends it forth. Here is an example in a sentence: God’s spirit **emanates** power and confidence in believer’s minds. Another example of emanate is music coming out of speakers; in other words, the speakers **emanate** or send forth music to the ears of those listening.

We have a “spirit” within us that is from the Almighty, and it is that spirit that animates us (Genesis 2:7 – the “breath/spirit of life”). However, at death, that spirit returns to the Almighty (Eccl. 12:7). We can ask at this point, “What does our spirit produce in us?” We answer: It activates, inspires, motivates, impels, encourages, and influences (ourselves and others), etcetera; it is what others see outwardly — how we conduct our self and the attitude we exhibit. Our spirit empowers us; that should be very plain and simple to understand. This applies to all people, believers and unbelievers alike.

The holy spirit is the power of the Almighty which, like man’s, also empowers. However, there is a great difference between the two. The Almighty’s spirit is prefaced with the adjective “holy,” i.e., **set apart** — and is quite different from man’s spirit. The Almighty’s spirit is used to influence us personally *when we accept it*. **It works on our spirit** to produce love, joy, peace, kindness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control and patience. **It causes us** to be able to forgive others, to seek what is good and honorable, to help others in need, and to turn our thoughts to spiritual things and away from material things. The Almighty’s spirit works only in believers. Thusly, the Almighty’s spirit is pure and good in all those who receive it, and it also activates, inspires, motivates, impels, encourages and magnifies our talents (gifts of the Almighty’s spirit).

The term “spirit,” itself, indicates an **invisible, immaterial, power**. It is compared to the “wind,” as Jesus explains in John 3:8 — “*The wind blows wherever it pleases. You may hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the spirit.*” Basically, spirit and wind are the same Greek word, *pneuma*, and we can only feel and/or see the results of its action.

The Almighty's spirit, like ours, is invisible; the wind is also invisible, as is the air we breathe. We only see what the wind does, like moving tree limbs or clouds, and sometimes smoke, ash, and dust; and during a storm or tornado we may see the wind carry the various things it destroys, like shingles, or, sad to say, the materials used to build houses. One cannot see the wind moving these things, only what the wind moves.

Back to the "spirit" — just as the invisible wind and air, the Almighty's spirit, which is His power, causes things to happen: like the creation of the Universe and our world in it, including all living things: see Genesis 1:1-31.

**First**, before we look at the works of the Almighty's spirit in believers, let's look at His work through Jesus, who was "*made both Lord and Christ*" (Acts 2:36). The man we know as Jesus was with the Almighty Father and was Deity before the Creation of the world (See John 1:1-3, 14, and 18).

The apostle John tells us that "*In the beginning was the Word (Logos), and the Word (Logos) was with the Deity (God), and the word was Deity (God). This one was in the beginning with the Deity (God). All things through him (the Logos) became, and without him (the Logos) became not one thing which has become*" ... "*No man has ever seen Deity (the Almighty); the only begotten Deity (the Logos), the one being in the bosom of the Father (the Almighty), **that one (the Logos) declared him (the Almighty)***" (John 1:1-3, 14 and 18 – Greek literal translation. Emphasis mine).

John also tells us "*What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands have touched, concerning the Word (Logos) of life, and the life was made known, and we have seen and we bear witness and we announce to you the life of the ageless, which was with the Father and was made known to us, what we have seen and we have heard, we announce also to you, in order that you may have fellowship with us. And indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ*" (1 John 1:1-3 – Greek literal translation).

The prophet Isaiah gave a prophecy about the coming of Jesus Christ: "*And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of Yahweh (YHWH) shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh (YHWH); And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of Yahweh (YHWH): and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins*" (Isaiah 11:1-5 KJV – YHWH is the Tetragrammaton found in the Hebrew OT, and was replaced by "LORD," all in capital letters, in the LXX translation around 285 BC – See Strongs Concordance, Hebrew Dictionary #3068. We choose to use the name *Yahweh* in place of the KJV *Jehovah* in the above quote. Emphasis ours.)

Isaiah's prophecy describes Jesus to a "T" (spiritually) and the New Testament Scriptures confirm it by recording Jesus Christ's words and actions.

The holy spirit is the power of our Almighty Father. It is the mind and essence of the Creator Himself; and by which He carries out His will. It is NOT a person or entity as is described in various creeds and church counsels. The Scriptures speak of the spirit as the power of the Almighty, which was bestowed upon Jesus; the power of love and of a sound mind. It emanates from Him and can be said to be "poured out" (Titus 3:6), "breathed on" (John 20:22), "fill" (Acts 2:4) and "anoint" (Acts 10:38), as we see in those verses: see also Isa. 32:15, Ezek. 39:29 and Joel 2:28-29.

The Father is the supreme Ruler of all individuals, whether they believe in Him or not. He is the object and focus of our worship and the ONLY ONE to whom Christians should pray. He sent His Son (the LOGOS or WORD), who gave up his role as Deity, to be born into the world by the Almighty's power and become the man we call Jesus:

The apostle Paul tells us that Jesus, "*Who, subsisting in the form of Deity (God), deemed it not robbery to be equal with (the Almighty) Deity (God), but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming in the likeness of man;*" [Eph. 2:6-7, Greek literal translation. Emphasis ours]. Yes, the man we know as Jesus was with the Almighty Father and was Deity before the Creation of the world. If that sounds confusing, read John 1:1-3, 14, 18 and 1 John 1:1-3 again.

The Father accomplishes His will by means of **His spirit**, by which He calls, regenerates, and through the process of conversion, transforms His new children into His image.

What we are now faced with is the question of "How do we get or receive the spirit of the Almighty?" To understand this we need to read the Letters or Epistles of the New Testament, and understand some things revealed in the Old Testament. Another question we must ask is, "What is the difference between "Our spirit, the Almighty's spirit, Christ's spirit, and all the other descriptions of the term 'spirit'?" Read on...!

Any study on the "spirit of man", the "spirit of the Almighty, Christ, truth, life", etc., and the "spirit" in all "living creatures" — fish, fowl, animals and creepy-crawly things — needs to be considered and understood in the context of any verse or passage found in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.

For example, Ecclesiastes 3:19 which speaks of the death of man and all living creatures, tells us:

*"For that which happens to the sons of man happens to animals; even one thing happens to them: as one dies, so dies the other; **yes, they all have one spirit**; so that a man has no preeminence above an animal: for all is vanity."*

As you can see from the above verse, all living creatures, man included, have a spirit that animates them. This "spirit" or "breath of life" from the Almighty is what makes His creatures come alive, i.e., become "living souls/creatures/beings," etc. (See Genesis 1:20,

21, 24, 30 and 2:7.) However, there is an aspect of this “spirit” that is only found in man: man was “Made in the image and likeness of Deity.” This aspect of the “spirit” is never applied to any of the other creatures Deity created. And it is this aspect that enables mankind to think, feel, love, design and create things, etc.; an aspect no other “living creature” has.

Job 32:8, in the LXX, literally tells us “*But there is a spirit in mortals, and the breath of the Almighty is the one teaching.*” This “breath” of the Almighty is what gives man (mortals) awareness and intelligence through this spirit in us by His spirit working on and with our own spirit.

This is what the Apostle Paul reveals to us in I Corinthians 2:9–14 —

“But as it is written: ‘eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart (mind) of man **the things** which (the Almighty) Deity has prepared for those who love Him.’ But the Almighty has revealed (the things) to us through His spirit. For the spirit (of the Almighty) searches all things, yes, the deep things of (the Almighty) Deity. For what man knows the things of a man **except the spirit of the man which is in him**? Even so no one knows the things of Deity **except the spirit of (the Almighty) Deity**. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from (the Almighty) Deity, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by (the Almighty) Deity. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the holy spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the spirit of (the Almighty) Deity, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know (the things) because they are spiritually discerned.” [Notice the mention of **TWO** spirits — The Almighty’s and man’s! The Almighty’s spirit and the holy spirit are the same thing.]

Then in Romans, Chapter 8, verses 5–8, Paul tells us that,

“Those who live according to their sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the spirit (of the Almighty) have their minds set on what the spirit desires. The mind (heart) of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the spirit is life and peace, because the sinful mind is hostile to (the Almighty) Deity. It does not submit to (the Almighty) Deity’s law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by their sinful nature cannot please (the Almighty) Deity.”

However, Paul goes on to tell us in verses 9–11 that,

“You, however, are controlled not by your sinful nature (the spirit of man) but by the spirit, **if** the spirit of (the Almighty) Deity lives in you. And **if** anyone does not have the spirit of Christ [same as the spirit of the Almighty!], he does not belong to Christ. But **if** Christ (spirit) is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of

righteousness. And **if** the spirit of Him (the Almighty) who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His spirit, who lives in you.”

In addition to this Good News Paul tells us in verses 14–17 that

“Those who are led by the spirit of (the Almighty) Deity are sons of (the Almighty) Deity. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received a spirit (of the Almighty) who makes you sons. And by which we cry, ‘Abba, Father’. The spirit (of the Almighty) itself testifies with **our spirit** that we are (the Almighty) Deity’s children. Now **if** we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of (the Almighty) Deity and co-heirs with Christ, **if** indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory.”

Yes, the Apostle Paul tells us that the spirit – the Almighty’s spirit – itself bears witness with **our spirit** (the one created in us), that we are the children of Deity, **if** we have really put on the spirit of Christ to control our **own spirit**. [Notice the highlighted **IF** in the above quotes from Paul. Emphasis ours.]

Both the Old and New Testaments make it plain that the Almighty has placed within every living creature a “spirit” which animates its body. (See the Genesis 1 and 2 references already given.) There are many verses of Scripture which reveal that mankind has a spirit which gives them something other living creatures do not have — the ability which makes one aware of spiritual things, and which makes it possible for **the spiritual things** of Deity, through the Almighty’s spirit, to interact and allow a spiritual understanding of things that are not possible without the Almighty’s spirit working in or on our **own spirit**.

“The spirit of Christ which a person can **put on** allows that person to have a one-on-one relationship with our Creator.” This is a “**hard saying**” to most people. “**If one does not have the spirit of Christ within one’s self, one does not belong to Christ; thusly one faces an eternal death.**” This is the gist of what Paul taught in his letters — and it is very plain and direct, **subject to no objection**.

We raised the question earlier of “How do we get or receive the spirit of the Almighty?” Another way of asking the question could be phrased this way: “How does one ‘put on’ the holy spirit of the Almighty and the Christ?”

The Apostle Peter gives us some insight on this in the sermon he preached to his fellow Jews after they saw what appeared to be tongues of fire resting on the Apostles and heard them speak in a multitude of different languages. This crowd of men came from all the nations in the world, and each of them heard the words spoken in their native language — and they were amazed and marveled to hear the great deeds of the Almighty being spoken by the Apostles who were Galileans. They asked one another, “What does this

mean?” Some, (which always seem to appear at gatherings of all kinds throughout the ages) naturally, mocked them and said that they were drunk! (See Acts 2:1–13.)

Peter, hearing this, was quick to stand up and address the crowds to explain what was going on. He said that they were not drunk this early in the morning, and what they see and hear is the fulfillment of the prophecy spoken by the prophet Joel (Joel 2:28–32). He then proceeded to give the first sermon of Christianity and the founding of the first “Assembly of Christ” on the earth: i.e., “Church” of Christ! (See Acts 2:14–36.)

This sermon really struck the hearers with fear! **“What shall we do?”** they asked. Peter replied and said: (Greek literal translation.)

**“Repent, and let each of you be immersed on the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the holy spirit.”**

Peter continued to say much more that is not recorded, but it is said that he warned and pleaded with them to “Save yourselves from this perverse generation.” Those who believed his words got immersed in water in Christ’s name and were added to the church that same day: about 3,000 people were saved! And more were added on a daily basis, the holy spirit working in and on their own spirit. (See Acts 2:37–47.)

The conversion of Saul (later named Paul) also shows us the way one is to put on the spirit of Christ. Saul was a persecutor of the followers of Christ. One day while he was on the way to Damascus, Syria, to bring back to Jerusalem the Christians who had been captured, a light from the heavens shone around him, he fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, *“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”* Amazing, isn’t it — persecuting Christians is just like persecuting Jesus, the Lord and Christ! Saul then asked, *“Who are you Lord?”* The voice answered: *“I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”* (Acts 9:4–6.) Let’s find out what Saul was told to do to put on the spirit of Christ.

“In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, ‘Ananias!’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ he answered. The Lord told him, ‘Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.’

‘Lord,’ Ananias answered, ‘I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.’

But the Lord said to Ananias, ‘Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name.’

Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord — Jesus, who

appeared to you on the road as you were coming here — has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the holy spirit. Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes, and he could see again. He got up and **was immersed**, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.” (Acts 9:10-19, REB –Revised English Bible.)

So, Saul got baptized. Did he receive the spirit of Christ before he got baptized, as various churches teach, or was it like the 3,000 who received the holy spirit after they got baptized? We will let Saul, whom, after many years, was called Paul, tell us the meaning of being immersed, i.e., baptized. (Romans 6.)

“Don’t you know that all of **us** who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **We** were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Verses 3–4.)

“Because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.” (Verse 7.)

“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to Deity in Christ Jesus.” (Verse 11.)

“But thanks be to (the Almighty) Deity that, though you used to be slaves to sin, **you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed.**” (Verse 17.)

Paul used the terms **US** and **WE** in reference to being immersed in water, and that immersion was symbolically a death, burial, and resurrection just as Christ Jesus was crucified unto death, buried and resurrected from the grave and death. This symbolic act was the **FORM OF TEACHING** each one of us followed in obeying the command of Christ Jesus as taught to us by the Apostles Peter and Paul. To the Christians of Galatia Paul had this to say about this **form of teaching**: (Galatians 3:26–29.)

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were united with Christ in baptism have been **clothed with Christ**. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (NIV) [The KJV puts the above bold words as **put on Christ**, which is the same as Christ in you!]

When Paul preached Christ at Jerusalem he told them how he got his sins removed. You can read this in Acts 21:40–22:21, in which is found in 22:16 — **“And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be immersed (baptized) and wash your sins away, calling on His name.”** It seems very clear that Paul believed, got baptized to wash away his sins, and, although not stated, received (from the Almighty) the holy spirit just as did the 3,000 who believed, got baptized to receive the forgiveness of their sins, received the holy spirit and were added to the *ekklesian* of believers that very day — an **assembly or congregation**, which the word *ekklesia* should be translated as: and is incorrectly called “Church” by most people; and we are stuck with it, sadly.

However, regardless of the above paragraph, **what the Apostles taught about putting on Christ’s spirit** is what we are talking about. Baptism just happens to have an important part in what the writers of scripture have to say about this connection with the holy spirit working on and in our own spirit.

Man has a “spirit”, and he is told to “put on” or be “clothed” with the “spirit of Christ.” Does this mean that one has “Two spirits” when putting on the spirit of Christ? Is this “holy spirit” something that one can put on like a piece of clothing?

We have already seen and read that man has a “spirit” as an aspect of the “breath of life” breathed into him when born, or likely even earlier when conceived in the womb. Paul let us know this fact about the “spirit of man”: “For what man knows the things of a man except (through) the spirit of the man which is IN him?” (1 Cor. 2:11). We can also interject this little thought in this question Paul raised (let’s re-quote it): “For what man knows the things of a man (*how can man know or think, understand or perceive and have consciousness of himself*) except (through) the spirit of man which is in him?” **Do you begin to see the need of another spirit to see spiritual “things” of the Almighty?**

The Almighty, through the writers of Scripture, makes it plain that He has placed WITHIN mankind a “spirit” which allows one to have self-awareness, and makes it possible for one to have a direct relationship with Him. As we have seen and read, this “spirit in man” is not aware of the things of the Almighty; that is, the spiritual things of Deity. It is possible for the mind of the Almighty, through His holy spirit, to connect, somehow, with this spirit in man and allow an understanding that would not be possible without this connection.

After all, we were created “in His image” to be able to think, feel, love, design and create many things as we grow in knowledge of Deity’s creation and our place in it. It is this aspect that we do not find in any of Deity’s other creatures on this earth. Animals do not carry on a conversation with us, or have created art, designed things, or planned anything spectacular as humans do. Yes, some animals build or create all the time, like birds, ants, bees, etc., but a bird can’t build an ant-hill or a bee hive and neither can an ant or bee build a bird nest, or an ant built a bee hive and vice-versa. They only can do what they were created to do, and have no ability or free will to do anything else.

The spirit the Almighty put in every person gives us the possibility to communicate in an intelligent way with each other, and allows for each person the possibility of connecting with the Creator's spirit (an aspect of man's spirit in one's life), a one-on-one relationship with the Creator: the Almighty Deity Himself, the one and only invisible supreme Spirit, Yahweh by name!

**Even though this “spirit in man” is not actually aware of the things of the Almighty, nor can it be alive apart from ones life, it is possible for the Almighty's spirit to make a connection with this “aspect” of man's spirit, and provide a spiritual understanding not possible without it.**

The “spirit in man” makes all the difference between us and all the other creatures the Almighty, through the Logos or Word, created. It makes us able to think, reason, be self-aware and most importantly to connect to the “spirit of the Almighty” to understand His “spiritual things.” It is His spirit working on our spirit that can save us through our faith in Jesus, the Christ (Messiah or Anointed One) of the Almighty Father. Listen to what the Apostle Peter realized about Jesus when the Father's spirit connected with him: **“You are the Christ, the son of the living Deity”** (Matt. 16:17). This is what we should all come to realize, and really believe that until our last day of life on this world.

This “spirit in man” is not merely “breath” as some would say, but if that was the case, why would the writers of Scripture *personify* it on many occasions? Should the term “spirit” be capitalized as a “personal noun”? Any study on what the “spirit in man” and the “spirit of Christ, God, truth, life,” etc., and the “spirit” given to all “living creatures” must be understood in order for us to define its use in the Old and New Testaments. The word “spirit” comes from the Latin **“spiritus”** which means “breath or wind”. This same definition is found in the Hebrew term **“ruach”** and the Greek term **“pneuma.”**

The Creator is called “The Deity of the spirits of all flesh” (Num. 16:22), and “The Father of spirits” (Heb. 12:9). It is by the Creator's spirit that a Christian serves and worships the Deity. The Apostle Paul testifies: “For the Deity is my witness, whom I serve with **my spirit** in the Gospel” (Rom. 1:9). Jesus states: “Deity is spirit; and they that worship Him **must worship Him in spirit and in truth**” (John 4:24 – **Deity** in all the above verses in this paragraph is the “Father”).

Man has a “spirit”; and he is told to “put on” or “cloth” one's self with the “spirit of Christ” — Does this mean that one has “two” spirits when being “clothed” or when “putting on the spirit of Christ”? [See **the listing of the usage of the word “spirit” on the last page of this section! Which ones would you think of “putting on”?**]

In what English terms are we supposed to think of this word “spirit”? Let's now look for the answer to this question.

When God's holy spirit was given on Pentecost, God manifested it as a mighty wind. It was invisible as wind/air is, and that isn't a living thing, much less a “person”, but it

came to the hearing of those gathered as *the power* of the Almighty Father to carry out His purpose on that occasion. One should notice that this *power*, manifested as a “wind,” not only *filled* the apostles, but it also *filled* the house in which they were gathered.

When recording words about the holy spirit the apostles had no reservations about interchangeably using verbs associated with things rather than people. For example, Paul tells Timothy “*to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear*” (2 Timothy 1:6-7). We usually stir liquids and mixtures, not people. Luke, when recording the book of Acts, used the verb “pour” to describe God’s use of the spirit (Acts 2:17-18, 33). I certainly don’t believe that a “person” can be poured into another “person.”

### **An examination of Acts 5:1-11 (NIV)**

We will only quote the appropriate verses (#) to get the context of the passage.

(1) “*Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. (2) With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet. (3) Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that **you have lied to the holy spirit** and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? (4) Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? **You have not lied to man but to God.**’”*

Let’s look more closely as to what Peter meant when he said, “**You have lied to the holy spirit.**” To do this we have to examine the context to understand what he meant. We have highlighted Peter’s parallel accusation: “**You have not lied to men but to God.**” (For your information, the generic “God” is the Greek word “*Theos*,” i.e., Deity.) It is important to understand that Peter accuses Ananias of **sinning against God**. Think: what was the lie?

(7) “*About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. (8) Peter asked her, ‘Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?’ ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘that is the price.’ (9) Peter said to her, ‘**How could you agree to test the spirit of the Lord?** Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.’”*

Notice that when Peter talks to Sapphira later, he repeats the accusation in a different way: “**How is it that you have agreed together to test the spirit of the Lord?**” (In saying that, Peter uses “Lord” from the Greek “*kurios*.”) Peter is saying that the holy spirit is a **possession** of the Almighty God.

As you, or anyone, can see in these verses quoted from the passage, Peter actually explains what he meant: Ananias and Sapphira had tried to deceive God who was present in the apostles by the power of His spirit. Did Ananias and Sapphira not realize, Peter asks, that through His spirit God knew what they were doing? Although not directly mentioned in this passage, it is apparent that Ananias and Sapphira received more money

from the sale of their land than they apparently said they had. They tried to deceive the apostles that they had donated **ALL THE MONEY** they had received. Subtly, it sure seems as though they wanted to increase their standing in the community with their act of charity – a very deceptive practice that all should be aware of.

Many teachers use Scripture verses to impress upon us that “**HE**” (a personal pronoun to personify the holy spirit) “speaks,” “tells,” “declares,” “convicts,” “guides,” “hears,” etcetera; which verbs, by themselves, cannot give us any conclusive proof that the holy spirit is a divine being. This is called “personifying” a non-living “thing.”

But why do many teachers try to make it seem as if the spirit has a personality? There is a reason, if one accepts it! *The power of the Almighty’s spirit is the vehicle by which He accomplishes His will; be it through the Son, the Apostles and those who believe what the Almighty has revealed through them.* What the Almighty has revealed is only to be found in the Bible, not in the reasoning of theologians or creedal councils.

The Almighty’s spirit is made to take on actions that people do — for example, in attributing verbs to describe the actions of **things**; i.e., “Money talks,” “Power corrupts,” “Words sting,” etc., all to describe a human personification to **things**. In addition, we hear people use phrases such as “the wind howls,” “the rain dances and pours,” “water runs,” “listen to the wind moan,” etc. — all these phrases with verbs do not make these things human, nor are they meant to; although they do “personify” those **things**.

Watch how even the Apostle Paul personifies the following words:

**Death:** Romans 5:14, “Death *reigned* from Adam to Moses.”

**Law:** Romans 7:1, “The law has *dominion/authority* over a man...”

**Sin:** Romans 7:8, “Sin, *seizing the opportunity*...”

Romans 7:9-10, “...sin *sprang to life* and I died.”

Romans 7:11, “Sin...*deceived me*...and *put me to death*”

It would be very hard to justify that “Sin, Law and Death” have a personality, even though the above *verses use verbs to personify them*. We absolutely know that none of the above **things** have personality, **so why do we personify them? It’s the same thing that is done to the “spirit” of the Almighty! Doing so to the spirit does not make the spirit a person.** If one pays close attention to the speech of others, one may notice that a lot of people personify non-living things, which is not all that bad – they are “puns.”

We should all accept how the entire Bible “speaks” (a pun) about the concept of the Almighty’s spirit. Just because translators “personify” the holy spirit in certain verses that “talk” (a pun) of what the spirit does in humans, does not make it a person. (Notice the puns about personifying the Bible!) Using verses that contain a verb that personifies the spirit to prove a **doctrine** that the spirit has a personality and is a person of the Godhood is called “proof-texting:” — a method that leads to all kinds of errors. The true method to be used is to *“always use verses that are clear to explain verses that are unclear, and put together all the pertinent verses, in context, from the whole revelation of the Bible;*

*then harmonize them before putting forth a conclusion to make a doctrine.*” In doing this one can reach a conclusion that has a Biblical application worthy of belief.

The Almighty Father is revealed in the Bible to have body parts like us, He even sits on a throne in Heaven, even though he is a spirit; the Son, Jesus, we don't have to speak on, for He was here as a complete human being just like us; but the spirit is described to be like wind, oil, fire, and water — never having any verbs that would describe a body like a human being. Also, the Spirit has no “family” relationship to Christians. God is our Father and Jesus is our Brother. The Apostle Paul says “Jerusalem above...is the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:26) a personification of Jerusalem, a place. The spirit of the Almighty is not a person but a **gift**, the mind and power of the Almighty working in and through us (2 Timothy 1:7).

### **Here is something to think upon, seriously:**

The following was e-mailed to me from a close friend who stated, “*This one (an email) is interesting, because it talks about the Holy Spirit as being the power that God uses in communicating with us. I never thought of it in that way before. What are your thoughts about the Holy Spirit as being a Power and not a personality?*” This is worthy of serious consideration. Read each of the Scripture verses that are shown. Notice that this individual mentions the Apostles James, Peter, John and Paul.

■ “Adherents of the Trinity doctrine assert that the Holy Spirit is a personality alongside the Father and the Son. Yet, when the apostles — especially Paul — referred to the God Family in their epistles, why is mention of the Holy Spirit totally absent?

James 1:1, 2 Peter 1:2, 1 John 1:3, Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:3, 2 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, Colossians 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:2, 1 Timothy 1:1-2, Titus 1:4 and Philemon 1:3.

“Where is the Holy Spirit? Is James not a servant of the Holy Spirit (James 1:1)? Is he a servant only of God and of Jesus Christ? What about “knowledge of the Holy Spirit” in 2 Peter 1:2? Is there no “fellowship with the Holy Spirit” in 1 John 1:3? Why do the apostles ignore it?

“They include a greeting from the Father and the Son in each of these letters, but there is no greeting from the Holy Spirit. These Scriptures were inspired by God! Is it possible that this is evidence that there is no other personality? Little by little, it keeps adding up. We need to see this with our own eyes — the Holy Spirit is *ignored* every time the God Family is mentioned. Father and Son — yes. Holy Spirit — no.

“With a few variations in words, every apostle ignores the holy Spirit. Would it not be gross insubordination for them to recognize two in the highest offices in the universe and totally ignore the third? They did this because they did not know the Holy Spirit as a personality within the God Family, because *Jesus taught them no such thing*. The Holy Spirit is *the power* God uses to direct and carry out His purposes within His creation.” ■

In absolutely none of the manuscript evidence we have before the 4<sup>th</sup> century do they indicate that the “Holy Spirit” is a third person and/or personality of the Godhead: and there are over 50,000 early manuscript quotes available.

The historical record of how the trinity doctrine came to be is **open knowledge** to the world. The Christian church never completely accepted the idea of the trinity, and even after the early counsels most of the various congregations or assemblies of the Christian church did not embrace it until many centuries later! Even then, after the counsel of 381 AD, it was only accepted as a political concession to the Roman Emperor. Add these facts to its absence in the Scripture, and it is no wonder that so many today reject the doctrine. Even the Roman Catholic Church who had dogmatically promoted the doctrine for centuries are now, in their *Catholic Encyclopedia and Catholic Dictionary*, admitting that the “Holy Spirit” is simply the power and means that the Almighty uses to fulfill His will. And multiple millions in various denominations, increasingly today, do likewise.

Would you “put on” the spirit of **humility** as you put on the spirit of Christ? What about the spirit of the **world**, can one put that on too? How about putting on the spirit of **bondage and adoption, truth, grace, holiness, meekness, faith, promise, slumber, error, prophecy, fear, power, love, sound mind, wisdom and revelation, infirmity, divination**, or (shudder!) **antichrist**? Which ones are from the spirit of Deity? Do any of these “spirits” *also* come from Deity, or do *some* come from Satan? What about the “spirit of man”? Think about this: How many spirits are there? What does the word “spirit” really mean to you?

### **Spirit of:**

**God** — Matt. 3:16, 12:28; Rom. 8:11, 8:14; 1 Cor. 2:12, 2:14, 3:16, 6:11, 7:40, 12:3; 2 Cor. 3:3; Eph. 4:30; 1 Pet. 4:14; 1 John 4:2

**The Lord** — Luke 4:18; Acts 5:9, 8:39; 2 Cor. 3:17, 3:18; 2 Thess. 2:8

**The Father** — Matt. 10:20      **Jesus Christ** — Phil. 1:19; 1 Pet. 1:11

**Truth** — John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13; 1 John 4:6      **The Son** — Gal. 4:6

**The devil** — Luke 4:33      **Antichrist** — 1 John 4:3      **Divination** — Acts 16:16

**Infirmity** — Luke 13:11      **World** — 1 Cor. 2:12      **Bondage & Adoption** — Rom. 8:15

**Man** — 1 Cor. 2:11      **Slumber** — Rom. 11:8      **Error** — 1 John 4:6      **Grace** — Heb. 10:29

**Holiness** — Rom. 1:14      **Meekness** — 1 Cor. 4:21; Gal. 6:1      **Faith** — 2 Cor. 4:13

**Promise** — Eph. 1:13      **Glory** — 1 Pet. 4:14      **Life** — Rev. 11:11; Rom. 8:2

**Prophecy — Rev. 19:10 Wisdom & Revelation — Eph. 1:17**

**Fear, Power, Love, Sound Mind — 2 Tim. 1:7**

The other occurrences of the use of “spirit” in the New Testament are all in the “neuter” sense — i.e., neither feminine nor masculine, nor are they connected with any particular word as the above list mentions. Also note that in 89 instances of the word “spirit” the word “holy” prefaces it: “holy Spirit.”

**NOTE: Isaiah 61:1-2**

’The **spirit of the Lord**<sup>1</sup> is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
to proclaim the year of the **Lord’s**<sup>2</sup> favor.’

1. The word “Lord” here is the Hebrew word “**Adonay**” — an emphatic name used only of the Supreme Being.
2. The word “Lord” here is the Hebrew word “**YHWH**” — Yahweh: the self-existent or eternal Supreme Being; the Father of Jesus the Christ, the Son of Yahweh (See Part Six for an explanation).

**Section Five**

**A Look at Greek terms used in various places in the Bible.**

This is the section in which we will have to be more technical. To do so we will have to give you definitions of some of the Greek terms we will use. These definitions will be from the rules given in “**Elementary Greek Lessons**” (a PDF file) which we will make available to anyone who would like to get a basic understanding of the Koine Greek Language. I recommend that those of you who want to check up on our “translations” being correct to get that file, and I will send to anyone who wants one. Our e-mail address is [ken@kenfortier.com](mailto:ken@kenfortier.com) — just request it in an e-mail to us.

**Definitions of the Greek Language:**

**Second Declension Nouns**

“**Declension**”: All that one needs to do to decline a noun in Greek, is to add certain endings to the stem; such as (singular nouns) **ος**, (plural nouns) **οι**, both in the “**nominative (normal) case**” – For example, the stem of **ἄνθρωπος** is **ἄνθρωπ** (man) to which are added the endings of the second declension as just given. Now, if **ἄνθρωπ** is

in the “**genitive case**,” we would add the ending **ου**, making it a singular noun, or a **ων**, making it a plural noun. Next, if **ἄνθρωπ** is in the **Locative, instrumental or dative case**, then adding a **ῳ** would make it a singular noun, while adding **οις** would make it plural. Notice that the Locative, Instrumental and Dative cases are all the same in form. The correct translation can only be gained by means of the context, although these cases are both singular and plural. One more appears: the **accusative case**, to which adding an **ον** to the stem **ἄνθρωπ** makes it a singular, and adding **ους** makes it a plural.

The above explanation shows how one declines a Second Declension Noun; and a First Declension Noun is done the same way, although the endings are a little different.

1) The **Nominative case** (or ending) is the case that the subject of the sentence is found in. (Singular or Plural; Masculine, Feminine or Neuter)

2) The **Genitive case** is the case used to describe ownership of something. For example, **οἴκου ἀνθρώπου** means “*the man's house*” or “*the house of the man*”. [Another example is found in the phrase “the spirit of God” – **το πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ**: **το** is in the *masculine nominative neuter case* as is **πνεῦμα**; **τοῦ** is a **definite article** in the *masculine genitive case* – the definite article is declined the same as nouns, pronouns, adjectives and verbs, and is normally translated into our English language as the word “the.” **θεοῦ** is in the *singular masculine genitive case* and is translated as “God” most of the time: The correct meaning of this phrase in our modern American English is “God’s spirit;” in other words, the spirit is possessed by God!]

3) The **Locative case** indicates where something is located. “**οἴκῳ** “ means “in a house.”

4) The **Instrumental case** indicates the means by which something is. “**οἴκῳ** “ means “by means of a house.”

5) The **Dative case** indicates the direction of something. “**οἴκῳ** “ means “to a house.”

6) The **Accusative case** shows limits. "**οἶκον**" means "the house" (only).

7) The **Vocative** (which occurs only in the singular) is the case of address. “**ἄνθρωπε**” means “man!”

Let me bring up one 2<sup>nd</sup> declension noun, the Greek term meaning Apostle - **ἀποστολος**. Notice that the ending is **ος**, which makes in a **nominative masculine singular case**. Here is an example sentence containing this term. First the Greek sentence:

ἔβλεψα **τοῦ** ἀποστολοῦ λεγοντα ταυτα  
 “I saw the apostle while he was saying these things”.

Notice the **ου** on both the definite article and the term “apostle.” From what is already given you from Elementary Greek Lessons, you should be able to identify “the apostle” as being in the **genitive case** and as a **singular masculine term**. In this sentence you should understand that it was the Apostle “saying these things” – whatever they were, they belonged to the Apostle! That is the meaning of the **ου** ending on those two words. **Cases must match** – A Greek Language rule of translating!

## 1st Declension Nouns

First declension nouns are declined the same way as second declension nouns, however, the endings are different. We will only show one example of this to shorten this lesson.

So, let's look at the Greek term for "truth" – ἀληθεια. The stem of this noun is ἀληθει, to which the ending must be added to show its cases. Adding an "α" onto the stem tells us that it is in the *nominative feminine singular case*. If one was to add an "αι" to the stem, one would make it a *nominative feminine plural case*. But, what if one to add an "ας" to the stem, one would make it a *singular feminine genitive case*, and if one adds an "ων" to the stem, one would make it a *plural feminine genitive case*. Are you beginning to see the reason for the variant endings added to the stem/root of a word in the Greek language? If the stem had a ας (as) ending, the word would be a "masculine" term. (It's actually that simple to understand!)

Let's look at the phrase, "**the spirit of Truth**" that occurs in the NT Scriptures. Here is the phrase in Greek from 1 John 4:6 – "τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας." Notice the τὸ and the word πνεῦμα, they are both in the **singular nominative neuter case, an "it", to speak truthfully**. The definite article τῆς is in the *genitive feminine case* and the word for "Truth" (ἀληθείας) is in the *singular genitive feminine case*. Thusly one could translate this phrase as "the Truth's spirit;" and be correct, for it tells us that "Truth" is the ownership of the spirit – in other words, it (the spirit) belongs to "the Truth!" (Notice that the Definite Article in the *feminine case* matches the *feminine case* of Truth; that is the rule of the Koine Greek language – listed just 3 paragraphs down this page.)

One other thing about the above paragraph: "the spirit of Truth" only appears 4 times in the New Testament Scriptures; John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13 and 1 John 4:6. It is only the Apostle John that uses that particular phrase, and the Greek spelling is the same in all 4 occurrences.

**Note: And we stress this: translators and scholars chose to use our English term "of" to represent the genitive case found throughout the Bible. But, of course, our modern American English adds the "s" to nouns when the genitive case is used in the Greek. This you should be made aware of! This means that the "s" signifies the object as belonging to the noun. An example: "Bob's car" means that it belongs to him and no one else.**

**Nouns, pronouns, adjectives and verbs have gender, number (singular or plural) and case. When these are used in Greek they will agree (match) the noun in gender, case, and number.**

**Now let's look at a specific verse, one that concerns the "definite article":**

It is interesting that the first mention of the "spirit" spoken by Jesus occurs in Matthew 10:20. In this verse Jesus is talking about the 12 Apostles whom he chose in Matthew 10:1. Let's look at these two verses.

**Matthew 10:1** (NIV) – "He (Jesus) called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to cure every kind of disease and sickness."

(Verse 2 lists the names of the twelve disciples now called “apostles.”)

**Mt. 10:20 (KJV):** “For it is not ye that speak, **but the Spirit of your Father** which speaks in you.”

**Literal Greek:**

οὐ γὰρ ὑμεῖς ἐστε οἱ λαλοῦντες ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τὸ λαλοῦν ἐν ὑμῖν.

Comment, **the unlined part:** “for (but) not you (plural) are the-ones (plural) speaking”. The KJV has the translation correctly stated – it refers back to verse 19 for clarification.

Now to the **bold underlined** part: “but **the** spirit **of-the** father **of-you**” – a literal word for word translation. Notice the following words in the bold underline part; 1) “the”, 2) “of-the” and 3) “of-you” (which is plural and refers back to the unlined part). We now look at the Greek to see the *Case*, which show that all three terms are in the *Neuter Gender*; but the second and third are in the *Neuter Genitive Case* **which means ownership of the object referenced, i.e., In Modern English it says:** “but your Father’s spirit,”

Now to finish with the plain **underlined** Greek: “the-one speaking in you.” “The-one” (*Nominative Neuter*) references the “spirit of the Father” as “the-one” speaking in “you” (plural). **In Modern English:** “the Father’s spirit is the one speaking in all of you.”

Let’s put Matthew 10:20 into our Modern American English: “...*but it is not any of you that are speaking, but your Father’s spirit is the one speaking in all of you.*”

While **Matthew 10:20** specifically refers to Jesus’ twelve Apostles, it does not mean that anyone today has that same thing happen when they go out speaking the Gospel message. I, personally, do not believe that God’s spirit is going to be speaking through us other than what we may say in talking to others about what God has revealed in the Scriptures.

**Let’s examine some more verses:**

**Matthew 12:18** (This is a quote from **Isaiah 42:1-4** which is a “thus saith the LORD” – see **Isa. 41:13.**) “*Behold, the servant of me (μου) whom I chose, the beloved of me (μου) [with] whom was well pleased of me (μου); I will put the spirit of me (μου) on him, and judgment to the nation he will announce.*” [Note: μου can be translated “my” as many translators have done. This verse does not make the “spirit” a third person of a Trinity; it is the Father’s own spirit; and is talking about Jesus.] Greek pronouns are declined the same as nouns, as we have already mentioned.

Let’s quote Matthew 12:18 **in Modern American English:** “*Behold, my servant whom I chose, the one I loved and whom my being was well pleased; I will put my spirit on him, and to the nations he will announce judgment.*”

**Matthew 12:28**, this is Jesus speaking. – “*But if in the spirit of God I expel the demons, then comes upon you the kingdom of God.*” **Note:** *theos* (θεος/*theos*) means God/Deity, and *θεοῦ* means “of God/Deity” and “kingdom of God” is *θεοῦ* also. “οὐ” means it is in the **Masculine Singular Genitive case** used to describe ownership of something; in this

case it means that God (**theou**) is the one who possesses the spirit (pneuma), in other words, the spirit is God's spirit; just as your spirit is your spirit. (Words have meanings – see my next comment).

Comment: **Mt. 12:28** tells us that the “spirit *of* the Father” (the Father's spirit) was the power that Jesus used to expel the demons, and was proof that the kingdom *of* God (God's Kingdom) was active among the Jews. Jesus is the Head of His Kingdom. In **Mt. 12:28** θεοῦ means “**of** Deity/God”, the tittle ( ` ) above the **u** accents the owner and means “of”, a possessive term (belonging to): the spirit is a possession of God; and He **put it** in Jesus. It is God's own spirit in Jesus. We have already mentioned this *genitive case* previously.

Let's quote Matthew 12:28 in **Modern American English**: “*But if in God's spirit I expel demons, then upon all of you comes God's Kingdom.*” (Jesus, speaking to the Jews.)

Let's look at the first mention of “spirit” in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Septuagint, i.e., the LXX).

**Genesis 1:2 — Literal translation** — “But the earth (ground) was unseen and unready, and darkness was upon the depth, and **spirit (of) God** looked upon the water.”

**Notice that there is no “definite article” before the word “spirit.”** The Greek has this as πνεῦμα θεοῦ; which in our modern American English would be stated as “God's spirit.” Both “spirit” and “Deity's” are in the *genitive case*, which means that the spirit belongs to Deity, and not some other “person.” There is a rule in the Greek that applies here:

“Of particular importance in translating Greek is whether or not the definite article is used IMMEDIATELY before the adjective. Note the following sentences very carefully, paying particular attention to the placement of the article and the translation given:

ὁ λογος ἀγαθος = the word IS good  
ἀγαθος ὁ λογος = the word IS good

The adjective is “good” (ἀγαθος), and notice that the noun is “word” (λογος): so in this example the “the/ὁ” is placed before either word in both cases. In our case above, the “of” is used because the word “θεου” is in the genitive case; thusly, “Deity's spirit.” Also notice that in the example sentences that the word IS was added, even though it doesn't appear. That is the same case as in the “of” in the traditional phrase, “spirit of God.” I hope this doesn't confuse you, the reader!

**NOTE:** The English term “of” was chosen by the vast majority of Scholars and Translators to represent the Genitive Case of the Koine Greek Language. “**OF**” is a preposition “used as a function word to indicate belonging to or ownership.”

**More Greek Lesson material;** we will picture this part as the Lesson 10 shows.

### Third Person (he, she, it – himself, herself, itself)

Singular

	Masc.	Fem.	Neuter
Nom	αὐτός- he	αὕτη- she	αὐτό- it
Gen	αὐτοῦ- of him	αὐτῆς- of her	αὐτοῦ- of it
L.I.D.	αὐτῷ- to him	αὐτῇ- to her	αὐτῷ- to it
Acc.	αὐτόν- him	αὐτήν- her	αὐτό- it

Now we look at **Romans 8:16 and 26** which the KJV uses “itself” in translating the Greek term οὐτό into our English language. There are **only two** “interlinear” Greek/English Bibles I have found that have changed the Greek term οὐτό to read ουτος; which NONE of the old MSS and Codex’s agree that I’m aware of! We find that the NIV, RNIV, NET, NKJV, NRSV, RSV, NASB, and many others translate οὐτό with our English term “himself”, which goes against all Greek Lesson Courses concerning this Greek term. A Greek language scholar has this to say about this: *“Indeed, there are places in the NT where the author has intentionally (and against grammatical rules) changed the personal pronoun in a passage to masculine when referring to the Spirit (neuter), and apparently (according to many scholars) this was done intentionally to emphasis the personhood of this Spirit.”* (Al Maxey in a letter to us, and other scholars.)

**Rom. 8:16** — “The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit”

“**αὐτό** τὸ πνεῦμα συναρτυρεῖ τῷ πνεύματι”

The literal Greek reads this as:

“The spirit **itself** witnesses with our spirit” (“that we are God’s children.”)

**Rom. 8:26** — “ἀλλὰ **αὐτό** τὸ πνεῦμα” – “but the spirit itself...”

The literal Greek read this as:

“...but the spirit **itself** intercedes on our behalf with words unutterable;”

**Why would the Apostle Paul use this Greek term if he didn’t mean it?** Is it wrong to address the “spirit” as an “it”? If not, does anyone have a valid scriptural reason why?

Notice that the Greek terms “τὸ πνεῦμα” are both in the **Neuter case**. The “τὸ” is a *Neuter Definite Article* translated as “the” and “πνεῦμα” is a *Singular Nominative Neuter* noun translated simply as “spirit” wherever it is found in the Bible.

#### **Greek, John 14:16-17:**

καγὼ ἐρωτήσω τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἄλλον παρακλήτονα δώσει ὑμῖν, ἵνα μεθ’ ὑμῶν ἦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν, ὅτι οὐ θεωρεῖ **αὐτό** οὐδὲ γινώσκει **αὐτό**; ὑμεῖς γινώσκετε **αὐτό**, ὅτι παρ’ ὑμῖν μένει καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται.

**Literal translation:**

“And I will request the Father and another comforter he will give you, that he (the Father) may be with you unto the age, **the spirit of truth**, which the world cannot receive, because it does not see **it** nor knows **it**; you all know **it**, because with you all (it)remains and in you will be.”

Compare the **Third Person Singular** (neuter case) in Koine Greek shown on page 62.

### Another Greek Lesson:

**Lesson 10: Personal Pronouns** (in the future tense, “to be”)

αὐτός- he
αὕτη- she
αὐτόν- it

#### Greek, John 16:7

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τὴν ἀλήθειαν λέγω ὑμῖν, συμφέρει ὑμῖν ἵνα ἐγὼ ἀπέλθω. ἐὰν γὰρ μὴ ἀπέλθω, ὁ παράκλητος οὐκ ἐλεύσεται πρὸς; ἐὰν δὲ πορευθῶ, πέμψω αὐτόν πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

#### Literal translation:

“But I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I should go away. For **if** I go not away, the comforter by no means comes to you; but **if** I go I will send **it** to you.”

“Auton” (αὐτόν) is in the Neuter future tense – (**to be** sent or to come), and in this case the meaning is “**it**” – see the full context of the verse (“**it**” will not be sent or come **if** I don't go away).

As you can see **both the Apostle John and Paul use the term “it” or “itself” in reference to the Spirit in the verses we have examined.**

God's spirit moved them to write the way they did, and I'm sure they understood what they wrote: should we not believe them? Would it be wrong to refer to the spirit as an “**it**” as did these two Apostles? **I think not** for we rely upon what they actually said.

**CONSIDER THESE THINGS!** Words do have meanings, whether in Greek or in our English language. We have some more legitimate questions that remain unanswered: **1)** Why is it that all of the Greek Text Bibles We have looked at contain the **Genitive case** when the “spirit of God” (τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ θεοῦ) is used? **2)** Why is this construct in the Greek not really addressed and stressed when teaching the Greek language in our Bible Colleges and Seminaries? **3)** Why are those who know about this construct reluctant to expound upon it? **4)** The writers of Scripture are the source of this construct, so are we teaching the truth of God's word when we ignore what He says through the writers of the Bible?

**Now for the last Lesson of this section:**

## A STUDY FOR YOU TO DO CONCERNING THE FOLLOWING VERSES

You should be able by now to look up these verses and connect the two Greek terms in #1 and #2 below with the “object” and translate it into our Modern American English.

**1. τοῦ θεοῦ** – translated as “of God” by most translators. Word for word translation is **of-the of-Deity**. Both of these terms are in the Genitive case: [The **Genitive case** is the case used to describe ownership or possession of something] – the οὐ. The context of the verse shows the **object** that is “of” or is “possessed” by God. In our Modern English it means “God’s (object – whatever it is; spirit, kingdom, house, son, etc.)”.

**Matthew:** 3:16; 12:4, 28; 15:3, 6; 14:33; 16:17, 23; 19:24; 21:31, 43; 22:16, 21, 29, 37; 27:54.

**Mark:** 1:14, 15, 24; 3:11, 35; 4:11, 26, 30; 7:8, 9 13; 8:33; 9:1, 47; 10:14, 15 23, 24, 25; 12:14, 17, 24, 34; 14:8, 25; 15:34, 39, 43; 16:19.

**Luke:** 1:6, 8, 19, 26, 37, 78; 2:40; 3:2, 6, 38; 4:3, 9, 34, 41, 43; 5:1; 6:4, 12, 20; 7:28, 30; 8:1, 10, 11, 21, 28; 9:2, 11, 21, 27, 43, 62; 10:9, 11; 11:20(2), 28, 42, 49; 12:6, 8, 9; 13:18, 20, 28, 29; 14:15; 15:10; 16:15, 16, 20; 17:20(2); 18:16, 24, 25, 29; 20:21, 25, 36; 22:69; 23:35, 51; 24:19.

**John:** 1:6, 12, 13, 29, 36, 49, 51; 3:3, 5, 18, 36; 4:10; 5:25; 6:28, 29, 33, 45, 46, 69; 7:17, 40, 41, 47(3); 9:3, 16, 33; 10:35, 36; 11:4(2), 22, 27, 40, 52; 12:43; 13:3; 14:1; 16:27, 30; 19:7; 20:17, 31; 21:19.

**2. τὸν θεὸν** – translated as “of God” by most translators. Word for word translation is **the Deity (only)**. Both of these terms are in the Accusative case: [The **Accusative case** shows limits. "τὸν θεὸν" means "the God" (only)] – the οὐ. In our Modern American English it means “the (only) God” – the “object” referenced in the verse means it is limited to “the only God”.

**Matthew:** 5:8, 9; 9:8.

**Mark:** 2:12; 5:7(2); 12:30.

**Luke:** 1:16, 64; 2:20, 28; 4:8, 12; 7:16, 29; 10:27; 12:21; 13:13; 17:15, 18:2, 4, 17, 42; 19:37; 20:37(3); 23:40, 47; 24:53.

**John:** 1:1, 2, 18; 5:18; 10:33; 13:3; 16:2; 17:3.

[See the “declination” of Nouns and the Definitive Article; that is, the **Genitive** and the **Accusative** cases. See pages 58 and 59.] Note: There are many more examples that could be shown in the rest of the New Testament, and also in the Septuagint (Old Testament). We have given only verses concerning these terms that appears in the 4 Gospels.

## Part Six: The Family of God

### Section One: The “Logos” of Yahweh

הָרַךְ כְּאִמֹּה נִי־רָאָה הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר הָאֱלֹהִים אָלֵימִשׁ אָמַר אֶל־הַיָּמִים נִי־  
נִי אֲלֵיכֶם: הַשְׁלַח לְאֶהְיֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבָנָי תֵּאמַר  
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲלֵבְנֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים אֲמַר יָמֵי אֲלֵמִשׁ וְהָאֵלֶּה עֵן נִי־אָמַר  
יִקְוֹאֵה יִצְחָק אֵלֶּה יִאֲבָרְהָם אֵלֶּה יֵאָבְדִיכֶם הָאֵלֶּה יִהְיֶה  
רָדָר: יִלְדֵה זָכָר וְנָוִי לְעֹלָם זֶה־שֵׁמִם נִי אֲלֵיכֶם בַּשְׁלַח יֵעָקֵד

NOTE: The above is **Exodus 3:14-15** from the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures. It is read from right to left. The source is *The Westminster Leningrad Codex* of the Hebrew OT. (**We don't expect you to be able to read or understand the Hebrew Language** — it's just to show you what the translators had to work with in producing the Greek Septuagint Version around 285 BC, commonly called the LXX.)

Και εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωυσῆν ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν και εἶπεν,  
(14)And said the Theos to Moses, **I am the one being**. And he said,  
οὕτως ερεῖς τοῖς Ἰσραήλ, ὁ ὢν ἀπέσταλκέ με πρὸς  
thus **you shall say** to the sons of Israel, **the one being** has sent me to  
υμᾶς. και εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πάλιν πρὸς Μωυσῆν οὕτως ερεῖς  
you. (15)And said the Theos again to Moses, thus **you shall say**  
τοῖς Ἰσραήλ, **κύριος ὁ θεὸς** τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν, ὁ θεὸς  
to the sons of Israel, **Lord the Theos** of our fathers, **the Theos**  
Ἀβραάμ, και ὁ θεὸς Ἰσαάκ, και ὁ θεὸς Ἰακώβ ἀπέσταλκέ  
of Abraham, and the Theos of Isaac, and the Theos of Jacob sent  
με πρὸς υμᾶς; τούτό μου ἐστὶ τὸ ὄνομα αἰώνιον και μνημόσυνον  
me to you; this is my name *for the ages*, and a memorial  
γενεῶν γενεαῖς.  
for generations to generations.

NOTE: The above is **Exodus 3:14-15** from the Greek of the LXX version of the Hebrew OT. [The **BOLD** emphasis is mine.]

**An explanation for the above quotations:** This is for those who would like to check further with Translators or those with some background in the Hebrew and Greek languages of the Bible. (The accent marks on the Greek letters may not be totally correct because of the font used to show them.)

Look at the **BOLD** terms in the Greek and English quote above. Notice that it does not say “**I am who I am**” as is commonly stated by preachers and teachers in almost all the churches of Christianity. Our Savior and God is saying that directly to Moses, and then continues on to tell him what to say to the Sons of Israel captive in Egypt, saying “**Thus you shall say to the Sons of Israel, The one being has sent me to you,**” and then even goes further with what Moses is to say in verse 15. However, when you read further in Exodus of Moses speaking to the Israelites in Egypt, you will never find it recorded that he said that the name of our Savior and God is “**I am who I am**”! Keep this in mind, for there will be more to be revealed other than what you have read in this Treatise.

Another point we want to bring to your attention is that the term **κύριος**, translated in English as “Lord,” is actually the Hebrew name of the Almighty God, **YHWH**; a term that no one today really knows how to pronounce, although many spell it out as Yahweh. So, the above Greek and Hebrew could be translated as “Yahweh the Deity”, i.e., the Almighty God. Many incorrectly pronounce it as Jehovah — even though there is no “J” sound in the Greek and Hebrew languages. One should also be aware that the 70 Jewish Scholars who translated the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek version, because they did not want to put the name of the Almighty God — YHWH — into the Greek language, they substituted the Greek term **κύριος** wherever it was found.

We will now bring out what the Apostle John has to say about the **Almighty God and the Word (Logos)** concerning the Family of God. We now quote the Greek of John, Chapter One, verses 1-2 & 18; literally word for word. Note that the Greek word “**Theos**” and “**Theon**” means “**Deity**” and are usually translated with the English word “God.”

Εν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν, καὶ  
 1: In beginning was the Logos and the Logos was with **the Theon**, and  
 θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν.  
 2: **Theos was the Logos.** This one was in the beginning with **the Theon.**  
 θεὸς οὐδέις αὐτὸν ἑώρακεν πώποτε. μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν  
 18: Theos no man has seen never: **the only begotten Theos**, the one being  
 εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς, ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.  
**in the bosom** of the Father, **that one is declared.**

There are a few things to be pointed out in these quotes. In verses 1 and 2 notice that the **BOLD** print shows a word in the Greek that is not translated into English by the translators: the word “**τὸν = the**”, and also notice that verse 2 tells us that “Theos was the Logos” and verse 18 tells us that “the only begotten Theos” (the Logos or Word) **was** “in the bosom” of the Father (**The Theon**), and “**was** in the beginning with the Father,” and that is the one being declared (**spoken about!**). The Apostle John also tells us in verse 14 that “the Word (**Logos**) **became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the **only begotten of the Father**, full of grace and truth.” One other thing to be brought out is that in the Book of Revelations, 19:13, our Savior and God, Jesus the Christ, is called “**The Word (Logos) of God**” — **OF GOD THE FATHER!** (Theos means “Deity”). Also notice: ὁ ὢν in verse 18 above is the same as in Ex. 3:4 and is also translated “the one being” in 2 places in that verse.

So now we have both the FATHER and SON being together at the beginning of creation, and both of them called THEOS (God, actually “Deity”). Pay attention to the record as John delivered it to us: the Word was not “**the** God” and was actually “with **the** God.”

Have you ever considered the following verses in the Book of Genesis? NOTE: Genesis 1:26-27 (KJV) — “And God said, Let **us** make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness...” “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

**We call this to your attention:** everywhere you see the word “God” in the first chapter of Genesis it is actually the Hebrew word “Elohim,” a plural word that indicates “more than one.” Not only that, but the term “Elohim” is used in more than 2,000 places in the Old Testament. Is “God” more than one Being? John’s Gospel tells us that the “Word” was **with the Deity** (God), and that the Word **was himself Deity** (God), and that the Word “**was in the beginning with the Deity**” (God); that “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:3). If you are “with” someone, you sure aren’t that “someone”! John definitely describes two separate “Beings” before Creation — called Father and Son, which are both Deity!

Hebrews 1:3a (NIV) — “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and **the exact representation** of his (God’s) being, sustaining all things by his powerful word” (“word” here is the Greek ῥῆματι, not λογος/logos).

This last verse tells us that the Son — the Logos/Word — is the exact representation of the Father’s nature (being). The Greek for “word” here has the meaning of a **spoken command**, not the Logos. Let’s see what is further said by the Father.

Hebrews 1:8-12 (NIV) — Read the whole chapter in context!

“But about the Son he says,

‘Your throne, **O God**, will last for ever and ever,  
and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.  
You have loved righteousness and hate wickedness;  
therefore **God, your God**, has set you above your companions  
by anointing you with the oil of joy.’

“He also says,

‘In the beginning, **O Lord**, you laid the foundation of  
the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.  
They will perish, but you remain;  
they will wear out like a garment.  
You will roll them up like a robe;  
like a garment they will be changed.  
But you remain the same,  
and your years will never end.’”

From the above verses you can see that **THE DEITY, the Father, calls the Son Deity. The Father, THE DEITY, also said He is the Son's DEITY.** This should direct you to another verse of Scripture spoken by Jesus to the Pharisees; let's look at it next.

Matthew 22:41-45 (NIV) — “While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?’ ‘The son of David,’ they replied. He said to them, ‘How is it then that David, speaking by the spirit, calls him Lord? For he says, **The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet. If then David calls him Lord, how can he be his son?**’ No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.”

Matthew's recording of this goes right along with the message in the Book of Hebrews, and also with everything said up to now in this article. How would you answer the question Jesus asked the Pharisees? Could you really answer Jesus' question?

As we have shown you by quoting John 1:1-2 & 18 on page 45, let's go to his First Epistle and reveal more that tells us of the Father and Son.

I John 1:1c-3 (NIV) — “...this we proclaim to you concerning the **Word (Logos) of life**, which was **with** the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the **Father and with his Son**, Jesus Christ.”

This proclamation from the Apostle John in his first epistle agrees wholeheartedly with what he said in his Gospel (John 1:1-2 & 18). The Word or Logos was with “The God (Deity)” before creation, as John's record reveals. Matthew's record, showing Jesus quoting Psalm 110:1, indicates that **the Son was with the Father**; and the Apostle Paul in Colossians 1:15-17 elaborates further to agree with John and Matthew's record: “**He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God (Deity/Father)**, the firstborn over all creation. **For by him all things were created:** things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; **all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**” (NIV)

We could go on and on about this, but let's just look at one other verse of Scripture to compound the witness of Matthew, John and Paul:

Hebrews 1:2 (NIV) — “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us **by his Son**, whom he appointed heir of all things, and **through whom he made the universe.**”

The KJV translates the term “**αἰῶνας**/anionas” as “worlds” versus the NIV as “universe.” That word literally means “ages” – without saying how many or how long each age was. We will have to wait until the end (after the resurrection) to find out (if we are still interested at that point).

**Thus, as you have just read, the Word was present with the Father before anything was created; and what was created was created by the Word. It's just that plain and simple, and exactly what the Scriptures actually reveal to us!**

To give a little background on the thoughts of the early Church up to the point of the argument that led to the controversy initiating the Nicene Council in 325 AD, and culminating in the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD, we now bring up a witness from that time period.

341 AD: **Wulfila (Ulfilas)** was ordained Bishop of the Goths by Eusebius of Nicomedia, the Bishop of Constantinople. Wulfila was born in 311 AD among the Goths north of the Danube River, the son of a Christian who was taken there as a captive from Cappadocia. **Wulfila was not an “Arian”**. According to his disciple, Auxentius, **he maintained that both sides of the Arian controversy were heretical**. “His devoted and virtuous life generated such confidence in his wisdom and integrity that many of the Goths accepted Christianity.” [Auxentius on Wulfila]

**381 AD: Bishop Wulfila** was summoned to the Council of Constantinople, but when he saw what was happening there, he became ill and died. He was 70 years old. The so-called “Arian” Christianity he had planted among the Goths continued to spread, and other peoples received their Christianity from the Goths. Within two generations, the barbarian Goths, Vandals and Lombards were Christians, and the new kingdoms they established in the Balkans, Gaul, Spain, Italy, and Africa were officially Christian nations. What these nations believed may be seen from the testamentary creed that Wulfila left with his followers just before he died:

**Creed of Wulfila:** “I, Wulfila, Bishop and Confessor, **have always believed thus** and in this sole and true faith I make my journey to my Lord. I believe that there is **only one God the Father**, alone unbegotten and invisible, and in **His only-begotten Son, our Lord and God**, creator and maker of all things, not having any like unto Him. Therefore **there is one God of all, who is also God of our God**. And I believe in **one holy spirit, an enlightening and sanctifying power**. As Christ says after the resurrection to his Apostles: ‘Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be clothed with power from on high.’ (Luke 24.49) And again: ‘And ye shall receive power coming upon you by the holy spirit.’ (Acts 1.8) Neither God nor Lord, but the faithful minister of Christ; not equal, but subject and obedient in all things to the Son. And I believe the Son to be subject and obedient in all things to God the Father.” (From: Auxentius on Wulfila; The surviving part of a letter written by Bishop Auxentius of Durostorum in Bulgaria, a disciple of Wulfila, shortly after Wulfila died in 381; discovered in 1840; translation by Jim Marchand; Internet Medieval Source Book.) [Bold Emphasis mine, KF]

This independent creed shows that precedence and substance were diversionary issues, Debaters’ tactics, and the real issue was whether Jesus is subordinate and obedient to God. The “Arian Controversy” was over the final step in the deification of Jesus. The

“Arians” believed it was blasphemy to make a man equal to God. The “Nicenes” believed it was impious to say the Son is inferior to the Father. (Comment by Swett.)

The above excerpts are taken from “*The State Church of the Roman Empire: a Summary Chronology*,” an article researched and authored by Ben H. Swett, 7 May 1998. This article by Swett is very much in conformity with the research we conducted back in the early 1980’s.

We have put **BOLD emphasis** on parts of Wulfila’s creed to call your attention to what was believed by the majority of Western and many in Eastern Christianity before the Nicene Council and for a few centuries later. (There are still a great number today that believe as Wulfila did.) Notice his confession that **there is only one God of all, who is also God of our God**. He was sickened by the controversy he witnessed going on in Christianity. The reason why he was **not** an “Arian” (named after a sect of Christian beliefs held by a priest named Arius, the pastor of Baucalis Church in Alexandria) was because he didn’t accept the argument of Arius nor the **one God** incarnate being put forth by Athanasius in this controversy. Athanasius said that Jesus was the ‘Artificer’ who created all things in heaven and earth, the ‘re-creator’ of human beings, and that while he was operating his human body; he was also operating and sustaining the rest of the universe as the Supreme Being (Athanasius; Christian Classics Ethereal Library).

Like Wulfila, we also reject the “theories” of Arius and Athanasius. We think what is called “The Arian Controversy” was a title later “Trinitarian adherents” put on the controversy as that is a title “winners” would put on the “looser.” This seemingly is what all “winners” do of controversies as history shows us; and they don’t want to normally give us the “the other side of the story.” The whole controversy should realistically be called “The Arius/Athanasian Controversy” for those were the individuals who started it!

## **Section Two: the expansion of the Family of God**

As we have just show in Section One, God’s family is comprised of a Father and Son; and because of the incarnation of the Son into the created “human” family, God’s family is to grow exponentially!

It is somewhat amazing that God himself said to the Israelites that they “**are gods; and all of you are children of the most High**.” (See Psalms 82:6) Even Jesus referenced this from the Old Testament when the Jews accused him of blasphemy because he claimed to be the Son of God, making himself God (see John 10:22-33). Look at his response!

John 10:34-36 — Jesus answered them: “Is it not written in your Law, ‘**I have said you are gods**’? If he called them ‘**gods**’, to whom the word of God came — and the Scripture cannot be broken — what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘**I am God’s Son**’?”

Yes, true followers of Jesus, the Son of God, are also called “sons of God”! We would like you to understand that in Psalm 82 the term “gods” is the Hebrew term “Elohim,” a

plural term, which was called to your attention page 67; and the term “you” found there is **also** a plural, meaning **more than one**: go ahead, check it out! It’s not that hard!

When one reads certain verses (in context) in the New Testament one will find many references to true followers of Jesus being called “sons” of God, both while living here on earth (as a promise), and after Resurrection Day. Let’s look at them next!

John 1:12 tells us that all who believe in Jesus’ name God gives believers **the right to become children of God**, that is, to all who are born from above by God — the “**new birth**” or in a “**newness of life**” as the Apostle Paul tells in Romans 6:4 – (Read in context). Paul also, as in Romans 6, and bringing what he said there, connecting it with what he says in Galatians 3:26-29 by saying: “You are all **sons of God** through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were united with Christ in baptism have been clothed with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (NIV — read Gal. 3:15 thru 4:1-7 in context).

Romans 8:14-15 (Greek literal translation) — “For as many as are led by the spirit of God, these are **sons of God**. For you received not a spirit of slavery for fear again, but you received a **spirit of adoption** by which we cry: ‘Abba’, Father.”

In Romans chapter 8 the Apostle Paul connects the words “**sons of God**” with “**the spirit of adoption**” which makes us “**children of God**”; and because we are children of God through adoption, we are then “**heirs of God**” and “**co-heirs with the Son of God**,” our Lord and savior, the Christ Jesus! What an exciting thing to know! What a thing to look forward to — waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies, the expectation for the sons of God to be revealed at the last day!

John 20:17 has Jesus telling his followers that the Almighty, invisible Supreme Being of the universe is his God and our God by saying that “**I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.**” What a revelation from Jesus — we too, will follow Him to God when He returns for us on Resurrection Day!

These are not the only places that speak of true believers in Christ with the words “**adoption**” (Eph. 1:5), “**sons of God**” (Philippians 2:15), “**heirs**” (I Peter 3:7; James 2:5), and other places with Abraham’s faith which makes believers in Jesus **children of God**.

Hebrews, Chapter Two, especially verses 10-13, are very much in agreement with all of the verses mentioned in this section. Read the whole chapter after we call attention to verses 10-13 which reflect perfectly with what we are trying to get across to you.

Hebrews 2:10-13 (NIV) — “In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the Pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering. **Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.**

He says:

‘I will declare your name to my brothers;  
in the congregation I will sing your praises.’

And again,

‘I will put my trust in him.’

And again,

‘Here I am, and the children God has given me.’”

Yes, God’s family is expanding, and will until Jesus returns on Resurrection Day. As the Apostle John says, “Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:2 — NIV) **We can’t wait, can you?**

### **Section Three: our last words**

As we have tried to inoculate you, the reader, to what the Scriptures have revealed about the Christ or Messiah in Part One of this Treatise, you should realize that most people in various churches of Christianity do not actually know what or who Jesus truly was and is. We have pointed out that he, the Word (Logos) was fully incarnated into the human race as Jesus. We have pointed out “What is said about Jesus,” and “what the Apostle John records what Jesus said.”

We have also pointed out what Tertullian, around 216 AD, had to say about the **majority beliefs of his time** — that they did **NOT** believe in the “three in one” theory that he was propagating, although at that time he never taught anything about the “holy Spirit” being a part of the “Trinity”: some taught that there were “two persons” and some taught that there were “three person” that the One God presented Himself as — that the Supreme Being Himself was “incarnated” as Jesus of Nazareth. The Scriptures, both the Old Testament and the New Testament, just do not teach that at all! In Part Three of this article we have presented many authorities who plainly and blatantly point out that the idea of a “Trinity” is not found anywhere in the whole of the Bible, **period!**

Part Two got right to the heart of the issue of the “Trinity” showing that the Supreme Being, “Yahweh”, is not a divided “God” into “three separate persons” — a God that acts the part of “Father,” “Son” and “Holy Spirit.” Part Three, as was pointed out in the previous paragraph, backs up Part Two exactly. In fact, Part Three shows how the “Trinity” is so confusing to explain, calling it **“an absolute mystery,” “beyond the comprehension of man,” “mysterious in its origin and its content,” “impossible for Christians actually to understand,” “unintelligible,” “incomprehensible mystery,” “misunderstood,” “presents strange paradoxes” and is “widely disputed.”** We did not need to elaborate any further, but we did anyway, for there are too many Christians who do not know the facts of history nor what the Bible actually says. There is too many who take a single verse or two and make it say whatever comes to their minds on it.

In Part Four we have given you a very compressed view of how this “Trinity” doctrine came about. History is very clear about what we say, and I know of no Authority who

would deny what we have said. (A much more detailed article researched and authored by Ben H. Swett, entitled, *State Church of the Roman Empire: A Summary Chronology*, follows this Treatise, and is used with his permission.)

Part Five expands on the “Holy Spirit” as presented in the New Testament; the Old Testament does not contain those exact words, but does contain the phrase “his holy spirit” — although in only 3 places as was pointed out. The “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit” is presented as the Bible speaks, not as man speaks. We could have expanded more on what the Bible says about the holy spirit, but as explained, you need to find out for yourself to be convinced in your mind – for you will stand alone before the Almighty Judge on the last day.

Part Six is what you are now reading. It is very pointed in that it presents the Biblical evidence that God is not a “Trinity”, nor is the Word (Logos) the Father, the Supreme Being — THE DEITY. Read it over again and again, checking it out with all the resources you can muster. We are not trying to pull the wool over your eyes, so to speak. We are very serious in what we presented to you in this Treatise, and hope you will study it as closely as you are able. Ask your “minister, teacher, preacher, priest, theologian, Bible College or Seminary Authorities and Translators of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures. If it is found that we are wrong, let us know and we will consider the evidence and do something about it — even to the changing of our minds. We can do no more than to conform to the truth, wherever it may lead us.

We leave you with the words of a wonderful hymn that expresses very well what the Family of God is all about. The hymn was written by the Gaithers.

I'm so glad I'm a part of the family of God;  
I've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood!  
Joint heirs with Jesus as we travel this sod,  
For I'm part of the family, the family of God.

You will notice we say “brother and sister” ‘round here;  
It's because we're a family and these folks are so near;  
When one has a heartache we all share the tears,  
And rejoice in each victory in this family so dear.

From the door of an orphanage to the house of the King;  
No longer an outcast, a new song I sing;  
From rags unto riches, from the weak to the strong,  
I'm not worthy to be here, but, praise God, I belong!

May the Almighty and Sovereign God be with you as you seek to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and our God, our Savior and King, the Christ Jesus!

.....

**Addendum to Part Six:** This is crucial information for a person to have concerning the evidence available for us to believe what the Bible tells us to believe.

Many will take exception to what is revealed in this addendum to the Trinity Treatise. To make it simpler to understand, one needs to realize that thanks to the work of Wescott and Hort, two Greek scholars and translators, we have been given a new Greek text of the Bible — a version that these two men produced in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (1882 AD) that undertook to make the Greek language conform to the English language instead of making our English language conform to what the Greek language had to say. (We say this sarcastically) **Let us give you some information concerning what they did to the Bible.**

We have to admit, as others have stated, that “Most scholars have generally dismissed the conclusions of Brooke Westcott and Fenton Hort, and both have virtually become straw men for the missiles of the extreme conservative position and King James Only voices. But Hort was, at least, right about one thing; textual criticism not being an exact science ‘... is entirely subjective’.” (Emphasis added.)

The following is from Dr. Donald Waite’s book *Defending the King James Bible*:

“Do you know how many changes they made? My own personal count, as of August 2, 1984, using Scrivener’s Greek New Testament referred to above, was 5,604 changes that Westcott and Hort made to the Textus Receptus in their own Greek New Testament text. Of these 5,604 alterations, I found 1,952 to be OMISSIONS (35%), 467 to be ADDITIONS (8%), and 3,185 to be CHANGES (57%). In these 5,604 places that were involved in these alterations, there were 4,366 more words included, making a total of 9,970 Greek words that were involved. This means that in a Greek Text of 647 pages (such as Scrivener’s text), this would average 15.4 words per page that were CHANGED from the Received Text. Pastor Jack Moorman counted 140,521 words in the Textus Receptus. These changes would amount to 7% of the words; and 45.9 pages of the Greek New Testament if placed together in one place.”

“Rev. Jack A. Moorman, in December 1988, wrote a book entitled: *‘Missing in Modern Bibles--Is The Full Story Being Told?’* It was published by *The Bible For Today* in April, 1989. Rev. Moorman counted every word of the Received Greek Text and also every word of the Nestle/Aland Greek Text and, on a chapter by chapter count, came up with the Nestle/Aland text being SHORTER than the Received Text by 2,886 words. This is 934 words more than were omitted from the Westcott and Hort text. (1,952 vs. 2,886). The omitting of 2,886 Greek words is the equivalent, in number of English words involved, of **DROPPING OUT THE ENTIRE BOOKS OF 1 PETER AND 2 PETER!** Pastor Moorman’s book is eighty large pages.” (B.F.T. #1726) *Bible for Today*, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108. (Emphasis added.)

**To give you an explicit example** of the blatant and bold corruption of the Majority Text made by Wescott and Hort in producing their Greek New Testament Bible around 1882 AD, we call to your attention the changes made the book of II Peter 3:8 and the

book of Revelation 20:2-7. This concerns the reference to the terms “chilioi etos” (χίλιοι ἔτος) which appears in each of those verses: two in Peter and 6 in Revelations.

II Peter 3:8 — “But this one thing let not be concealed from you, beloved, that one day with the Lord is as **chilioi years** and **chilioi years** as one day.”

The bold emphasized words above mean “thousands” — a plural term which means “more than one” and requires one to ask the question, “thousands **OF** what?” The answer is very obvious. The “what” is YEARS. So, one can truthfully say it means “**thousands of years**”! Thusly, we see Peter telling us “that one day with the Lord is as thousands of years and thousands of years as one day.” This exact same thing is noted in Revelation 20:2-7 — χίλιοι ἔτος, and means “thousands of years.”

However, Wescott and Hort have blatantly replaced χίλιοι (chilioi) in all 8 of these places with the Greek term χίλια (chilia), a singular term meaning “thousand” which does not by itself include the article “a” before it: and they translate it as “one thousand” in all 8 places mentioned above, even though the Greek term μία (mia), which means “one,” does not appear in any of the 5,000+ early Greek Manuscript quotes we have!

Wescott & Hort are the translators who are mainly responsible for the replacement of “chilia” in place of “chilioi” as far as we have noticed. Of all the Greek scholars we have mentioned this to, they all agree that “chilioi” is the correct term, but then bow down and accept the use of the term “chilia” in these verses — regardless of the evidence of the 5,000+ manuscripts we have with the writings of the early “Church Fathers”, including many Codex’s, i.e, Bibles.

Chilioi means “thousands” in the above verse from Peter’s letter and John’s book of Revelation; and to find out the number **of** “what” or “how many” it refers to, one has to look at the terms preceding or following the term, or the terms prefix. In the above quote we see that in the first occurrence of the term the word preceding it is “**as**,” and following it the word is “**years**,” also a plural. In the second occurrence of the term the word preceding it is “**and**,” and following it is the word “**years**,” again as a plural. Thusly, the term references an unknown number of “years,” — although it is a **plural**, thousands. And from the time Peter wrote his letter, almost two *thousands of years* have passed: “**a thousand**” or “**one thousand**” years is not in view according to the Greek language Peter and John used.

#### **We now look at Rev. 20:2-7:**

**Verse 2:** The terms “thousands years,” **do not have an article** before It — an “**a**” or a “**the**”, and likewise, does not have any terms that would signify the “number” of years it covers. **Verse 4** shows the same expression. However, **verses 3, 5, 6, and 7** do have a Definite *article* before the term chilioi — τῶν, which is translated with the word “**the**.” Thusly, the translation is expressed by “the thousands ‘*of*’ years.” To find out how many “thousands” are involved, we have to realize that none are given to us, with the exception that we have a plural term, which is readily admitted by all Greek scholars to indicate “more than one.” As for what the term refers to, we also know that it is “years,” another plural in the context it is used in, indicating “more than one.” As we have already brought out before, the word “chilioi” itself requires us to ask the question, “*of what or*

*how many does ‘thousands’ refer to?’* Seeing as how no numbers of years are literally indicated, we have to take the term “chilioi” at its plain meaning of “thousands.” Being a plural, it has to be “*more than one*,” and as we know for sure that almost two of these “thousands of years” have already passed since this passage was written by John, we know that it cannot be, nor should be, translated “a” or “one” thousand years. Reading it in the Greek one would almost automatically insert our English word “of” between these two terms, letting it say, “*thousands of years*,” which answers the question of “*how many*” years are involved — which actually remains unanswerable, for no number has been given to the term. All we really know is that the term indicates *more than one* thousand, and it is paired with the term *years*.

**But this is not all of the evidence we have as to the meaning of the term χιλιοὶ (chilioi)! The Greek term for “one” is “μία” (mia) and is not present in II Peter 3:8 or in Revelation 20:2-7 to justify the singular χιλιά (chilia) seen in the Wescott & Hort Greek Text!**

## **I Am who I Am**

This is one of the most famous verses in the Hebrew Bible. The King James version of the Bible translates the OT Hebrew as “I Am that I Am” and uses it as a name for God. The Aramaic Targum Onkelos leaves the phrase untranslated and is so quoted in the Talmud (B. B. 73a).

A better renderings might be “I will be what I will be” or “I will be who I will be”, or “I shall prove to be whatsoever I shall prove to be” or even “I will be because I will be”. In these renderings, the phrase becomes an open-ended gloss on God’s promise in Exodus 3:12. Other renderings include: Leeser, “I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE”; Rotherham, “I Will Become whatsoever I please.”

(ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ὢν), “I am the One Being” in the Septuagint, and Philo, and Revelation or, “I am The Existing One”. However, the Roman Catholic **Latin Vulgate Bible** has it as “*ego sum qui sum*,” “I am who I am,” and has become the theological expression for the name of the Supreme Being, and **it is the originator of that expression**.

Read John 8:24 in the NIV and KJV of the Bible to see how they have rendered the “I am” in the context of the whole chapter and other places in the Bible. Jesus’ statement pertains to the context of the whole chapter which does not mean “I am (who I am)”; rather, He was saying “I am” (who I claim to be – the Son of God).

## **The Tetragrammaton**

The name of God in Judaism used most often in the Hebrew Bible is the four-letter name יהוה (YHWH), also known as the Tetragrammaton. The Tetragrammaton appears 6,828 times in the *Biblia Hebraica* Stuttgartensia edition of the Hebrew Masoretic Text. It is first mentioned in the Genesis 2:4 and is traditionally translated as *The LORD* in English language bibles. The Hebrew letters are (right to left) Yodh, He, Waw and He (יהוה). It is written as YHWH, YHVH, or JHVH in English, depending on the transliteration

convention that is used: which is deceiving, for there is no “J” or “V” in the Greek language.

The Tetragrammaton was written in contrasting Paleo-Hebrew characters in some of the oldest surviving square Aramaic Hebrew texts, and were not read as *Adonai* (“My Lord”) until the Rabbinic teachings after Israel went into Babylonian captivity because Judaism forbids pronouncing the name outside the Temple in Jerusalem: the correct pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton may have been lost, as the original Hebrew texts only included consonants. The prohibition of blasphemy, for which capital punishment is prescribed in Jewish law, refers only to the Tetragrammaton.

Rabbinical Judaism teaches the four-letter name of God, YHWH, is forbidden to be uttered except by the High Priest in the Holy Temple on Yom Kippur. Throughout the service, the High Priest pronounced the name YHWH “just as it is written” in each blessing he made. When the people standing in the Temple courtyard heard the name they prostrated flat on the Temple floor. The name ceased to be pronounced in Second Temple Judaism by the 3rd century BC. Passages such as: “And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, YHWH [be] with you. And they answered him, YHWH bless thee.” (Ruth 2:4), indicates the name was still being pronounced at the time of the redaction of the Hebrew Bible in the 6th or 5th century BC.

The Jewish Encyclopedia tells us that the Tetragrammaton appears 6,823 times in the *Biblia Hebraica*.

The ASV of the Bible uses the name “Jehovah” in place of YHWH 6,886 times.

The KJV uses the word “Lord” in place of the Tetragrammaton 6,681 times.

The Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) uses “Adonai” (ָדוֹנָי) in place of YHWH 6,733 times and “Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh” 4 times.

## **A word about the “Capitalization” of the Holy Spirit**

In Professor Russell Boatman’s book on the Holy Spirit he brings up the subject of the capitalization of the terms “holy and spirit”: (Page 15) “*Note: the capitalizing of the letter “s”, in our familiar English versions is a translator’s choice. The Greek text does not do so.*” We agree with his note, for in all of the Greek MSS we have seen, the capitalization does not occur. So, what is the reason that so many translators and teachers capitalize the terms? Is it because they believe that the terms relate to a “person”? Admittedly, they would say yes, although Greek manuscripts don’t agree with that “yes”!

Personal names in Greek manuscripts are capitalized, as are place names. “Spirit” is never capitalized and neither are pronouns. The first word of a sentence is never capitalized unless it is a personal name or place. If one wants to see capital letters used in

the Greek, one has to look at “uncial” manuscripts, for all the letters of words are in capital letters. Minuscules are written in lower case letters with personal names and places capitalized, the word “spirit” is never capitalized, neither is the term “holy” – and they are the majority of manuscripts.

It’s now up to you to investigate what is said and come to **your own conclusion and your own beliefs!** You, yourself, are responsible for your own beliefs to the Judge of all!

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**NOTE:** The following Treatise by Ben Swett is a “Summary Chronology” of what caused changes in the beliefs of Christianity since it’s founding on the Hebrew day of Pentecost around 30 AD in Jerusalem. As he said, “If you want to copy all or parts of it, go ahead –you have my permission.” This we do. While what he said is basic, much more detail could be added to back up each of his statements. We thought of adding those details but decided to leave it just as it is.

We hope and pray that what Ben says is intriguing enough to encourage you to study the History of both religious and secular works of the time periods mentioned, and even what took place since then in the “evolution” of Christianity up to what it is in today’s world. You would be surprised, to say the least!

# State Church of the Roman Empire

A Summary Chronology

by

Ben H. Swett, 7 May 1998

“If the pagans of the first century were amazed by the love which Christians bore one another, those of later centuries could have been equally astonished at the loathing and intolerance the upholders of loving God and their fellowmen displayed towards their associates whose formulae for defining the indefinable differed from their own.”

(David Christie-Murray, *A History of Heresy*)

## PREFACE

For many years, I wondered what happened to Christianity between the Sermon on the Mount and the Spanish Inquisition. How did the teachings of Jesus become so completely reversed in Christian practice? For the first 300 years, Christianity spread without violence, permeating the world like yeast in bread, by preaching a better God and a Master worth following, and by demonstrating a better way to live both here and hereafter. Then, sometime between AD 300 and 400, everything changed. Suddenly, Christians were the persecutors, instead of the persecuted, and remained so until modern times.

I read everything I could find on this period, but my question was not answered. By searching the Internet, I found and bought a book entitled “The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: The Seven Ecumenical Councils” -- and wrestled with ancient theological doctrines until I could hardly see.

Then I remembered that theological doctrines serve political purposes, and went looking to see what the Roman Emperors did. Little by little, the picture of what happened to Christianity became clearer to me, but something was still missing, so I started building my own chronology and inserting into it everything I could find. This Treatise is the result of that process.

I could not find this material in any one place. I gathered it from many sources, stripped it of biased adjectives, preferential and prejudicial vocabulary, dogmatic propaganda and retroactive re-labeling, and compiled it in chronological order. Wherever I detected a change of policy or practice, I went searching for the cause of that change.

Now my question is answered. However, the picture that emerged from this study bears little resemblance to any conventional history of Christianity.

## PERSECUTION AND TOLERANCE

**303 Diocletian and Maximinus.** The Eastern Roman Emperor Diocletian issued four edicts, beginning in March 303, which severely persecuted Christians by ordering churches destroyed, books burned, priests jailed, and even household servants deprived of their liberty if they persisted in professing Christian belief. Christians were forbidden to assemble and were placed outside the law. Those who refused to sacrifice to the gods were imprisoned, tortured, and killed.

Contemporary accounts of this persecution illustrate how emperors' edicts were implemented downward through all levels of the government.

During the second year, the war against us increased greatly. It was commanded that all the people throughout the city should sacrifice and pour out libations to the idols. ... Maximinus issued edicts for the first time that all the people should offer sacrifice, and the rulers of the city should see to this diligently and zealously. Heralds went through the whole city of Caesaream by the orders of the governor, summoning men, women and children to the temples of the idols, and in addition the chiliarchs were calling upon each one by name from a roll.

The governors and military prefects incited — by edicts, letters, and public ordinances — the magistrates and generals, and the city clerks in all the cities, to fulfill the imperial edicts which commanded that the altars of the idols should be rebuilt with all zeal, and that all the men, together with the women and children, even infants at the breast, should offer sacrifice and pour out libations. And these urged them anxiously, carefully, to make sure that the people taste of the sacrifices; and that the viands in the market should be polluted by the libations of the sacrifices, and that watches should be stationed before the baths to defile with the all-abominable sacrifices all those who wash therein. [Medieval Source Book, Diocletian, De Mart]

Apparently this persecution was a large-scale effort. There were probably about six million Christians in the Empire (ten percent of the population), and there are contemporary indications that a significant percentage of them refused to comply with the Emperor's edicts. For example, while visiting Rome, Diocletian ordered that all the jailed Christians be forced to sacrifice to the Roman gods, because the jails were so full there was no room for criminals. [Stark] [Eusebius, viii, 2 - 6]

**305 Four-man rule.** Diocletian and Maximian divided the empire into four regions called prefectures. The Western Empire was divided between Constantius in Gaul (France, Germany, Britain and Spain) and Maxentius in Italy and North Africa. The Eastern Empire was divided between Flavius Severus in Illyricum (Greece and the Balkan countries) and Galerius in Asia (Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Egypt). Then Maximian and Diocletian resigned in hope that this four-man system of government would work. It didn't. The result was civil war.

**306** Constantius died, and his son Constantine was proclaimed Emperor of the West by his troops even though Maxentius was still the Caesar of Italy and Africa.

**307** Flavius Severus died, and Licinius became Caesar of Illyricum.

**311 Edict of Toleration.** Galerius issued an edict shortly before his death in which he explained the persecution and then granted tolerance to the Christian religion. He believed his fatal illness was the vengeance of the Christian God:

“Among other arrangements which we are always accustomed to make for the prosperity and welfare of the republic, we had desired formerly to bring all things into harmony with the ancient laws and public order of the Romans, and to provide that even the Christians who had left the religion of their fathers should come back to reason; since, indeed, the Christians themselves, for some reason, had followed such a caprice and had fallen into such a folly that they would not obey the institutes of antiquity, which perchance their own ancestors had first established; but at their own will and pleasure, they would thus make laws unto themselves which they should observe and would collect various peoples in diverse places in congregations.”

“Finally when our law had been promulgated to the effect that they should conform to the institutes of antiquity, many were subdued by the fear of danger, many even suffered death. And yet since most of them persevered in their determination, and we saw that they neither paid the reverence and awe due to the gods nor worshipped the god of the Christians, in view of our most mild clemency and the constant habit by which we are accustomed to grant indulgence to all, we thought that we ought to grant our most prompt indulgence also to these, so that they may again be Christians and may hold their conventicles, provided they do nothing contrary to good order.” [Internet Medieval Source Book]

Galerius was succeeded by Maximin, but Licinius soon added Asia to Illyricum and became Emperor of the East.

**312 The Conversion of Constantine.** While on his way to Rome with his army to battle Maxentius for control of the western empire, Constantine saw a cross in the sky over the sun, with the message, “In This Conquer.” He ordered his soldiers to mark on their shields the first two letters of the Greek word for Christ (chi, rho) and put a cross-bar on their flag staffs to make them resemble Christian crosses. He was victorious in battle at the Milvian Bridge over the Tiber River (28 October) and considered his victory confirmation of his decision to endorse Christianity.

**313 The Edict of Milan.** In January 313 the emperors Constantine and Licinius met and agreed on a policy of tolerance of religious diversity throughout the empire. Apparently there is no extant copy of the edict itself; the following are extracts from a prescript (implementing instruction) sent to provincial governors.

“No one whatsoever should be denied the opportunity to give his heart to the observance of the Christian religion, or that religion which he should think best for himself ... for the sake of the peace of our times, that each one may have the free opportunity to worship as he pleases, this regulation is made so that we may not seem to detract from any dignity of any religion.”

“In the case of the Christians especially, those places where they were previously accustomed to assemble ... shall be restored to the Christians without payment or any claim of recompense and without any kind of fraud or deception... those who have purchased and those who have secured them by gift are to appeal to the vicar if they seek any recompense from our bounty, that they may be cared for through our clemency. All this property ought to be delivered at once to the community of the Christians through your intercession, and without delay. And since these Christians are known to have possessed not only those places in which they were accustomed to assemble, but also other property... belonging to them as a corporation and not as individuals, all these things... you will order to be restored, without any hesitation or controversy at all ...”

“In all these circumstances, you ought to tender your most efficacious intervention to the community of the Christians, that our command may be carried into effect as quickly as possible... In order that the statement of this decree of our good will may come to the notice of all, this prescript, published by your decree, shall be announced everywhere and brought to the knowledge of all, so that the decree of this, our benevolence, cannot be concealed.” [Internet Medieval Source Book]

Suddenly — overnight — Christianity became one of the state-supported religions. The effect of this change on the clergy can hardly be overstated. During the previous ten years, ordination could be a one-way ticket to meet wild animals in the arena; now it was suddenly the door to a safe, secure, lifetime position, paid for by the state, exempt from taxes, military service and all other public duties.

Predictably, so many men entered the Christian priesthood so rapidly that city officials complained to the emperor, saying they couldn't find enough men to fill their required offices. Constantine issued an order prohibiting men from entering the priesthood who were eligible for civic duties, thus barring the equestrian class and leaving the priesthood open to the lower classes of Roman society. However, as later events show, this restriction was often ignored and not enforced.

Although the Edict of Milan made it clear that all religions should be respected, the strongest provisions dramatically upgraded the social status of Christians. Among other effects of this policy, Christians were allowed to designate churches and clergy as beneficiaries in their wills. Thus churches began to accumulate the wealth of one generation after another.

**314 Persecution by Licinius.** “Mutual enmity between Constantine and Licinius reached the point of war. Constantine defeated Licinius, forcing him to surrender all of Roman Europe except Thrace (the part of Turkey in Europe, and eastern Greece south of Bulgaria). Licinius revenged himself on Constantine's Christian supporters by renewing

the persecution in Asia. He excluded Christians from his palace, required every soldier to worship the pagan gods, forbade simultaneous attendance of both sexes at Christian worship, and finally prohibited all Christian services within city walls. Disobedient Christians lost their positions, their citizenship, their property, their liberty, and their lives.” [Durant, Vol. III]

## THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY

Arian — 1. a set of Christian beliefs held by a priest named Arius; 2. Those holding these beliefs whether influenced by Arius or not. [Not to be confused with Aryan.]

Aryan — 1. A hypothetical prehistoric language inferred from the commonalities of many languages in India and Europe; 2. The prehistoric people who supposedly spoke this language; 3. In Adolph Hitler’s National Socialist (Nazi) mythology, the “Nordic” super-race supposedly destined to rule the world.

From its origin onward, there have always been various forms of Christianity, each claiming their own beliefs were orthodox and differing beliefs were heresy. Thus, there never has been a truly universal church. However, a few Christians successfully imposed their beliefs on subsequent generations.

“**Alexander** became the Bishop of Alexandria, Egypt, in 312. Shortly thereafter, he stood by a window, watching a group of boys playing on the seashore below his house, and saw they were imitating the ritual of Christian baptism. He had the boys brought to him, and discovered that one of them, Athanasius, had acted the part of a bishop and baptized several of his companions. Alexander decided to recognize these make-believe baptisms as genuine, and said that Athanasius and his playfellows should go into training to fit themselves for a clerical career. Not long after this, Alexander invited Athanasius to be his secretary and share his meals.” [The Catholic Encyclopedia cites Rufinus, Hist. Eccl., I, xiv.]

**Athanasius** was brilliant and well educated. Before he was 20 years old, he wrote two treatises: “Against Pagans” and “The Incarnation” in which he argued that Jesus is God: “con-substantial and co-eternal with the Father ... as is the whole, so also is the part.” The Catholic Encyclopedia states that his two treatises “were admittedly written about 318 before Arianism as a movement had begun to be felt.”

In these two Treatises, Athanasius promoted Jesus past all the competition. He maintained that Jesus was not merely a man (because of his miracles); nor a prophet no matter how highly inspired. He was not a man who became a god, as Roman emperors were deified by vote of the Senate; nor a god who became a man, as Mithras was said to have done; nor a demigod like Hercules, the hybrid offspring of a god and a human mother; nor one of many gods, like Zeus; nor even the only-begotten, subordinate Son of the only God. None of these was sufficient. Athanasius said that Jesus was the “Artificer” who created all things in heaven and earth, the “re-creator” of human beings, and that while he was operating his human body, he was also operating and sustaining the rest of

the universe as the Supreme Being. [Athanasius; Christian Classics Ethereal Library]

Athanasius apparently started with his conclusion, “Jesus is God,” and backed in all the arguments he could muster in support of that conclusion. The use of this rhetorical method is called sophistry. He justified his thesis in terms of its effect on believers: “Apart from belief in the Incarnation, we [they] cannot ultimately believe in Christ as Redeemer.”

**Arius** was a parish priest, the pastor of Baucalis Church in Alexandria. He was known locally for making Christianity understandable, especially by witty rhymes set to catchy tunes. Even the dockhands on the wharves in Alexandria could hum these ditties while unloading fish. [Church History Institute]

**319 The beginning of the Arian controversy.** During an informal discussion with local clergymen, Arius accused Bishop Alexander of Modalism, which had been declared a heresy by a synod in Rome. (Modalism taught that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three “modes” of God in the same way the sun is bright and hot and round.) From the nature of Arius’ accusation, it seems obvious that Bishop Alexander invited Athanasius to present his new treatise on the incarnation, and Arius disagreed with it vehemently. Today, his spontaneous reaction to what he heard would be called cognitive dissonance: “This isn’t what we were taught!”

“Those who heard these doctrines advanced and blamed Alexander for not opposing the innovations at variance with doctrine. But this bishop deemed it more advisable to leave each party to the free discussion of doubtful topics, so that by persuasion rather than by force, they might cease from contention; hence he sat down as a judge with some of his clergy, and led both sides into a discussion. But it happened on this occasion, as is generally the case in strife of words, that each party claimed the victory. Arius defended his assertions, but the others [i.e., Athanasius] contended that the Son is con-substantial and co-eternal with the Father.”

“The debate was opened a second time, and the same points contested, but they came to no agreement among themselves. During the debate, Alexander seemed to incline first to one party and then to the others; finally, however, he declared himself in favor of those who affirmed that the Son was con-substantial and co-eternal with the Father [i.e., Athanasius], and he commanded Arius to receive this doctrine, and to reject his former opinions. Arius, however, would not be persuaded to compliance, and many of the bishops and clergy considered his statement of doctrine to be correct. Alexander, therefore, ejected him and the clergy who concurred with him in sentiment from the church [twelve priests and two bishops]. Many of the people, likewise, sided with them; some, because they imagined their doctrines to be of God; others, as frequently happens in similar cases, because they believed them to have been ill-treated and unjustly excommunicated.” [Sozomen I, xv]

This decision by Bishop Alexander in support of his young secretary, Athanasius, is the first authoritative statement that the Son is con-substantial and co-eternal with the Father. By telling his subordinates what they must and must not believe, Alexander

simultaneously created a local orthodoxy and a local heresy. Prior to this point there were various opinions on this subject but no dogma. For example, three writers of the previous century had expressed their views of Christ this way:

“Tertullian (160?-230?), who has been called the father of Latin theology, coined the terms later used to define the Incarnation and the Trinity. He wrote that God is one substance in three persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — but he did not portray them as equal in precedence or power or esteem. Judged theologically, he was almost a Jew.” [Lane]

“Origen (185-254) has been called the greatest and most influential Christian teacher between Paul and Augustine. He described a three-level divine hierarchy in which the Father is greater than the Son, and the Son is greater than the Holy Spirit. He was not certain whether the Holy Spirit should be considered a person or a principle. At this time, many Christians believed as Origen did.” [Lane]

“Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch 260-272, emphasized the sovereignty of God and the humanity of Christ. He said Jesus was a sinless man, uniquely united with God in will and purpose. By his perfect obedience despite his temptations, struggles and suffering, Jesus overcame the sin of Adam and grew in intimacy with God. This doctrine of ‘Low Christology’ was condemned by a local synod. However, the same synod also rejected use of the term homo-ousios (of the same substance) in reference to the relationship of God and Christ.” [Lane]

319 Alexander convened a synod of bishops who deposed and excommunicated Arius and those who supported him. Athanasius must have taken a leading part in these events, because he was Alexander’s trusted secretary and advisor, and because his name appears among those who signed the letter subsequently issued to counter Arius’s views.

319 Arius wrote a letter to Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia (a city in northwestern Turkey about 55 miles east of Constantinople):

“To the most esteemed lord, a faithful man of God, the orthodox Eusebius; Arius, unjustly accused by Father Alexander for the sake of truth, which overcomes all things, and which you also defend, greeting in the Lord. ... My father Ammonius being about to visit Nicomedia, I thought it my duty to salute you by him; and at the same time to make known to you, as being naturally charitable and affectionate in your disposition towards the brethren, for the love of God and of his Christ, that we are vehemently opposed and persecuted, and every engine is set in motion against us by the bishop; so that he has even expelled us from the city as atheists, because we do not assent to such declarations as follow, publicly uttered by him: God is always, the Son is always. The Father and the Son are co-existent. The Son, unbegotten, co-exists with the Father, and is always begotten; without being begotten, he is begotten; nor does God precede the Son in thought, nor by a single moment. Always God, always the Son. From God himself the Son exists.”

“Because Eusebius, your brother, bishop of Caesarea, and Theodotus and Paulinus,

Athanasius [of Asia], Gregorius and Aetius, and all the bishops of the East, affirm that God, who is without a beginning, existed before the Son, they have been condemned; with the exception only of Philogonius, Hellanicus and Macarius, heretical men, and uninstructed in the faith, who say: one, that the Son is an effusion; another, that he is a projection; and another, that, like the Father, he is unbegotten. We could not listen, indeed, to such impieties, although the heretics should threaten us with a thousand deaths.”

“But what we ourselves say and think, we have already declared, and now declare: that the Son is not unbegotten, nor in any manner a part of the unbegotten, or [made] of any matter subject to him; but in will and design he existed before all times and ages, perfect God, the only unbegotten, or created, or determined, or established, for he was not unbegotten.”

“We are persecuted because we have said that the Son has a beginning but God is without a beginning. On this account we are persecuted, and because we said that he is of things not existing. Thus we have said because he is not a part of God, or of any subjected matter. On this account we are persecuted. You know the rest.”

“I hope that you are in health in the Lord, and that you remember our troubles, you true disciple of Lucian, and truly pious man, as your name imports.” [Boyle translation]

319 Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia started writing letters to other bishops of Asia Minor in support of Arius, and invited Arius to come to Nicomedia until he could be reinstated as a priest.

320 Alexander wrote a “Catholic Epistle” full of roaring rhetoric (such as: “lawless men, enemies of Christ, teaching an apostasy which one may justly suspect and designate as a forerunner of the Antichrist”) in which he informed his fellow bishops that Eusebius of Nicomedia was spreading “the Arian heresy” and warned his colleagues not to follow Eusebius, lest they also fall into apostasy.

321 Arius wrote a letter to Alexander with a summary of his views, the essence of which was: God is God; Jesus is not God. About the same time, he also wrote “*The Banquet*,” perhaps in an effort to defend the orthodoxy (of) his views. Only fragments of this work survive, mostly in adversarial quotations by Athanasius.

**Summary.** The so-called “Arian Controversy” was initially an argument between two men, Athanasius and Arius. Athanasius authored an exalted Christology, and Arius reacted against it. Then two bishops, Alexander in support of his secretary Athanasius, and Eusebius of Nicomedia in defense of the exiled Arius, transformed what might have remained a minor Egyptian theological debate into an ecumenical controversy. The term “Arian heresy” was coined by Alexander at a time when it was neither Arian nor heresy, but a widely-held set of traditional beliefs. Alexander said Arius had started something that was spreading through Christianity, but what was actually spreading was a reaction against what he did to Arius.

**324 Constantine became the only Emperor.** The Goths lived north of the Danube River (now part of the border between Romania and Bulgaria) and occasionally tried to invade the Roman Empire. In 324 they invaded Thrace. When Licinius (of Rome) did not move against them, Constantine led his army to the rescue. Then, after the Goths were driven back across the Danube, Licinius and Constantine attacked each other. Licinius had 160,000 men. Constantine had only 130,000 men, but he won the war, and thereafter did not appoint a co-emperor. [Durant, Vol. III]

324 Constantine wrote to the eastern bishops (October):

“Concerning the churches over which you yourself preside, or know others who preside in such places, whether bishops, priests, or deacons — remind them to be active in the building of churches, either restoring or enlarging existing buildings or constructing new ones where need requires. You may yourself request, and the rest may request through you, what is needed from governors and the prefect’s office. For these have been given instructions that they are to lend their assistance to communications from your holiness with all eagerness.” [Barnes, 177]

“By this and similar actions, Constantine gave the bishops political power, judicial authority, autonomy, and immunity. Imperial largesse was channeled through metropolitan bishops to local bishops and through them to widows and orphans, clergy and their families and servants, and anyone the bishop deemed poor and needy. In essence, Constantine expanded the welfare system and turned most of its administration over to the Christian clergy, thus establishing a new type of patron in a society where patronage was the primary basis of political and social power. Christians became more and more militant and aggressive as they eagerly exploited the opportunities Constantine gave them. Each bishop became the center of a web of local patronage in which many people depended on him for their daily bread. This gave him very real political power that sometimes enabled a bishop to defy the emperor. Athanasius was the earliest and most spectacular example of this phenomenon, but as we shall see, his situation was a very special case because he was the metropolitan bishop of Egypt.” [Barnes, 177-179]

324 Alexander wrote a letter to the Bishop of Constantinople in which he warned his fellow bishops of the danger of “the Arian threat”. This letter may have been what brought the controversy to the emperor’s attention.

324 Constantine sent a letter to both Alexander and Arius, telling them to settle their differences peaceably or at least keep their arguments private. This letter shows his view of the controversy and the political purpose of his religious policy:

“I had proposed to lead back to a single form the ideas which all people conceive of the Deity; for I feel strongly that if I could induce men to unite on that subject, the conduct of public affairs would be considerable eased. But alas! I hear that there are more disputes among you than recently in Africa. The cause seems to be quite trifling, and unworthy of such fierce contests. You, Alexander, wished to know what your priests were thinking on a point of view, even on a portion only of a question in itself entirely devoid of importance; and you, Arius, if you had such thoughts, should have kept silence. ... There

was no need to make these questions public ... since they are problems that idleness alone raises, and whose only use is to sharpen men's wits. ... These are silly actions worthy of inexperienced children, and not of priests or reasonable men." [Durant, Vol. III]

324 Constantine sent his advisor on religious matters, Bishop Hosius of Cordoba (in Spain), to settle the quarrel in Alexandria. He failed to do so, but from his subsequent actions, Hosius apparently was very well impressed with Athanasius.

325 Bishop Hosius presided over a Synod in Antioch, early in the year, which condemned Eusebius of Caesarea for defending Arius, and formulated a doctrinal creed that supported Athanasius.

325 Constantine summoned the first empire-wide council of Christian bishops, and paid for their travel. He wanted them to settle the controversy dividing them. Bishop Silvester of Rome sent two delegates, but he did not attend because of his age, and there is no record that he formally confirmed the acts of this council.

[The Papacy was officially established in 444 by the emperor Valentinian III. He gave the Bishop of Rome authority over all other churches in the Western Empire. Prior to that time, it is not appropriate to refer to a Bishop of Rome as "The Pope".]

**325** Athanasius was ordained a deacon by Bishop Alexander and accompanied him to the Council of Nicaea as his secretary and theological adviser.

**325 Council of Nicaea.** In response to Constantine's summons 318 clerics convened at Nicaea (a city about 55 miles southeast of Constantinople) to resolve the dispute concerning the deity of Christ. Regardless of their theology, we can be certain of one thing: they wanted to please the emperor who had rescued Christianity from persecution and initiated state support of their churches. Some of them bore scars from twenty-one years of almost continuous persecution by his predecessors. And from the following sequence of events at this council, it looks very much like they dawdled around for two months waiting to see which way he would lean.

The council met in the large hall of an imperial palace. Constantine opened the proceedings by telling the bishops that they had to come to some agreement on the questions dividing them. He said, "Division in the church is worse than war." He obviously intended to govern Christianity the same way Roman Emperors had traditionally governed the pagan religions, as the Pontifex Maximus (highest priest). "He listened patiently to the debates, moderated the violence of contending parties, and himself joined in the argument." [Eusebius]

Arius reconfirmed his view that Christ was a created being, not equal to the Father, and "divine only by participation." Clever questioners forced him to admit that if Christ was a creature, and had a beginning, he could change; and that if he could change he might pass from virtue to vice. The answers were logical, honest, and suicidal. [Durant, Vol. III]

The most learned bishop present, Eusebius of Caesarea, presented the doctrinal statement he had inherited from his predecessors:

### **Creed of Caesarea**

“We believe in only one God, Father Almighty, Creator of things visible and invisible; and in the Lord Jesus Christ, for he is the Word of God, God of God, Light of Light, life of life, his only son, the first-born of all creatures, begotten of the Father before all time, by whom also everything was created, who became flesh for our redemption, who lived and suffered among men, rose again the third day, returned to the Father, and will come again one day in his glory to judge the quick and the dead. We believe also in the Holy Spirit.”

After meeting for two months (July - August), many of the bishops were ready to compromise, but the new deacon from Alexandria was not. With the support of Alexander and Hosius, Athanasius continued to insist on a creed that stated the full Deity of Jesus Christ. He justified his thesis in political terms well-calculated to stimulate the primary fear of these bishops: “If the people do not believe Jesus is God, paganism will triumph.”

Eusebius of Nicomedia sent a letter to the council in which he said he would never agree that Christ was of the same substance as God. Thus he handed Alexander and Hosius a convenient way to get rid of him. The suggestion to insert the word homo-ousios (of one substance) into the Creed probably came from Hosius. Athanasius accepted it as expressive of the sense in which he held Jesus to be God Incarnate. Eusebius of Caesarea and other bishops suggested using the word homo-i-ousios (of similar substance). Thus they presented the traditional view that Jesus is like God, but not the same as God. (In theology: divine, but not deity.)

Probably because Hosius had great influence with Constantine, the imperial nod went to his side of the table, whereupon Hosius wrote the Creed of Nicaea and the anathemas attached to it:

### **Creed of Nicaea**

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven. And he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead. And [we believe] in the Holy Spirit.”

“And whosoever shall say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was made of things that were not, or that he is of a different substance or essence, or that he is a creature, or subject to change or conversion — all that so say, the catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.”

All but a few of the bishops accepted this modified creed. Eusebius of Caesarea finally agreed that the Son is of the same substance as the Father, and signed the creed, but he but did not agree that the Son is part of the Father. [Eusebius]

Constantine exiled Arius and those who supported him, including Eusebius of Nicomedia. He decreed that all writings by Arius should be burned, and that anyone who did not surrender such writings immediately upon discovery would be put to death.

The Council of Nicaea was a pivotal event in the history of Christianity. The sudden adoption of a quasi-philosophic term to define the historic Jesus as equal to God was a major departure from scripture and tradition. Further, the use of this term in a Creed meant that, from 325 on, Nicene's can, and did, proclaim other dogmas that have no basis in Scripture.

“Constantine established the precedent that the emperor was Pontifex Maximus (highest priest) of Christians, but he did not abuse his authority. He denied himself the right to try bishops, referred all such cases to a council of bishops, and did not dictate or reverse church council decisions. What was new was the almost automatic secular enforcement of church council decisions.” [Barnes, 172]

327 Arius wrote a letter to Constantine that included a petition to be restored to the church and a creed that attempted to show the orthodoxy of his position.

**327 Council of Nicomedia** (December). “Constantine convened a council of bishops who investigated Arius, pronounced his views orthodox, and readmitted him and his supporters to communion, whereupon Constantine reversed his endorsement of the Council of Nicaea by recalling Arius and his supporters from exile.” [Barnes, 17]

“**328 Bishop Alexander of Alexandria died** (17 April) after expressing his desire that Athanasius succeed him. Before a decision could be reached by the 54 bishops deliberating over a replacement for Alexander, a small group of his friends (six or seven bishops) went to the Church of Dionysius and consecrated Athanasius as Bishop of Alexandria, despite the fact that he was not yet 30 years old as required by church law (8 June). Athanasius wrote a letter to Constantine announcing his election, which he represented as the unanimous choice of the people of Alexandria. He quoted a decree of the City Council as proof. The shocked opposition proceeded to elect a bishop on their own.” [Barnes, 18-20]

328 Constantine wrote a letter to Athanasius, urging him to re-admit Arius to communion. Athanasius refused to obey the emperor, saying there could be no fellowship with anyone who denied the Deity of Christ. Constantine wrote again: “Since you know my will, grant free admission to all those who wish to enter the church. For if I hear that you have hindered anyone from becoming a member, or have debarred anyone from entrance, I shall immediately send someone to have you deposed at my behest and have you sent into exile.”

328 Eusebius of Nicomedia brought charges against Athanasius, the most serious of which was that he had not reached the required age of 30 at the time of his consecration.

**Summary.** Why did Constantine change his mind? Church historians say that his sister, Constantia, pleaded for Arius on her deathbed, and that may be true, but Constantine convened and acted on the decision of another church council. And he also changed his mind about Athanasius. Constantine wanted harmony in the church as a basis for governance. When Athanasius refused to obey him, he probably re-evaluated the entire controversy and identified Athanasius as the trouble-maker. In any event, Constantine did change his mind. He restored all the clerics who were condemned at the Council of Nicaea and allowed Eusebius of Nicomedia to bring charges against Athanasius.

330 The churches of Alexandria sent a delegation of bishops to Constantine, to protest the use of coercive measures against them by Athanasius, and to request imperial permission to meet peaceably. Eusebius of Nicomedia befriended them at court, and obtained an audience for them with the emperor. [Barnes, 21]

**330 Constantinople.** Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire from the city of Rome to Byzantium, a city in Asia (now Istanbul, in northwestern Turkey) which he renamed “New Rome” but the people called it Constantinople. In the same year, his mother, Helene, sponsored building the Church of the Nativity on the site in Bethlehem traditionally claimed to be the place where Jesus was born.

**332.** Athanasius stone-walled the investigation by church authorities for four years by simply ignoring their letters and requests. Finally, Constantine summoned him to meet with a council of bishops and answer the charges against him.

**335 Synod of Tyre.** “After protracted delays for another thirty months, Athanasius finally consented to appear before a synod of bishops at Tyre (a city in Lebanon). He brought with him a gang of ruffians who disrupted the business of the synod while he abused his fellow bishops. When he realized the decision would probably go against him, he refused to be tried by the Synod. He suddenly fled from Tyre in a boat with some of his friends and went to see the emperor. The Synod deposed him as an overbearing prelate who systematically employed violence in the affairs of the church, and again pronounced Arius theologically orthodox.” [Barnes, 22-23]

Constantine was returning from a hunt when Athanasius stepped into the road in front of him and demanded a hearing. The astonished emperor could hardly believe his eyes, and needed the assurance of one of his attendants to convince him that this was indeed the Bishop of Alexandria. Athanasius said, “Give me a just tribunal or allow me to meet my accusers face to face in your presence.” His request was granted. Constantine sent a letter to the bishops at Tyre requesting them to meet in his presence to discuss the matter.

“On 6 November 335 the charges against Athanasius were reviewed by the bishops in the presence of the emperor, who found him innocent of several of the charges, including

murder. But Athanasius was also accused of threatening to prevent the flow of grain from Egypt to Constantinople. (As the metropolitan bishop of Egypt, he had legitimate access to the Egyptian grain supply for charitable purposes, but because Egypt was one of the main sources of supply for Constantinople, he could divert grain that was needed to prevent riots in the imperial city.) Upon hearing this charge, Athanasius lost his temper and told Constantine that God would ultimately judge between them. Constantine sent him into exile at Trier (a city on the Moselle River in western Germany near the border with Luxembourg). In letters to the church at Alexandria, Constantine justified his refusal to reinstate Athanasius by describing him as a trouble-maker whose condemnation by a council of bishops he could not simply set aside at his own whim. Athanasius probably began his journey in February 336 and arrived in late autumn of that year. His exile lasted nearly two and a half years.” [Barnes, 24, 179]

**336 The death of Arius.** Constantine ordered Bishop Alexander of Constantinople to give Arius communion in his own church. Arius openly triumphed; but as he went about the city on the evening before a formal ceremony was to restore him to his rank as a priest, he suddenly experienced such violent diarrhea that “his bowels came out” and he died in a public toilet, “which Catholics could not help regarding as a judgment of heaven, due to the bishop’s prayers.” [The Catholic Encyclopedia] More likely, Arius was poisoned.

In summary of his life, all Arius really did was stand up to his bishop; when his bishop endorsed a recognized heresy. For this Arius was deposed from the priesthood, excommunicated from the church, and sent into exile. He wrote a few letters defending the orthodoxy of his views and begging to be restored to the church. That’s all. He did not introduce anything new, or go about preaching and teaching, or sway any church councils to his way of thinking. Upon investigation, his theological views were declared orthodox by two church councils prior to his death and by more church councils thereafter.

Every book I read on this subject, including encyclopedias, dictionaries, secular histories, and even the History of Heresy, flatly states that Arius preached heresy and Athanasius defended the ancient orthodoxy. But the chronological sequence of events clearly shows that what actually happened was the precise opposite: Athanasius was the innovator, not Arius, and his innovations were in fact departures from scripture and apostolic tradition. Therefore, I now believe all the books I read are preserving an inversion of history.

**337 Death of Constantine** (22 May). One of his last acts was to outlaw crucifixion throughout the empire in respect for Christ. He was baptized on his deathbed by Eusebius of Nicomedia, and his eulogy was delivered by Eusebius of Caesarea, both of whom were “Arians”. In summary: Constantine stopped the persecution of Christians, made Christianity legal and strongly supported it, but he did not impose it on the empire. He convened the Council of Nicaea and initially endorsed the results, but he soon changed his mind about Athanasius and Arius. The Empire was divided between his three sons: Constantius ruled in Gaul, Constans in Italy, and Constantine II became the Emperor of the East.

337 Constantius released Athanasius from exile in Trier and told him to return to Alexandria (17 June). Athanasius traveled in a leisurely manner, spreading his doctrines as he went. He was in Constantinople that summer, where he had an audience with Constantius. By the end of November, he was again the Bishop of Alexandria, even though he had ignored the decision of a duly authorized Synod and returned without the summons of any church authority. [Barnes, 30, 213]

337 Bishop Alexander of Constantinople died. (He was 98 years old.) Shortly thereafter, while Constantius was absent from the city, a Nicene named Paul was made bishop of Constantinople by a group of his friends, without the ratification of neighboring bishops. When he returned, Constantius summoned a council of bishops. They deposed Paul and installed Eusebius of Nicomedia as the Bishop of Constantinople. [Barnes, 231]

**339 Council of Antioch.** Convened in the presence of Constantius; this council deposed Athanasius for having resumed his office without even seeking approval of any church authority, and elected Gregory of Cappadocia to replace him. On 16 March soldiers tried to arrest Athanasius, but he hid from them. On 22 March Gregory entered Alexandria as the new bishop. On 16 April Athanasius left Egypt and wrote an encyclical letter to a large number of bishops complaining that he was unjustly treated. [Barnes, 45-46] He went to Rome and presented his case to Bishop Julius, who took up his cause. Julius summoned a Synod of bishops who declared Athanasius innocent of the charges against him, but he did not return to Alexandria for seven years. While he was in Rome, he probably wrote the list of New Testament books called the “Codex Vaticanus”, because the 27 books and the unusual order in which they are listed are identical to the list he published later.

340 Constantine II declared war against his brother, Caesar Constans of Italy, and was killed by his own generals. Constantius succeeded him as Emperor of the East, leaving Constans as Emperor of the West.

341 Constantius prohibited public sacrifices to the pagan gods.

341 **Wulfila (Ulfilas)** was ordained Bishop of the Goths by Eusebius of Nicomedia, the Bishop of Constantinople. Wulfila was born in 311 among the Goths north of the Danube River, the son of a Christian who was taken there as a captive from Cappadocia. Wulfila was not an “Arian”. According to his disciple, Auxentius, he maintained that both sides of the Arian controversy were heretical. “His devoted and virtuous life generated such confidence in his wisdom and integrity that many of the Goths accepted Christianity.” [Auxentius on Wulfila]

The Goths had no written language. Wulfila created the Gothic alphabet, based on the Greek alphabet, and taught them to read and write. He patiently translated, from Greek into Gothic, the entire Bible except the two Books of Kings, which he omitted as dangerously warlike. Wulfila’s Bible, which he completed in 343, was the first literary work in any Teutonic (German) language.

## SEARCHING FOR CONSENSUS

**341 Synod of Antioch.** The precise date of this synod is known, because it was held at the time of the dedication of the great church in Antioch known as the “Golden” which was begun by Constantine and finished by his son Constantius. All 97 of the bishops present were from the Eastern Empire, and most of them were hostile to Athanasius. Modern church historians have difficulty explaining this council:

“... there is no council that presents a greater amount of difficulty to the historian as well as to the theologian. No one can deny that St. Hilary of Poitiers, who was a contemporary, styled it a Synod of Saints (Synodus Sanctorum); that two of its canons were read at Chalcedon as the ‘canons of the Holy Fathers’; and that Popes John II, Zacharias, and Leo IV all approved these canons, and attributed them to ‘Holy Fathers.’ And yet this synod set forth creeds to rival that of Nicea, and, it is said, some of the canons were adopted to condemn Athanasius. Various attempts have been made to escape from these difficulties. It has been suggested that there really were two Synods at Antioch, the one orthodox, which adopted the canons, the other heretical. And yet, St. Hilary says that these creeds proceeded from a ‘Synod of Saints.’” [The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. Vol. XIV]

**Very interesting.** The canons produced by this council are included in church law and history, but the creeds are not. Why not? Further research finds the first through fourth “Arian Confessions” were written by this council. However, the first paragraph of the first “Arian Confession” states that this “Synod of Saints” was not Arian. Therefore, I believe “Arian” is retroactive re-labeling. Subsequent events show that this council was the beginning of a long-term effort to produce a truly consensus statement of the Christian faith.

### **The First Consensus Creed (“Arian Confession”)**

“We have not been followers of Arius — how could Bishops, such as we, follow a Presbyter [priest]? — nor did we receive any other faith besides that which has been handed down from the beginning. But, after taking on ourselves to examine and to verify his faith, we admitted him rather than followed him; as you will understand from our present avowals. For we have been taught from the first, to believe in one God, the God of the Universe, the Framer and Preserver of all things both intellectual and sensible. And in one Son of God, only-begotten, who existed before all ages, and was with the Father who had begotten Him, by whom all things were made, both visible and invisible, who in the last days according to the good pleasure of the Father came down; and has taken flesh of the Virgin, and jointly fulfilled all his Father’s will, and suffered and risen again, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father, and comes again to judge the quick and the dead, and remains King and God unto all ages. And we believe also in the Holy Spirit; and if it be necessary to add, we believe concerning the resurrection of the flesh, and the life everlasting.” [The Ecole Initiative]

341 Eusebius of Nicomedia, the Bishop of Constantinople, died late in the year. The Nicenes brought back Paul, who had been deposed as a usurper in 337. The “Arians” elected Macedonius. Rioting ensued. Constantius was in Antioch. When he heard what was happening, he sent one of his generals, Hermogenes, but Paul’s partisans resisted with force. When Hermogenes persisted in sending soldiers to expel Paul, a mob burned the house where Hermogenes was staying and murdered him. Constantius himself then came with an army, expelled Paul, fined the city by reducing the daily distribution of free bread (by 50 percent), and returned to Antioch, leaving Macedonius as Bishop of Constantinople. Paul went to the western court at Trier, where he soon persuaded the emperor Constans to champion his cause — and that of Athanasius. [Barnes, 213-214]

342 Constans invited Athanasius to his court, and laid before him a plan which Constantius had formed for a reunion of the churches. Athanasius went to consult with Bishop Hosius. They traveled together to the Council of Sardica.

**343 Council of Sardica.** Hosius presided over this council, which was summoned by the emperor Constans at the request of Bishop Julius of Rome in an attempt to unify the churches. The 94 Western bishops were not receptive to unification. The 76 Eastern bishops demanded Athanasius be deposed, but the Western majority of the council said he was innocent.

**344 Council of Philippopolis.** This council of Eastern bishops who left the Council of Sardica condemned Hosius, Athanasius, Julius, and four other bishops. Their letter stated several specific cases in which Athanasius had employed violence and intimidation against those who opposed him. Constantius decreed that, if Athanasius tried to return to Alexandria, he would be put to death. Athanasius left Sardica and went to Milan by invitation of Constans. [Barnes, 2, 72]

**344 Council of Antioch.** This Council wrote the Fifth Consensus Creed (“Arian Confession”), which is notably longer than those written at Antioch in 341.

345 The western emperor Constans intervened in the religious affairs of the east. On 7 April 345 he wrote to his brother, the eastern emperor Constantius: “Athanasius and Paul are here with me. From questioning them I have discovered that they are being persecuted for the sake of piety. Accordingly, if you undertake to restore them to their episcopal thrones, expelling those who are vainly clinging to them, I shall send the men to you. But if you were to refuse to take this action, be assured that I will come in person and restore them to the thrones which are theirs, even against your will.” [Barnes, 89. Sozomen specifically reports two letters from Constans, the first requesting Constantius to restore Athanasius and Paul, the second telling him “either to receive the men or prepare for war.”]

345 Bishop Gregory of Alexandria died, probably of violence (26 June), whereupon Constantius yielded. He probably realized that any election in Alexandria would lead to violence which the supporters of Athanasius would win, and that he could not risk a civil

war in which the Bishop of Alexandria supported the other side. He wrote to Constans and Athanasius, inviting Athanasius to come to his court. But Athanasius stayed with Constans for another full year. Constantius wrote twice more. Finally, Athanasius went to meet with Constantius in Antioch. He was accorded a gracious interview, and was sent back to Alexandria in triumph. He entered the city on 21 October 346. There he began his ten years' reign, which lasted until his third exile in 356. [Barnes, 90, 167, 225]

346 Constantius also allowed Bishop Paul to return to Constantinople.

348 Under persecution by Athanaric, the pagan Gothic chieftain, Bishop Wulfila obtained permission from the emperor Constantius to bring his community of Gothic Christians across the Danube into the Empire. They settled in Thrace.

**349 Council of Antioch.** This council condemned and deposed Athanasius, and elected George of Cappadocia as the Bishop of Alexandria, but Constantius did not enforce this part of their decision. They also condemned and deposed Bishop Paul. Constantius had him arrested and sent to prison. [Barnes, 19]

**350 Death of Constans.** Constans was not popular or widely respected. Writing in 361, Aurelius Victor charged him with rabid pederasty, headlong avarice, and the employment of corrupt ministers. He alienated his high civilian officials and his military officers. On 18 January 350 his most successful general, Magnentius, was proclaimed Emperor. Constans fled, but he was caught and killed. [Barnes, 101]

350 Magnentius apparently wrote to Athanasius and Paul, and perhaps other bishops, trying to enlist their support against Constantius. Athanasius later denied this correspondence. Letters between Magnentius and Paul were probably intercepted, because at this time Paul was strangled in prison. [Barnes, 214-217]

**351 Council of Sirmium.** This council condemned and deposed Athanasius on charges of high treason for having fomented enmity between Constans and Constantius. But Constantius did not enforce this decision, either, because he was at war with Magnentius and could not risk having the Bishop of Alexandria against him. The Sixth Consensus Creed ("Arian Confession") was written here. It seems to be an expanded revision of the Fourth Consensus Creed written in 341. By this time there were probably about 34 million Christians in the Empire (56 percent of the population), which was a five-fold increase in fifty years, almost all of it in the last twenty-five years. [Barnes, 63, 103, 109, 167] [Stark]

352 Bishop Julius of Rome died (12 April), and Liberius succeeded him. For two years Liberius was favorable to the cause of Athanasius, but then he signed a formula from which the Nicene word, homo-ousios, was omitted.

**353 Constantius became the only emperor.** Over a two-year period, Constantius drove Magnentius out of the Balkans and Italy. Magnentius retreated to Gaul, but in the summer of 353 Constantius sent his forces across the Alps. They won the major battle at Mons

Seleucus, and Magnentius committed suicide (10 August). Thereafter, Constantius did not appoint a co-emperor. [Barnes, 106]

**353 Council of Arles** (autumn). Supported Arius and condemned Athanasius. Imperial orders were sent to the prefect of Egypt that “the grain be taken away from Athanasius and given to those who hold the views of Arius.” [Barnes, 179]

354 Constantius ordered the closing of some pagan temples and prescribed death for those who sacrificed in public. However, many pagan temples and rites were permitted to survive.

**355 Council of Milan.** Athanasius was condemned and deposed. This time there were four charges against him (all of which he denied in his later writings): that he fostered enmity between Constans and Constantius before 350, corresponded with Magnentius in 350, used the Great Church begun by Gregory before it had been dedicated, and disobeyed an imperial summons to come to court in 353. Only a handful of Western bishops spoke in his behalf. The council confirmed George of Cappadocia as the Bishop of Alexandria. And again, imperial orders were sent to the prefect of Egypt that “the grain be taken away from Athanasius.” [Barnes, 118, 179, 196]

356 Constantius enforced the decision of the Council of Milan. Soldiers were sent to arrest Athanasius, but he fled (8 February). After remaining some days in the neighborhood of Alexandria, he was thought to have gone into the desert of upper Egypt. Force was used in Alexandria and throughout Egypt to secure compliance with the deposition of Athanasius: of the 90 bishops who supported him, 16 were exiled, some fled, and others conformed. But resistance proved tenacious, especially in Alexandria. His supporters retained the city churches until June, when the new prefect expelled them and handed the churches over to supporters of Bishop George, who arrived in Alexandria on 24 February 357. However, his hold on the diocese was never secure and did not last long. [Barnes, 119]

**357 Council of Sirmium.** This council wrote the Seventh Consensus Creed (“Arian Confession”). The words *ousios*, *homo-ousios* and *homo-i-ousios* were rejected as not biblical, and it was agreed that God the Father is greater than his subordinate Son. Bishop Hosius, by now a centenarian, was forced to attend this council and sign this formula against his will.

**358 Council of Ancyra.** A council of dissenting bishops at Ancyra refused to accept the creed of the Council of Sirmium.

358 A mob of the supporters of Athanasius attacked Bishop George in the Church of Dionysius and almost lynched him (29 August). Just over a month later, he left Alexandria, and they seized all the churches in the city a few days later. The civil authorities ejected them and restored the churches to the supporters of George (24 December). Why did these people fight so hard for an exiled bishop? It wasn't his theology: it was his patronage. Through his entrenched network of subordinate bishops,

Athanasius still controlled the distribution of patronage in Egypt, and especially the distribution of grain. Loyalty was bought and paid for with daily bread. Nicene people fought because the imperial government tried to take their welfare benefits away from them, and Nicene bishops fought because their own power depended on their distribution of those benefits. [Barnes, 119, 177-179]

**359 Council of Sirmium.** (May) This council wrote the Eighth Consensus Creed (“Arian Confession”).

**359 Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia.** Constantius summoned two councils to finish developing a consensus creed for Christianity. The Council of Ariminum in the West was attended by more than 400 bishops (May). The Council of Seleucia in the East was attended by about 160 bishops (September). After a series of stormy arguments, they wrote the Ninth Consensus Creed (“Arian Confession”) which affirmed that Jesus is divine “like the Father” and anathematized those who said he is not like the Father. In the end, both councils subscribed to this traditional (“Semi-Arian”) statement of the Christian Faith. [Barnes, 144-148]

**360 Council of Constantinople.** A council of 72 bishops, including Bishop Wulfila of the Goths, convened in Constantinople (January) to review the conclusions of Ariminum and Seleucia the year before. They abolished the use of unscriptural terms in reference to God, and condemned as heresy all formulas contrary to this one:

**The Tenth Consensus Creed (“Arian Confession”)**

“We believe in One God, Father Almighty, from whom are all things;  
And in the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from God before all ages and before every beginning, by whom all things were made, visible and invisible, and begotten as only-begotten, only from the Father, only God from God, like to the Father that begat Him according to the Scriptures; whose origin no one knows, except the Father alone who begat Him. He, as we acknowledge, the only-begotten Son of God, the Father sending Him, came hither from the heavens, as it is written, for the undoing of sin and death, and was born of the Holy Ghost, of Mary the Virgin, according to the flesh, as it is written, and convened with the disciples, and having fulfilled the whole stewardship according to the Father’s will, was crucified and dead and buried and descended to the parts below the earth; at whom Hades itself shuddered: who also rose from the dead on the third day, and abode with the disciples, and, forty days being fulfilled, was taken up into the heavens, and sits at the right hand of the Father, to come in the last day of the resurrection in the Father’s glory, that He may render to every man according to his works. And in the Holy Ghost, whom the only-begotten Son of God himself, Christ, our Lord and God, promised to send to the race of man, as Paraclete, as it is written, ‘the Spirit of truth’ (John 16:13), which He sent unto them when He had ascended into the heavens.”

“But the name of ‘Essence,’ which was set down by the Fathers in simplicity, and, being unknown by the people, caused offense, because the Scriptures contain it not, it has

seemed good to abolish, and for the future to make no mention of it at all; since the divine Scriptures have made no mention of the Essence of Father and Son. For neither ought 'Substance' to be named concerning Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But we say that the Son is Like the Father, as the divine Scriptures say and teach; and all the heresies, both those which have been afore condemned already, and whatever are of modern date, being contrary to this published statement, be they anathema." [From: The Ecole Initiative]

## CONSENSUS CHRISTIANITY

**360 Declaration of Establishment.** Constantius declared Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. This was an orthodox Christianity. Neither "Nicene" nor "Arian"; it was a consensus worked out by a dozen councils of bishops, in the East and the West, over the previous nineteen years. However, this monumental event is not even mentioned in most history books. I found it in "A History of Heresy" [Christie-Murray] and alluded to, but not stated clearly, in an ancient Ecclesiastical History written about 430 AD. [Sozomen, IV, xxiii].

360 Constantius' armies in the East were facing difficulties and meeting defeat. His cousin Julian, whom he appointed Caesar of Gaul in 355, defeated a German invasion and was declared Emperor by his army. Then Julian suddenly changed his religion. Although he had previously confessed Christianity, he declared himself the Pontifex Maximus of pagans, frequented pagan temples, offered sacrifices, and invited his subjects to adopt that form of worship.

**361 Synod of Antioch.** This was a meeting of bishops who disagreed with the newly established orthodoxy. Led by Acacius, who had succeeded Eusebius as the Bishop of Caesarea, they wrote a creed in which they asserted that Christ is dissimilar from God in all respects — substance and will — and had no existence prior to his birth. However, their view was refuted by "Semi-Arians" and "Nicens," and not adopted by anyone. [Sozomen IV, xxix]

**361 Death of Constantius.** While Constantius was in Syria leading his army to face an expected invasion by the Persians, Julian led his army into Illyricum under the pretext that he intended to apologize to Constantius for receiving the symbols of imperial authority without his approval. When Constantius heard that Julian was marching toward him with an army, he abandoned his expedition against the Persians and started back toward Constantinople, but he died on the way (4 November). He was 45 years old. In summary: Constantius attended councils which discussed creedal matters, and he fostered attempts to define an acceptable orthodoxy, but he consistently observed and explicitly asserted the principle that a bishop could be condemned and deposed only by a council of his peers, whatever the charge. [Barnes 132]

**361 Julian the Apostate.** A little while after Constantius died, Julian entered Constantinople and was proclaimed emperor.

361 The death of Constantius was soon followed by an attack against the “Arian” Christians in Alexandria. Bishop George entered the city on 26 November. Four days later came news of the death of Constantius. George was imprisoned and tortured. On 24 December a mob dragged him out of prison and murdered him. On receiving this news, Julian jumped to the conclusion that George had been murdered by pagans. He wrote the city a letter of mild rebuke for killing George “the enemy of the gods” rather than leaving him to be tried and suitably punished. But more likely George was murdered by supporters of Athanasius. [Barnes, 155]

362 Julian canceled all the privileges granted to Christians by Constantine and his sons, and set about restoring paganism (4 February). “He commanded that all the pagan temples should be reopened throughout the East; that those which had been neglected should be repaired; that those which had fallen into ruins should be rebuilt, and that the altars should be restored. He assigned considerable money for this purpose; he restored the customs of antiquity and the ancestral ceremonies in the cities, and the practice of offering sacrifice. He himself offered libations openly and publicly sacrificed; bestowed honors on those who were zealous in the performance of these ceremonies; restored the initiators and the priests, the hierophants and the servants of the images, to their old privileges; and confirmed the legislation of former emperors in their behalf; he conceded exemption from duties and from other burdens as was their previous right; he restored the provisions, which had been abolished, to the temple guardians, and commanded them to be pure from meats, and to abstain from whatever according to pagan saying was befitting him who had announced his purpose of leading a pure life.” [Sozomen V, v]

**362 Act of Clemency** (8 February). Julian believed that paganism would be advanced more successfully by patience and mildness towards Christians. “He recalled from exile all Christians who had been banished on account of their religious sentiments, and restored to them their property that had been confiscated by law. He charged the people not to commit any act of injustice against the Christians, not to insult them, and not to force them to offer sacrifice unwillingly. He commanded that if they should of their own accord desire to draw near the altars, they were first to appease the wrath of the demons, whom the pagans regard as capable of averting evil, and to purify themselves by the customary course of expiations. He deprived the clergy, however, of the immunities, honors, and provisions which Constantine had conferred; repealed the laws which had been enacted in their favor, and reinforced their statute liabilities. He even compelled the virgins and widows, who, on account of their poverty, were reckoned among the clergy, to refund the provision which had been assigned them from public sources. For when Constantine adjusted the temporal concerns of the Church, he devoted a sufficient portion of the taxes raised upon every city to the support of the clergy everywhere.” [Sozomen V, v]

**362 Trinity and Creed.** Athanasius appeared by night in the church at Alexandria (22 February). His sudden appearance caused great astonishment, for although he was thought to be somewhere in Upper Egypt, he had concealed himself in the house of a holy virgin in Alexandria. He promptly convened and led a small Synod of bishops who disagreed with the recently established orthodoxy. *They approved the Athanasian Creed,*

*in which God is defined as one substance (substantia) in three persons (persona, an actor's face mask) — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This was when and how the Holy Spirit was made into a person and promoted to the Godhead: "They confessed that the Holy Ghost is of the same substance as the Father and the Son, and they made use of the term 'Trinity.'" [Sozomen, V, xii]*

Church historians still maintain that Arius tried to strip the mystery out of the Holy Trinity, but Arius died before Athanasius defined the Trinity. I believe that Athanasius made Christian theology mysterious by the paradoxical assertion: "Three equals One." I still don't know why he made the Holy Spirit a person equal to God, but he previously said, "Unless the people believe Jesus is God, paganism will triumph," so I think he probably defined the Trinity for a political purpose.

362 Julian deposed Athanasius (23 October) on grounds that the act of clemency did not restore bishops to office, but only to their native lands, and Athanasius had resumed his office without Julian's permission. But Athanasius did not leave, so Julian expelled him from Egypt. Athanasius dismissed this order of the emperor as "a small cloud which will soon pass," went up the Nile, and once again avoided capture by the soldiers sent to arrest him. [Sozomen, V, xv] [Barnes, 158-159]

362 Julian's instructions to pagans. Here are some indications of the reputation that ordinary Christians held among pagans, and thus why Christianity spread.

"To Arsacius, High-Priest of Galatia, Paganism has not yet reached the degree of prosperity that might be desired, owing to the conduct of its votaries. The worship of the gods, however, is conducted on the grandest and most magnificent scale; so far exceeding our very prayer and hope... for no one could have dared to look for so extensive and so surprising a change as that which we have witnessed within a very short space of time. But are we to rest satisfied with what has been already effected? Ought we not rather to consider that the progress of Atheism has been principally owing to the humanity evinced by Christians towards strangers, to the reverence they have manifested towards the dead, and to the delusive gravity which they have assumed in their life?"

"It is requisite that each of us should be diligent in the discharge of duty: I do not refer to you alone, as that would not suffice, but to all the priests of Galatia. You must either put them to shame, or try the power of persuasion, or else deprive them of their sacerdotal offices, if they do not, with their wives, their children, and their servants, join in the service of the gods, or if they support the servants, sons, or wives of the Galileans in treating the gods impiously and in preferring Atheism to piety. Then exhort the priests not to frequent theaters, not to drink at taverns, and not to engage in any trade, or practice any nefarious art. Honor those who yield to your remonstrances, and expel those who disregard them."

"Establish hostelries in every city, so that strangers from neighboring and foreign countries may reap the benefit of our philanthropy, according to their respective need. ... For, while there are no persons in need among the Jews, and while even the impious

Galileans provide not only for those of their own party who are in want, but also for those who hold with us, it would indeed be disgraceful if we were to allow our own people to suffer from poverty.”

“Teach the pagans to co-operate in this work of benevolence, and let the first-fruits of the pagan towns be offered to the gods. Habituate the pagans to the exercise of this liberality, by showing them how such conduct is sanctioned by the practice of remote antiquity... Let us not permit others to excel us in good deeds; let us not dishonor ourselves by violence, but rather let us be foremost in piety towards the gods.” [Sozomen V, xvi]

**363 Death of Julian** (26 June). Julian invaded Persia, but he let his army plunder and destroy as they went, not thinking that he might have to return by the same route. After becoming confused as to which route he should travel to find more provisions, he was approached by an old man who offered to guide him, but then deceived him into marching three days into an uncultivated region. The old man was put to torture. He confessed that he had exposed himself voluntarily to death for the sake of his country, and was therefore prepared to endure any sufferings that could be inflicted on him. The Roman troops were now worn out by the length of the journey and the scarcity of provisions, and the Persians chose this moment to attack them. In the heat of the conflict which ensued, a violent wind arose; and the sky and the sun were totally concealed by the clouds, while the air was at the same time mixed with dust. During the darkness which was thus produced, a horseman, riding at full gallop, directed his lance against the emperor, and wounded him mortally. After throwing Julian from his horse, the unknown assailant secretly went away. Some conjectured that he was a Persian; others, that he was a Saracen. There are those who insist that he who struck the blow was a Roman soldier, who was indignant at the imprudence and temerity which the emperor had manifested in exposing his army to such peril. [Sozomen, VI, i]

It is said that, when Julian was wounded, he took a handful of blood that flowed from the wound, and threw it up into the air. Some thought he saw Jesus Christ approaching, and threw it at him. Others thought he was angry with the sun-god because it favored the Persians. [Sozomen, VI, ii] However, I think this gesture may have been his last libation to all the gods he served.

**363 The Emperor Jovian.** When Julian was killed, the army chose Jovian as their leader. He was the captain of the imperial guard. As they were about to proclaim him emperor, he announced that he was a Christian, and refused to accept the symbols of imperial authority. However, when the soldiers heard why he refused, they loudly proclaimed that they themselves were Christians. [Sozomen, VI, iii]

363 Jovian made peace with Persia by surrendering four of the five satrapies that Diocletian had seized seventy years earlier. He did not persecute anyone, but he promptly transferred state support from the pagan temples to the churches — at one-third of the level they enjoyed under Constantine. [Barnes, 177]

363 Athanasius secretly returned to Alexandria. His first act was to convene another synod to reaffirm the Athanasian Creed of 362. On 6 September he set out for Antioch, bearing a letter containing the pronouncements of this council. At Antioch he met with Jovian, who received him graciously and even asked him to prepare an exposition of the Nicene faith. Lucius, who had been elected successor to George as Bishop of Alexandria, arrived in Antioch bearing complaints against Athanasius, but Jovian would not listen to them. [Barnes, 159-160]

364 Jovian ruled for about eight months, and suddenly died while enroute from Antioch to Constantinople (16 February). “Some say that his death was occasioned by eating too plentiful a supper; others attribute it to the dampness of the chamber in which he slept; for it had been recently plastered with unslaked lime, and quantities of coals had been burnt in it during the winter for a preventive; the walls had become damp and were exceedingly moist.” [Sozomen VI, vi]

**364 The Emperors Valentinian in the West and Valens in the East.** When Jovian died, the army proclaimed Valentinian emperor. After he was invested with the symbols of imperial authority, the soldiers cried out that it was necessary to elect someone to share the burden of government. To this he replied: “It depended on you alone, O soldiers, to proclaim me emperor; but now that you have elected me, it depends not upon you, but upon me, to perform what you demand. Remain quiet, as subjects ought to do, and leave me to act as an emperor in attending to the public affairs.” Not long after this, he went to Constantinople and proclaimed his brother Valens Emperor of the East, retaining for himself the Empire of the West. [Sozomen VI, vi]

364 A group of Nicene bishops sent a delegation to the emperors requesting permission to meet “for the correction of doctrines.” Valentinian replied that as a layman he had no right to an opinion on such matters, and they might gather as they wished. They met at Lampsacus, declared the Council of Constantinople invalid, and wrote a letter to all of the eastern churches. When Valens learned of their decisions, he invited them to be reconciled with those they condemned, and when they refused, he exiled them. [Barnes, 161]

364 Valens reconfirmed the Consensus Creed of 360 as the official religion of the Eastern empire. He banished all the bishops who were deposed by Constantius but allowed to return by Jovian. Upon receiving this news, Athanasius fled from Alexandria to a house outside the city (5 October). It was during this period that he is said to have spent four months hiding in his father’s tomb.

366 Valens restored Athanasius as the Bishop of Alexandria. Many historians find it difficult to explain why he did this, because he certainly did not agree with Athanasius on religion. But he did have a political reason. On 28 September 365 Julian’s relative Procopius was proclaimed Emperor, so Valens had to face what appeared to be a serious challenge to his rule. Like Constantius in 351, he could not afford the risk that Egypt might side with the usurper. On 1 February 366 he invited Athanasius to return to Alexandria and resume his office as Bishop. The rebellion was not suppressed until the spring of the following year. [Barnes, 163]

366 Bishop Liberius of Rome died, and dissent in the Roman church broke out in a violently contested election. Damasus was elected bishop of Rome, but fighting between his partisans and those of his rival left 137 dead bodies in the Basilica of Sicinius in a single day. [Barnes, 118]

**367 The New Testament.** Athanasius wrote to the churches in his diocese an Easter letter which is now regarded as the first authoritative statement of the canon of the New Testament. He included several disputed works such as Second Peter and the Book of Revelation, but he excluded The Didache, The Epistle of Barnabas, First Clement, and The Shepherd of Hermas, which had long been regarded as equal to the apostolic letters. He wrote: “In these [27 books] alone the teaching of godliness is proclaimed. No one may add to them, and nothing may be taken away from them.” But his pronouncement was not universally accepted even in Alexandria. Twenty years later, the Alexandrian scholar Didymus the Blind still regarded as authoritative the books that Athanasius excluded, and there were many such examples all over the Empire, both in the East and the West, but by 395 all such dissent had been silenced by the emperor. [Church History Institute]

367 On 24 September, Lucius, who was elected bishop after George was murdered in 361, entered Alexandria. Two days later he was escorted out of the city by a large force of armed soldiers, through a continuous shower of threats and insults, to prevent the partisans of Athanasius from murdering him. [Barnes, 163]

368 On 8 June, Athanasius celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his consecration as bishop of Alexandria by commissioning a documentary history of the church of Alexandria from the beginning of the Fourth Century in order to ensure that his version of events would henceforth be accepted — an enterprise in which he was singularly successful. Thereafter he declined to involve himself in ecclesiastical affairs outside of Egypt. [Barnes, 164]

370-371 Three bishops, Basil of Caesarea, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus, have been credited with developing the doctrine of the Trinity, but they wrote later than the Synod of Alexandria led by Athanasius in 362 at which his Creed and his doctrine of the Trinity were approved.

**373 Athanasius died** (2 May). He was about 75 years old. He had promoted the deification of Jesus for 55 years, and deification of the Holy Spirit for more than 10 years, in defiance of both imperial and ecclesiastical authority. His innovations theoretically collapsed the divine hierarchy upward by elevating first Jesus and then the Holy Spirit to equality with God. The main difficulty with this theological maneuver was that it required a paradoxical assertion of unity (three equals one) in order to retain the political power of monotheism: “Our God is the only God; everyone else worships idols or demons.” Although Athanasius is still called “The Great Defender of Orthodoxy,” such titles are misleading. His innovations were officially condemned as heresy during

his life, and were still heresy at the time of his death. From 325 onward, he continued to preach, “Let what was confessed by the Fathers at Nicaea prevail,” but it had not prevailed; it had been replaced by the consensus creed of the orthodox church established in 360.

373 Peter, whom Athanasius appointed to succeed him as bishop of Alexandria, was deposed by a delegation of bishops from the emperor Valens, and replaced by Lucius. Peter escaped from prison and went to Rome where he was sheltered by the Nicene Bishop Damasus. At the same time, Valens authorized Lucius to eject Nicene bishops from Alexandria and the rest of Egypt. [Sozomen VI, xix]

374 Ambrose, a lawyer and governor of the province, was made Bishop of Milan by public acclamation and approval of the Western Emperor Valentinian. Ambrose was baptized, made deacon, priest, and bishop — in eight days. This was a stark violation of the Council of Nicaea (Canon 2) which strictly forbade the ordination of a novice as priest, much less bishop. He began studying diligently to make up for his lack of theological training.

375 Valentinian died and was succeeded by Gratian. A tribe of barbarians invaded the western empire and then sent ambassadors to solicit peace. When they were brought before him, Valentinian expressed his displeasure, for a long time, in a very high-pitched voice, burst a blood-vessel, and died shortly thereafter. He was about 54 years old. The army proclaimed his four year old son, Valentinian II, Emperor of the West. The Eastern Emperor Valens acknowledged him with the provision that Valentinian’s sixteen year old son Gratian serve in that capacity until Valentinian II was somewhat older. Gratian was raised as a Christian. During the ceremony in which he was given the symbols of imperial authority, he refused to accept the pagan title, Pontifex Maximus. However, he only “lived up to his father for a year or two, then abandoned himself to amusements and the chase, and left the government to corrupt officials who put every office and judgment up for sale.” [Sozomen VI, xxxvi] [Durant, Vol. IV]

376 The Huns had conquered the Ostrogoths north of the Black Sea and pressed on westward to attack the Visigoths in Dacia (now part of Romania and Hungary). Some Visigoths fled with Athanaric into the mountains of Transylvania, but the majority petitioned the emperor Valens to be taken into the Roman Empire. About 200,000 Visigoths crossed the Danube and settled in the province of Pannonia, but oppression by Imperial officials soon caused them to revolt. They traversed the country plundering as they went.

376 Bishop Peter returned to Alexandria from Rome with a letter from Damasus, confirming the tenets of Nicaea and his own ordination. He was installed in place of Lucius, who sailed away to Constantinople after his eviction. “The Emperor Valens very naturally was so distracted by other affairs that he had no leisure to attend to these transactions.” [Sozomen VI, xxxix]

377 Bishop Ambrose became Gratian’s chief adviser. He wrote a treatise entitled “The

Faith” whereby he instructed the young Emperor in Nicene Christianity.

**377 Edict of tolerance.** Gratian disapproved of persecution, and recalled all those who had been banished on account of their religion. He enacted a law by which every individual should be freely permitted the exercise of his own religion, and should be allowed to hold assemblies, with the exception of the Manichaeans and the followers of Photinus and Eunomius. [Sozomen VI, xxxix]

**378 Death of Valens.** The Visigoths marched on Constantinople, but when Valens came out with his army, they retreated. He pursued them across Thrace to Adrianople (about 130 miles northwest of Constantinople), where he found them encamped in a secure position. He ordered his army to attack without waiting to arrange them in proper order. His cavalry was dispersed, his infantry was forced to retreat; and, pursued by the enemy, he dismounted from his horse, and with a few attendants entered into a small tower, where he hid himself. The Visigoths went on by, not suspecting he was there, but as the last detachment was passing the tower, his attendants shot a volley of arrows at them. They shouted to the units ahead of them. The other Visigoths returned and surrounded the tower. Then they collected vast quantities of wood from the country around, piled it against the tower, and set fire to it. The emperor and his attendants were utterly destroyed. Valens was 50 years old. [Sozomen VI, xl]

## **EDICT OF INTOLERANCE**

**379 The Emperor Theodosius.** Gratian appointed a Spanish general named Theodosius to replace Valens as Emperor of the East (19 January). His parents were Nicenes, which is not surprising since Bishop Hosius had great influence in Spain. Theodosius led a successful campaign against the Visigoths, forced them to sue for peace, and proceeded to Thessalonica (a city in northeastern Greece) at the end of the year. There he became seriously ill, and believing he was about to die, he was baptized by the Nicene Bishop Ascholius. While he was recuperating from his illness, he was told that all the churches farther to the East, with the exception of Jerusalem, were in the hands of “Arians”. Upon hearing this, “Theodosius enacted a law at Thessalonica [27 February 380], which he caused to be published at Constantinople, well knowing that it would speedily become public to all the other cities, if issued from that city, which is as a citadel of the whole empire.” [Sozomen VII, ii & iv]

**Edict of 380.** “It is our desire that all the various nation which are subject to our clemency and moderation should continue to the profession of that religion which was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter, as it has been preserved by faithful tradition and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, a man of apostolic holiness. According to the apostolic teaching and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe in the one deity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in equal majesty and in a holy Trinity. We authorize the followers of this law to assume the title Catholic Christians; but as for the others, since in our judgment they are foolish madmen, we decree that they shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to give their conventicles the name of churches. They will suffer in the first place the chastisement of divine condemnation, and second, the punishment that

our authority, in accordance with the will of heaven, shall decide to inflict.” [Theodosian Code XVI.1.2; and Sozomen, VII, iv]

As soon as I saw this edict, I realized it was one of the largest missing pieces, the first authoritative definition of Catholicism. Thus 27 February 380 is the birth date of the Catholic Church; despite all claims to the contrary, it did not exist prior to that time. Like the edict itself, church historians claim longevity for the Church retroactively, by pointing back to the Council of Nicaea and the Apostle Peter.

By this edict, Theodosius reversed the policy of his predecessors, from tolerance to intolerance of religious diversity. The last sentence was a declaration of war that pre-justified religious persecution as the will of God. Here, then, is the original charter of the inquisitions, the crusades, and the burning of heretics all over Europe. The next time we see tolerance of religious diversity proclaimed as official state policy is 1300 years later, in Pennsylvania.

The Trinitarian formula imposed by the Edict of 380 is not the Nicene Creed of 325; it is the Athanasian Creed of 362. Thus, overnight, Theodosius made Athanasian heresy orthodox and the current orthodox faith “Arian” a heresy.

Four dogmas of subsequent Catholic orthodoxy were authored by Athanasius and imposed by Theodosius: the Incarnation, Trinity, Creed, and Canon of the New Testament. Thus, from 380 onward, and in all retroactive re-labeling, “Nicene” means “Athanasian” and “Arian” means “not Athanasian.”

Although the Edict of 380 is usually omitted or barely mentioned or glossed over, it was one of the most significant pronouncements in Western history, politically and religiously, because it was (and is) so thoroughly enforced. From this point on, Churchmen wrote biased histories and inversions of history, developed and perpetuated preferential and prejudicial vocabulary and definitions of terms, and suppressed or destroyed contradictory documents, in order to legitimize the origin of the Church and disguise what actually happened.

## **ENFORCEMENT OF INTOLERANCE**

380 Theodosius repressed the Vandals and Huns, and made peace with the Goths. On 24 November he held his triumph at Constantinople. As soon as he came into the city, he began expelling “Arian” Christians. In January 381, he closed all the “Arian” churches, expelled their clergy, and turned the buildings over to Nicenes.

Writing less than fifty years later, Sozomen describes how this was done: “The Arians, under the guidance of Demophilus, still retained possession of the churches. The emperor sent to command Demophilus to conform to the doctrines of Nicaea, and to lead the people to embrace the same sentiments or else to vacate the churches. Demophilus assembled the people, acquainted them with the imperial edict, and informed them that it was his intention to hold a church the next day without the walls of the city, in

accordance, he said, with the Divine law, which commands us when we are persecuted in one city to 'flee unto another.' ... "When Demophilus and his followers had quitted the church, the emperor entered therein and engaged in prayer; and from that period those who maintained the con-substantiality of the Holy Trinity held possession of the houses of prayer. These events occurred in the fifth year of the consulate of Gratian, and in the first of that of Theodosius, and after the churches had been during forty years in the hands of the Arians." [Sozomen VII, v]

**381 Council of Constantinople.** Theodosius convened a council of 150 Nicene bishops (May-June) which was later called the Second Ecumenical Council. He also summoned 36 bishops of the Macedonian sect, but they refused to say, "The Son is of the same substance as the Father," and withdrew from the meeting. At first, Bishop Meletius of Antioch presided, but he died. He was replaced by Bishop Gregory of Nazianzen, whom Theodosius had made Bishop of Constantinople the year before, but he resigned and retired to a monastery.

"The emperor and the priests therefore proceeded to the election of another bishop, which they regarded as the most important affair then requiring attention; and the emperor was urgent that diligent investigations might be instituted, so that the most excellent and best individual might be entrusted with the high-priesthood of the great and royal city. The council, however, was divided in sentiment; for each of the members desired to see one of his own friends ordained over the church."

"A certain man of Tarsus in Cilicia, of the illustrious order of senator, was at this period residing at Constantinople. Being about to return to his own country, he called upon Diodorus, bishop of Tarsus, to inquire whether he had any letters to send by him. Diodorus was fully intent upon the ordination, which was the subject then engrossing universal attention of men. He had no sooner seen Nectarius than he considered him worthy of the bishopric, and straightway determined this in his own mind as he reflected on the venerable age of the man, his form so befitting a priest, and the suavity of his manners. He conducted him, as if upon some other business, to the bishop of Antioch, and requested him to use his influence to procure this election. The bishop of Antioch derided this request, for the names of the most eminent men had already been proposed for consideration. He, however, called Nectarius to him, and desired him to remain for a short time with him."

"Some time after, the emperor commanded the priests to draw up a list of the names of those whom they thought worthy of the ordination, reserving to himself the right of choosing any one of those whose names were thus submitted to him. All the bishops complied with this mandate; and, among the others, the bishop of Antioch wrote down the names of those whom he proposed as candidates for the bishopric, and, at the end of his list, from consideration for Diodorus, he inserted the name of Nectarius."

"The emperor read the list of those inscribed and stopped at the name of Nectarius at the end of the document, on which he placed his finger, and seemed for some time lost in reflection; ran it up to the beginning, and again went through the whole, and chose

Nectarius. This nomination excited great astonishment and all the people were anxious to ascertain who Nectarius was, his manner of life, and birthplace. When they heard that he had not been initiated [baptized] their amazement was increased at the decision of the emperor. ... For when the emperor was informed that Nectarius had not been initiated, he remained of the same opinion, although opposed by many priests. When at last consent had been given to the imperial mandate, Nectarius was initiated, and while yet clad in his initiatory robes, was proclaimed bishop of Constantinople by the unanimous voice of the Synod.” [Sozomen VII, vii]

In the period between Constantine and Theodosius, neither the emperor nor any of his officials dictated the results of a church council [Barnes, 169]. But needless to say, the bishops at this council continued to do what Theodosius told them. They ignored all the councils that disagreed with Athanasius, endorsed his full deification of both Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and condemned all other forms of Christianity including the current orthodoxy that was established throughout the Empire twenty-one years earlier.

**381 Bishop Wulfila** was summoned to the Council of Constantinople, but when he saw what was happening there, he became ill and died. He was 70 years old. The “Arian” Christianity he had planted among the Goths continued to spread, and other peoples received their Christianity from the Goths. Within two generations, the barbarian Goths and Vandals and Lombards were Christians, and the new kingdoms they established in the Balkans, Gaul, Spain, Italy, and Africa were officially Christian nations. (Prior to this study, I didn’t know that any barbarians were Christians.) What these nations believed may be seen from the testamentary creed that Wulfila left with his followers just before he died:

**Creed of Wulfila.** “I, Wulfila, Bishop and Confessor, have always believed thus and in this sole and true faith I make my journey to my Lord. I believe that there is only one God the Father, alone unbegotten and invisible, and in His only-begotten Son, our Lord and God, creator and maker of all things, not having any like unto Him. Therefore there is one God of all, who is also God of our God. And I believe in one Holy Spirit, an enlightening and sanctifying power. As Christ says after the resurrection to his Apostles: ‘Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be clothed with power from on high.’ (Luke 24.49) And again: ‘And ye shall receive power coming upon you by the Holy Spirit.’ (Acts 1.8) Neither God nor Lord, but the faithful minister of Christ; not equal, but subject and obedient in all things to the Son. And I believe the Son to be subject and obedient in all things to God the Father.” [From: Auxentius on Wulfila]

This independent creed shows that precedence and substance were diversionary issues, debaters’ tactics, and the real issue was whether Jesus is subordinate and obedient to God. The “Arian Controversy” was over the final step in the deification of Jesus. The “Arians” believed it was blasphemy to make a man equal to God. The “Nicenes” believed it was impious to say the Son is inferior to the Father.

**381 Council of Aquileia.** Gratian summoned a council of bishops (September). Not surprisingly, almost all the 25 bishops who attended were Nicenes. The meeting was conducted as a trial in which Bishop Ambrose led the condemnation of two “Arian” bishops, both of whom were apparently disciples or associates of Wulfila.

**382 Synod of Constantinople.** Two years after the Edict of 380 all the churches in Constantinople were held by the Catholics, but other sects still existed in various parts of the empire.

“Theodosius, therefore, again summoned together the presidents of the sects which were flourishing, in order that they might either bring others to their own state of conviction on disputed topics, or be convinced themselves; for he imagined that all would be brought to oneness of opinion, if a free discussion were entered into, concerning ambiguous points of doctrine. The council, therefore, was convened.”

“[Theodosius] commanded each party to draw up a written exposition of its own creed. On the day appointed for the presentation of these documents, Nectarius and Agelius appeared at the palace as representatives of those who maintain the con-substantiality of the Holy Trinity; Demophilus, the Arian president, came forward as the deputy of the Arians; Eunomius represented the Eunomians; and Eleusius, bishop of Cyzicus, appeared for the sectarians denominated Macedonians.”

“The emperor, after receiving their formularies, expressed himself in favor of that one alone in which con-substantiality of the Trinity was recognized, and destroyed the others.” [Sozomen VII, xii]

This is how we got the “Nicene Creed” that is still recited by Christians all over the world. It was not voted by a church council; it was arbitrarily selected by one man, Theodosius, wielding his authority as the Pontifex Maximus (highest priest).

#### **Creed of Theodosius (“The Nicene Creed”)**

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead. Whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver-of-Life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And in one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.” [Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. XIV]

The Catholic Encyclopedia says that Theodosius “made severe punishments by his laws, but did not carry them out, for he did not wish to punish, but only to frighten his subjects, that they might think as he did about Divine things.” This seems to be true. He apparently did not torture or kill many people. Instead, he used the legal powers of government against law-abiding people, without damaging them enough to make martyrs of them or provoke them to violent rebellion. Although his overall strategy for unifying the Empire was not politically expedient because it alienated so many people, his tactics were expedient because they minimized his expenditure of coercive resources. The essence of his tactics was to destroy existing organizations, prevent reorganization, and thereby stop the transmission of doctrines differing from his own.

“The emperor enacted a law, prohibiting heretics from holding churches, from giving public instructions in the faith, and from conferring ordination on bishops or others. Some of the heterodox were expelled from the cities and villages, while others were disgraced and deprived of the privileges enjoyed by other subjects of the empire.” [Sozomen VII, xii]

382 **Jerome** became secretary to Bishop Damasus of Rome, obtained the Bishop’s approval, and began translating the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin. Completed 23 years later (405), Jerome’s translation, known as the Vulgate (from the Latin word *vulgus*, meaning “common” language), soon became the only Bible in the Western Church. Scholars worked from the Vulgate instead of translating directly from the original languages for more than 1,000 years.

382 Gratian reversed his own policy of tolerance and went along with Theodosius. He canceled state support of all non-Christian religions, terminated payments by imperial or municipal treasuries for their ceremonies, vestal virgins or priests, and confiscated lands belonging to temples. He removed from the Roman Senate “that statue of the goddess Victory which Augustus had placed there in 29 BC and before which twelve generations of senators had taken their vows of allegiance to the emperor.” [Durant, Vol. IV]

383 Gratian took measures to suppress every form of Christianity except the new orthodoxy. He made apostasy (defined as conversion from Nicene Christianity to any other faith) a crime punishable by the government.

**383 Death of Gratian.** Maximus, a Roman general, led a rebellion in Britain that spread into Gaul. Gratian fled from Paris to Lyons. One of the rebel commanders “obtained possession of the imperial chariot, and sent word to the emperor that his wife was traveling towards his camp. Gratian, who was but recently married and passionately attached to his wife, hastened incautiously across the river, and in his anxiety to meet her, fell without forethought into the hands of his enemies.” He was seized and shortly thereafter murdered. (25 August) He was 24 years old. Maximus proclaimed himself Emperor of the West. Theodosius acknowledged him on condition that he allow Gratian’s twelve year old brother, Valentinian II, to rule in Italy. [Sozomen VII, xiii]

383 The Roman Senate sent a delegation to Valentinian II to plead for restoration of the statue of Victory. The young emperor was moved by their petitions, and even Christians in his imperial council advised him to restore the statue, but Bishop Ambrose overruled the council with an imperious letter to the emperor. He said, “All men serve the emperor, and he serves God, but he who would be loyal to the true God must have no indulgence for the gods that are demons. Idols must be burned and profane ceremonies abolished. To restore the Altar of Victory would be a persecution of Christianity, and the emperor would thereby become apostate.” In effect, he threatened to excommunicate the emperor if the statue of Victory was restored. Valentinian II denied the Senate’s appeal. [Boyd, 27]

384 **Augustine** came to Milan to accept a position as teacher of rhetoric. He was converted from paganism to Nicene Christianity by Bishop Ambrose. Eleven years later, Augustine was the Bishop of Hippo, in North Africa. He is still recognized as one of the most influential teachers in the entire history of Christianity.

385 A Spanish bishop, Priscillian, was accused of heresy by two other bishops, tried before the Western Emperor Maximus, condemned, and despite the protests of Bishop Ambrose and Bishop Martin of Gaul, he and several of his companions were burned to death. This was the first recorded instance in which Christians burned Christians for heresy — the last was in France, in 1756.

385 The “Arian” Empress Justina, the mother of Valentinian II, requested Bishop Ambrose to open a church in Milan where she and her friends could celebrate the Easter of 385, but he refused. He organized a “sit-in” of his followers to keep the church continuously occupied. Valentinian sent a party of soldiers: “They forced their way into the interior, arrested Ambrose, and were about to lead him into exile at that very moment, when the people assembled in crowds at the church, and evinced a resolution to die rather than submit to the banishment of their priest.” [Sozomen VII, xiii]

386 Valentinian II enacted a law making persecution of “Arian” Christians a crime. “By this law, all who conformed to the doctrines set forth at Ariminum and ratified at Constantinople were exhorted to convene boldly; and it was enacted that death should be the punishment of those who should hinder or be running counter to this law of the emperor.” [Sozomen VII, xiii] Bishop Ambrose ignored this law, and apparently no one enforced it.

387 Maximus expelled Valentinian II, who fled with his mother to Thessalonica, whereupon Theodosius brought Valentinian II back to Italy with an army, defeated Maximus, and executed him. Justina died, and Valentinian II, by the advice of Theodosius, placed himself under the guidance of Bishop Ambrose.

388 Theodosius sent his agents through Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor, with orders to destroy pagan temples and break up their membership associations. Here again, he implemented his policies by destroying organizations and eliminating the ability to transmit doctrines. This tactic was successful. It destroyed the 4,000 year old Egyptian

religion so thoroughly the language was lost. No one could read ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics for 1,400 years, until the discovery of the Rosetta Stone (1799) and the difficult re-translation work of Jean-François Champollion.

390 Theodosius closed the Oracle of Delphi. This ancient Greek shrine, sacred to Apollo, had been operating continuously for 1,500 years. It has not been reopened.

390 Theodosius ordered the slaughter of about 7,000 people at Thessalonica, to punish the city for an uprising. Bishop Ambrose wrote a letter chastising him severely, refused to hold worship services in his presence, and stood in his way when he tried to enter the church — whereupon Theodosius did public penance. This episode established the threat of excommunication which popes and bishops used to control emperors and kings for more than 1,100 years, until King Henry VIII declined to be coerced. In 1534 he had Parliament pass the Act of Supremacy which made the King, not the Pope, the head of the Church of England.

391 Theodosius refused to restore the statue of Victory in the Roman Senate. He issued laws making pagan sacrifices, omens, and witchcraft punishable offenses.

**391 Destruction of the Library of Alexandria.** Bishop Theophilus of Alexandria, having obtained the emperor's approval, confiscated the Temple of Dionysius and started to convert it into a church. The statues were removed and the innermost shrines were opened. Then, to cast shame on the pagan mysteries, he ordered his followers to carry sacred objects out of the temple in a public procession. Thus he made a spectacle of the phalli (large models of male sex organs) and other objects that really were or seemed to be ridiculous. [Sozomen VII, xv]

The pagans, enraged by this unexpected humiliation, attacked the Christians, killed many and wounded others, and then seized the Serapion (the Temple of the god Serapis) and used it as a fortress. They continued to drag Christians into the Serapion, torture them, and compel them to sacrifice to the pagan gods. Those who refused had both legs broken. If they still refused they were crucified or killed in some other ingenious manner. [Sozomen VII, xv]

When the local officials found they were unable to suppress this rebellion, they appealed to the emperor. He declared that the Christians who had been killed were blessed, because they were martyrs who suffered for the faith. He offered free pardon to those who had killed them, hoping by this act of clemency to induce pagans to convert to Christianity. The pagans who had barricaded themselves in the Serapion abandoned it. [Sozomen VII, xv]

A mob of Christians entered the Serapion, destroyed the colossal statue of the god Serapis, looted the temple, and burned the library. The Serapion was one of the wonders of the ancient world, and possibly the largest place of worship in the world at that time — a city within a city, an enormous complex of buildings, some of which held the Library of Alexandria. This library had the largest and most famous collection of ancient scrolls. It

was started by Ptolemy I about 300 BC. He and other rulers added to it until it contained over 700,000 scrolls. Part of the library was destroyed by fire during the siege of Alexandria by Julius Caesar in 47 BC; the remainder, plus all the documents accumulated during 438 years, was burned by Nicene Christians.

**392 Eugenius the Apostate.** Valentinian II died in Gaul, just as Bishop Ambrose was crossing the Alps to baptize him. He was found strangled in his bedchamber. Some people said he was murdered; others said he committed suicide. He was 21 years old. Arbogast, his pagan tutor, proclaimed a rhetorician named Eugenius the ruler of Italy (May). Theodosius refused to recognize him. Eugenius, although nominally a Christian, tried to unite the western pagans in his defense. He set up pagan altars and restored the statue of Victory in Rome. His soldiers marched under the standard of Hercules. [Sozomen VII, xxii]

392 Theodosius directed that the entrances of every pagan temple throughout the empire be closed to the public.

393 Theodosius stopped the Olympic Games, which had been held every four years since 776 BC. They were not held again for 1,500 years (1896). But he did not stop the gladiatorial games, which were supposed to harden the citizens to the sight of human bloodshed so they could endure war.

393 Theodosius declared his younger son Honorius successor co-emperor, and leaving him at Constantinople with his older son Arcadius who had previously been appointed co-emperor, he departed for Italy at the head of his troops. His army consisted not only of Roman soldiers, but of bands of “barbarian” Visigoths. Even though the Visigoths were not part of the Roman Empire, and most of them were “Arian” Christians by this time, he hired them to help him fight the pagans.

394 Theodosius defeated Eugenius near Aquileia (6 September). This was the final blow to the old Roman religion, now outlawed and persecuted as Christianity had been prior to the Edict of Milan, 81 years earlier. Theodosius entered Rome as the sole master of his newly created Nicene Empire. He enacted laws that enforced keeping Sunday as the Sabbath and added to the penalties imposed on pagans, Jews, and heretics, but his personal triumph only lasted four months.

**395 Death of Theodosius.** After his triumph in Rome, Theodosius went to Milan. There he became seriously ill. He sent for his son Honorius from Constantinople. When Honorius arrived, he seemed to feel better, so he went to see the horse-races and other events in the hippodrome. After dinner, however, he suddenly grew worse, and asked Honorius to preside at the spectacle. He died the following night (17 January). Bishop Ambrose preached his funeral oration. [Sozomen VII, xxix]

The Catholic Encyclopedia says: “Theodosius stands out as the destroyer of heresy and paganism, as the last sovereign of the undivided empire.” But he weakened the empire by alienating vast segments of the populace, and his will divided the empire between his

sons, thus splitting it permanently. His eleven year old son Honorius became Emperor of the West, and his eighteen year old son Arcadius became Emperor of the East. They both held the same religious views as their father and continued to enforce his policies -- and so did their children after them.”

## **SUMMARY**

Theodosius institutionalized religious persecution by Christians. He initiated and waged a culture war to make his own sect the State Church of the Roman Empire. Any objective view of Western civilization before and after his reign clearly shows that it marks the end of antiquity and the beginning of the dark ages. And now I know that his Edict of 380 was the dividing line, the watershed, between what Christianity was and what it became.

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# Wulfila, the Apostle of the Goths

Compiled by Ken Fortier

This Treatise has been compiled and condensed to give students of early Christian History a more complete history of **Ulphilas and the Arian/Athanasius controversy**. Many sources were compared to compile this article, including the sources mentioned by Ben H. Swett who published a summary chronology of the *State Church of The Roman Empire*, 7 May 1998.

## Wulfila or Ulphilas

|                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Born</b>                 | c. 311 AD in Europe              |
| <b>Died</b>                 | 383 AD in Constantinople         |
| <b>Other names</b>          | Urphilas, Uphila                 |
| <b>Ordained</b>             | 330 AD                           |
| <b>Writings</b>             | Translated the Bible into Gothic |
| <b>Congregations served</b> | Goths and other Teutonic tribes  |
| <b>Offices held</b>         | Bishop of the Goths              |
| <b>Title</b>                | Apostle of the Goths             |
| <b>Children</b>             | (adopted) Auxentius of Milan     |

**Wulfila** (Gothic: “Little wolf” or Latin: **Ulphilas/Ulphilas**) (c. 311 - 380 AD.) was the apostle of the Goths, missionary, translator of the Bible, and inventor of the first Gothic alphabet. He was probably descended from Christians of Anatolia who were brought to Europe after being captured by the Goths. He was sent to Constantinople as a young man by the Goths as either an ambassador or a hostage, and was ordained a bishop by Eusebius of Nicomedia at the height of the Arian controversy. He then returned to the Goths in Dacia to work as a missionary.

In 348, to escape religious persecution by a Gothic chief, probably Athanaric, Wulfila obtained permission from Emperor Constantius II to immigrate with part of his flock of converts to Moesia in what is now northern Bulgaria. Others among his converts became martyrs to their faith, a form of Arian Christianity.

In Moesia, Ulfilas translated the Bible from Greek into the Gothic language after devising the first Gothic alphabet. He later participated in the church council at Constantinople in 360. The council attempted to solve the conflict between Arian and Nicene Christians by banning the previous creeds of both factions.

Ulfilas converted many among the Goths who, when they conquered Rome as “barbarians,” were in fact Semi-Arian Christians. Though largely unheralded by history due to his so-called “heretical” views, he ranks among the greatest Christian missionaries of all time. Emperor Constantius II reportedly called him “the Moses of his day.”

## **Biography**

Born probably in 311, Ulfilas was descended from Cappadocians captured during raids in Asia Minor by the Goths from the north of the Danube. According to fragments of the Cappadocian church historian Philostorgius, preserved by Photius, the Goths during the time of Emperor Valerian took many Christian prisoners, probably including Ulfilas’ ancestors.

As a young man he was sent by the Goths to Constantinople, reportedly as an ambassador, though possibly as a hostage. There, he held the position of lector in the church of Constantinople and was consecrated as a bishop at the age of 30 by Eusebius of Nicomedia, himself the archbishop of Constantinople and a celebrated Arian leader with high connections in the imperial court of Constantius II.

(Emperor Constantius II sought unsuccessfully to reconcile Arian and Nicene Christians.) Shortly after his consecration, Ulfilas returned to Dacia as a missionary. During the remaining 40 years of his life he labored among his fellow countrymen, teaching them the Christian faith, though not adhering to the Nicene Creed.

The first eight or ten years of his missionary life were spent in Dacia. The church historian Socrates Scholasticus attributes to Ulfilas the conversion of many of the Goths under the leadership of both Fritigernes and Athanaric. The latter, says Socrates, regarded this as “a violation of the privileges of the religion of his ancestors.” Thus, “many of Semi-Arian Goths of that period became martyrs.” (*Hist. eccl.* IV) As a result of this persecution, Ulfilas was compelled to seek refuge in Moesia, along with many of his Christian converts.

In Moesia, he conceived the idea of translating the Bible into the language of the Goths. The task demanded as a preliminary that he should invent a special alphabet. His familiarity with Greek made the task comparatively simple, with only a few letters being borrowed from other sources, either Runic or Latin.

Despite his many other activities, Ulfilas succeeded in translating “all the books of Scripture with the exception of the Books of Kings, which he omitted because they are a mere narrative of military exploits, and the Gothic tribes were especially fond of war, and were in more need of restraints to check their military passions than of spurs to urge them

on to deeds of war” (Philostorgius, *Hist. eccl.*, II, 5). He translated the books of the Old Testament from the Septuagint Greek version, and those of the New Testament from their original Greek.

Ulphilas was one of the bishops in attendance at the important church council called by Constantius II at Constantinople in 360, where Bishop Acacius of Caesarea triumphed and the council issued its compromise creed as a substitute for the formulas of both the Nicene and the Arian parties. In an effort to end the bitter acrimony between the conflicting sects, the council decreed that neither the word “substance” (*ousia*) nor *hypostasis* (translated as “persona” in Latin) should be used in theological creeds and declarations henceforth. Although affirming the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it adopted what came to be known by its opponents as the “Semi-Arian” position: “We affirm that the Son is like the Father, in such a manner as the sacred Scriptures declare and teach.” The policy failed to win over the extreme partisans of either camp and was especially offensive to the Nicene party, since it abrogated the decision of a previous ecumenical council, which had accepted the term *homoousios* (“same substance”) in speaking of the Son and the Father.

Ulphilas is thus be considered by “orthodox” Christianity to be an Arian heretic. The more sympathetic Philostorgius, however, reported that no less a personage than the Roman emperor himself “held Ulphilas in such high honor that he would often speak of him in conversation as ‘the Moses of his day.’”

### **The testimony of Auxentius**

The most detailed description of Ulphilas’ life comes from a letter of his foster son and disciple, Bishop Auxentius of Milan, (also called Auxentius Durostorum). Following the trinitarian formula that had been endorsed at Constantinople, Auxentius portrays Ulphilas not as an Arian *per se*, but as a semi-Arian who supported the view that neither *homoousios* (same substance: The Nicene term) nor *homoiousos* (like substance: The Arian term) should be used to describe the relationship between God the Father and God the Son.

Auxentius declared Ulphilas to be “verily a confessor of Christ, a teacher of piety and a preacher of truth,” who never hesitated to preach the Gospel to people of all ranks, even in dangerous circumstances among the pagan Goths. **Auxentius also credits Ulphilas with “scatter(ing) the sect of the Homoousians (Nicene Christians), because he believed not in confused and concrete persons, but in discrete and distinct ones.” On the other hand, Ulphilas also put the “Homoiousians” (Arians) to flight, “since they defended the assumption that (the Son and the Father) were not of comparable but different substance.”** [Bold emphasis by KF.]

Other heretics which Auxentius credits Ulphilas with opposing include: Manichaeans, Marcionists, Montanists, Novatianists, and Donatists, among others.

Auxentius further testifies that “by the kindness of God and the grace of Christ he reared me bodily and spiritually as a son in the faith.” He concludes his account by appending Ulphilas’ personal creed, which reads as follows:

“I, Ulfila, bishop and confessor, have always so believed, and in this, the one true faith, (as) I make the journey to my Lord: I believe in one God the Father, the only unbegotten and invisible, and in his only-begotten Son, our Lord and God, the designer and maker of all creation, having none other like him (so that one alone among all beings is God the Father, who is also the God of our God); and in one Holy Spirit, the illuminating and sanctifying power, as Christ said after his resurrection to his apostles: “And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49) and again: “But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts 1:8); being neither God (the Father) nor our God (Christ), but the minister of Christ... subject and obedient in all things to the Son; and the Son, subject and obedient in all things to God who is his Father... (whom) he ordained in the Holy Spirit through his Christ.”

## Legacy

Had he not sided with the losing party in the crucial theological controversy of his day, Ulfilas would certainly have been known as one of the greatest saints in history. He courageously brought the Gospel to the Goths, instilling in them a faith that led many to accept martyrdom. Although condemned in most histories as “barbarians,” the Gothic tribes who overtook Europe and eventually captured even Rome itself were in reality not pagans, but Semi-Arian Christians, due largely to Ulfilas’ influence.

The Goths tended not to interfere in the theological affairs of the Christians of the Roman Empire. Even though they were technically heretics, their ascendancy in the West actually aided the Catholic Church immensely. It allowed the Roman church to develop relatively free from state influence, providing a much-needed counterbalance to the meddling of the eastern Roman emperors at Constantinople, who sought to use the Christian religion as an instrument of the state.

Theologically, Ulfilas’ legacy was ultimately wiped out by the resurgence of Nicene orthodoxy and the demise of both Arian and Semi-Arian Christianity. A more lasting contribution is his invention of the Gothic alphabet and his translation of the Bible into the previously unwritten Gothic language. A few chapters of Ulfilas’ translation of the Old Testament are still in existence. Of the New Testament, the greater portion of the Gospels have been maintained in the beautiful Silver Codex (a purple parchment with silver and gold letters) now at Upsala, dating from the fifth century. Nearly all of his translations of Saint Paul’s epistles can still be found in a Milanese codex as well.

[Note: The Bible of Wulfila is one of the early versions that survived the ages and is a valuable resource for the earlier manuscripts of the second and third century that he used in his translation into the Gothic language. From the time he produced this Gothic version, around 348 AD, and copies of it, his translation is remarkably preserved. It is very apparent that his version of the Bible would not have contained the Trinitarian phrase in Matthew 28:19, **because he used manuscripts produced before 325 AD.**]

## Arianism

**Arianism** was a major theological movement in the Christian Roman Empire during the fourth and fifth centuries AD. The conflict between Arianism and standard Trinitarian

beliefs was the first major doctrinal battle in the Christian church after the legalization of Christianity by Emperor Constantine I. Named after an Alexandrian priest named Arius, Arianism spawned a great controversy that divided the Roman Empire and defined the limits of Christian orthodoxy for centuries to come.

The controversy involved not only emperors, priests, and bishops, but also simple believers throughout the Christian empire. Bitter disputes among popular church leaders led to mob violence and political turmoil, and thus Emperor Constantine was moved to convene the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325. The Nicene Creed rejected the tenets of Arianism and exiled its main proponents, but did not put an end to the controversy. Constantine eventually reversed his position, pardoned Arius, and sent his main opponent, Athanasius of Alexandria, into exile. Later fourth century emperors supported Arianism, but in the end, the Athanasian view prevailed and has since been the virtually uncontested doctrine in all major branches of Christianity.

Arius taught that although God the Son indeed pre-existed as a divine being before the creation of the Universe, he was not “co-eternal” with God the Father. The opposite position, championed by Athanasius, held that the Father and Son existed together with the Holy Spirit from the beginning. Further disagreements involved the question of whether the Son and the Father were of the “same substance” and whether the Son was in any way subservient to the Father.

The Arian controversy was one of several bitter disputes that split the Christian world during the early centuries following Christianity’s rise to power. Whether or not the outcome was providentially correct, it should not be presumed that either party’s ideas or methods had divine approval. Jesus, after all, told his followers:

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:35)

Arianism was the first form of Christianity to make major inroads with the Germanic tribes, and many of the “barbarians” who conquered Rome were actually Semi-Arian Christians. As a result of Semi-Arianism being successfully taught to the Germanic tribes by the missionary Ulfilas, Semi-Arian Christianity lingered for several centuries in western Europe after the fall of the western Roman Empire.

### **Traditional Semi-Arianism**

Strict Semi-Arians condemned the term *homoousios*, but also rejected “homoiousios” as conceding too much, insisting instead on the term “anomoios.”

A letter from the later fourth century Semi-Arian bishop of Milan, Auxentius (d. 374), still survives. [2] It speaks of:

“One true God... alone unbegotten, without beginning, without end, eternal, exalted, sublime, excellent, most high creator, epitome of all excellence... who, being alone... did create and beget, make and establish, an only-begotten God.”

Although Christ thus did not always exist with God the Father, he is nevertheless a pre-existent being, and the agent of creation. Christ is described as: “Author of all things [made to exist] by the Father, after the Father, for the Father, and for the glory of the Father... He was both great God and great Lord and great King, and great Mystery, great Light and High Priest, the providing and law-giving Lord, Redeemer, Savior, Shepherd, born before all time, Creator of all creation.”

Auxentius went on to praise the efforts of the great Germanic Semi-Arian missionary Ulfilas in tones that provide a glimpse into the bitter antagonism between the Arian, Nicene, and Semi-Arian parties:

“In his preaching and exposition he asserted that all heretics were not Christians, but Antichrists; not pious, but impious; not religious, but irreligious; not timid but bold; not in hope but without hope; not worshipers of God, but without God, not teachers, but seducers; not preachers, but liars; be they Manichaeans, Marcionists, Montanists, Paulinians, Psabbelians, Antropians, Patripassians, Photinans, Novatians, Donatians, **Homoousians**, (or) **Homoiousians**.” [A statement showing Ulfilas denying both Arian and Nicene Christians. Emphasis added.]

Auxentius also preserved the creed that Ulfilas taught to his converts. It is likely that many of the Semi-Arian Christians among the Germanic tribes adhered to this confession, or something like it:

“I believe that there is only one God the Father, alone unbegotten and invisible, and in His only-begotten Son, our Lord and God, creator and maker of all things, not having any like unto Him... And I believe in one Holy Spirit, an enlightening and sanctifying power...[who is] neither God nor Lord, but the faithful minister of Christ; not equal, but subject and obedient in all things to the Son. And I believe the Son to be subject and obedient in all things to God the Father.”

## **Semi-Arian and Arian Creeds**

Several other Arian and semi-Arian creeds also circulated. A council of bishops held at Antioch in 341 endorsed a compromise formula representing the semi-Arian stance side-stepping the question of “like substance” vs. “same substance.” It is known as the Creed of the Dedication:

“We have not been followers of Arius,—how could Bishops, such as we, follow a Presbyter? — nor did we receive any other faith beside that which has been handed down from the beginning... We have been taught from the first to believe in one God, the God of the Universe, the Framer and Preserver of all things both intellectual and sensible. And in One Son of God, Only-begotten, who existed before all ages, and was with the Father

who had begotten Him, by whom all things were made, both visible and invisible... And we believe also in the Holy Spirit..." In the process of battling Arianism and enforcing the destruction of Arian works, Athanasius himself ironically became history's main source of information on Arianism. His *De Synodis* in particular preserves many of the Arian and semi-Arian creeds adopted by various church councils, including the one just cited. Another example of a semi-Arian statement preserved by Athanasius is the following:

"Since 'Coessential' (*homoousios*) and 'Like-in-essence,' (*homoiousios*) have troubled many persons in times past and up to this day, and since moreover some are said recently to have devised the Son's 'Unlikeness' (*anomoios*) to the Father, on their account we reject 'Coessential' and 'Like-in-essence,' as alien to the Scriptures, but 'Unlike' we anathematize, and account all who profess it as aliens from the Church. And we distinctly confess the 'Likeness' (*homoios*) of the Son to the Father."

## **The History of Arianism**

Arius reportedly learned his doctrine from an Antiochan presbyter (priest/elder) and later martyr named Lucius. Arius spread these ideas in Alexandria and was appointed a deacon in that city by its bishop, Peter. Controversy ensued, and Arius was briefly excommunicated, but was soon reconciled with Peter's successor, Achillas, who promoted him to the position of presbyter, providing him authority as a teacher of church doctrine. A persuasive orator and gifted poet, Arius' influence grew steadily. However, he gained the enmity of another new bishop, Alexander, and in 321 Arius was denounced by the local synod for teaching a heterodox view of the relationship of God the Son to God the Father.

Despite this setback, Arius and his followers already had great influence in the schools of Alexandria, and when he was forced into exile, his views spread to Palestine, Syria, and other parts of the eastern Mediterranean. His theological songs and poems, published in his book, *Thalia*, were widely recited. Many bishops soon accepted Arius' ideas, including the influential Eusebius of Nicomedia, who had the ear no less a personage than the Emperor himself.

## **Nicea and its aftermath**

Constantine's hopes that Christianity would serve as a unifying force in the empire, meanwhile, faced frustration. By 325, the Arian controversy had become significant enough that he called an assembly of bishops, the First Council of Nicea. Reports vary, but the church historian Eusebius of Caesaria indicated that the Emperor himself expressed his support of the term *homoousios* to the council. Arius' views may have been losing the day in any case, but once the Emperor weighed in, the Arian cause was hopeless. The council condemned Arianism and formulated the Nicene creed, which is still recited in Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and some Protestant services:

“... God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance (*homoousios*) with the Father.”

In its original version, the creed added the following statement in a more overt opposition to Arianism:

But those who say: “There was a time when he was not”; and “He was not before he was made”; and “He was made out of nothing”; or “He is of another substance” or “essence”... they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.

Constantine exiled those who refused to accept the creed — including Arius himself and several others. He also exiled the bishops who signed the creed but refused to condemn Arius — notably Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nicea. The Emperor also ordered all copies of the *Thalia*, the book in which Arius had expressed his teachings, to be burned. This ended the open theological debate for several years, but under the surface, opposition to the Nicene creed remained strong.

Eventually Constantine became convinced that *homoousios* was an ill-advised and divisive term. In the previous century, it had been condemned by several church councils because of its association with the teaching of the heretic Paul of Samosata. Otherwise orthodox bishops, especially in the East, adamantly rejected the term. Concerned to bring peace to the Empire, Constantine became more lenient toward those exiled at the council. He allowed Theognis of Nicea and Eusebius of Nicomedia, a protégé of his sister, to return once they had signed an ambiguous statement of faith. The two, together with other friends of Arius, then began to work for Arius’ rehabilitation.

At the synod of Tyre in 335, they brought accusations against Arius’ nemesis, Athanasius, now the powerful bishop of Alexandria. Constantine had Athanasius banished, considering him intransigent and an impediment to reconciliation. In the same year, the synod of Jerusalem readmitted Arius to communion, and in 336, Constantine allowed Arius to return to his hometown. Arius, however, soon died. Eusebius and Theognis remained in the Emperor’s favor.

When Constantine, who had been an unbaptized believer much of his adult life, accepted baptism on his deathbed, it was from the Semi-Arian bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia.

## **The debates reopen**

Proponents of Arianism and Semi-Arianism prospered under the 24-year reign of Constantius II, shown above. After a struggle during the reign of Julian the Apostate, they regained a favored position under Valens.

The Nicene terminology was proving insufficient. After Constantine’s death in 337, open dispute resumed again. Eusebius of Nicomedia, who had been made bishop of Constantinople, became an adviser to Constantine’s son Constantius II, then emperor of the Eastern half of the Empire. Constantius encouraged the anti-Nicene groups and set

out to revise the official creed itself through numerous Church councils. He proceeded to exile bishops adhering to the old creed, including Athanasius, who fled to Rome. In 355 Constantius became the sole Emperor and extended his pro-Arian policy to the western provinces. When the Bishop of Rome, Liberius, refused to sign a denunciation of Athanasius, Constantius forced him into exile for a period of two years, the first instance of a long struggle in which the Roman church would emerge — in its view — as the champion of orthodoxy in the face of royal error.

As debates raged in an attempt to come up with a new formula, three camps evolved among the opponents of the Nicene Creed.

The first group opposed the Nicene formula mainly because of the divisive term *homoousios*, which some had rejected as heretical long before the advent of the Arian controversy. They preferred the term *homoiousios*. They rejected Arius, and accepted the equality and co-eternality of the Three Persons of the Trinity. However, they were usually called “semi-Arians” by their opponents.

The second group — called both Arians and semi-Arians — in large part followed Arius’ teachings but avoided invoking his name. In another compromise wording, they described the Son as being “like” the Father (*homoios*).

A third, overtly Arian, group described the Son as unlike (*anomoios*) the Father and condemned the compromisers as heretics.

Some bishops, of course, did not fall neatly into any of the above categories. Meanwhile, some among the now persecuted Nicene group stubbornly rejected any formula but the original one, which they deemed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. Coalitions between semi-Arian and moderate Nicene bishops waxed and waned, while other semi-Arians found allies among their more strict Arianist brethren.

No less than fourteen creedal formulas were adopted in formal Church councils throughout the Empire between 340 and 360. The pagan observer Ammianus Marcellinus commented sarcastically: “The highways were covered with galloping bishops.” Constantius hoped the matter would be finally settled at the twin councils of Rimini (Italy) and Seleucia (Turkey) in 359-360. The formula adopted, however, proved unacceptable to even moderate Nicenes, while the semi-Arian group explained:

“Whereas the term ‘essence,’ (*ousia*) has been adopted (by) the Fathers in simplicity, and gives offence as being misconceived by the people, and is not contained in the Scriptures, it has seemed good to remove it, that it be never in any case used of God again, because the divine Scriptures nowhere use it of Father and Son. But we say that the Son is like (*homoios*) the Father in all things, as also the Holy Scriptures say and teach.”

After Constantius’ death in 361, Bishop Liberius of Rome declared the above-mentioned councils null and void. Meanwhile, Constantius’ successor Julian the Apostate, a devotee of paganism, declared that the empire would no longer favor one church faction over

another. He allowed all exiled bishops to return. With no political consequences at stake for expressing previously unacceptable views, the Nicene formula re-emerged as a rallying point for many bishops, particularly in the West.

The next emperor, Valens, however, revived Constantius' policy and supported the "Homoian" party, exiling opposing bishops and often using force. Many Nicene bishops were exiled to the other ends of the Empire. These contacts, paradoxically, contributed to a rapprochement between the Western supporters of the Nicene creed and the Eastern Arians.

## **Theodosius and the Council of Constantinople**

The tide turned decisively against Arianism when Valens died in battle in 378 and was succeeded by Theodosius I, who strongly adhered to the Nicene Creed. Two days after Theodosius arrived in Constantinople, on November 24, 380, he expelled the Homoian bishop, Demophilus of Constantinople, and gave the supervision of the churches of that city to the future Bishop Gregory of Nazianzus, the leader of the rather small Nicene community there, an act which provoked rioting. Theodosius had recently been baptized during a severe illness, as was common in the early Christian world. In February he published an edict ordering that all Roman subjects should profess the faith of the bishops of Rome and Alexandria (i.e., the Nicene faith).

In 381, at the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople, a group of mainly Eastern bishops assembled and accepted the Nicene Creed. This is generally considered the end of Arianism among the non-Germanic peoples. At the close of this council, Theodosius issued an imperial decree ordering that any non-conforming churches would be turned over to pro-Nicene bishops. Although many in the church hierarchy in the East had opposed the Nicene creed in the decades leading up to Theodosius' accession, he managed to impose unity by a combination of force and effective administration.

## **'Arianism in the Germanic kingdoms**

During the time of Arianism's flowering in Constantinople, the Goth convert Ulfilas was sent as a missionary to the Gothic barbarians across the Danube, a mission supported for political reasons by Constantius II. Ulfilas' initial success in converting this Germanic people to a Semi-Arian form of Christianity was strengthened by the fact that Arianism was favored by the contemporary emperors.

When the Germanic peoples entered the Roman Empire and founded successor-kingdoms in its western part, most had been Semi-Arian Christians for more than a century. The conquerors established Semi-Arian churches throughout much of the former western Roman empire. Parallel hierarchies served different sets of believers — the Germanic elites being Semi-Arians, while the majority population adhered to the Nicene creed.

While most Germanic tribes were tolerant regarding the trinitarian beliefs of their subjects, the Vandals tried for several decades to force their Arian belief on their North African trinitarian subjects, exiling trinitarian clergy, dissolving monasteries, and exercising heavy pressure on non-conforming Christians.

Other Germanic Semi-Arian tribes tended to be less adamant in their faith than Nicene Christians, and the orthodox party possessed advantages in literacy and the sophistication of their Christian culture. By the beginning of the 8th century, the Semi-Arian kingdoms had either been conquered (Ostrogoths, Vandals, Burgundians) by Nicene neighbors, or their rulers had accepted Nicene Christianity voluntarily (Visigoths, Lombards). The Franks were unique among the Germanic peoples in that they entered the empire as pagans and converted to Nicene Christianity directly.

### **Later “Arianism”**

As the first major intra-Christian conflict after Christianity’s legalization, the struggle between Nicenes and Arians left a deep impression on the institutional memory of Nicene churches. Thus, over the past 1,500 years, some Christians have used the term *Arian* to refer to those groups that see themselves as worshiping Jesus Christ or respecting his teachings, but who place Jesus in a subservient position to God.

In 1553, the Spanish scholar and Protestant reformer Michael Servetus, seen by many Unitarians as a founding figure, was sentenced to death and burned at the stake by his fellow reformers, including John Calvin, for the heresy of Antitrinitarianism. His Christology was similar in several ways to Arianism.

Like the Arians, many more recent groups have embraced the belief that the Son is a separate being subordinate to the Father, and that Christ at one time did not exist. Some of these profess, as the Arians did, that God made all things through the pre-existent Christ. Others profess that Jesus became divine through his obedience to God. Despite the frequency with which Arianism is used to describe such groups, there has been no historically continuous survival of Arianism into the modern era, nor do the groups so labeled hold beliefs identical to Arianism. For this reason, they do not use the name as a self-description, even when they acknowledge that their beliefs are occasionally in agreement with Arianism.



Those whose religious beliefs have been compared to, or labeled as Arianism include:

Unitarians, who believe that God is one, as opposed to a Trinity, and who often accept Jesus as a moral authority but not as a divinity.

Jehovah's Witnesses, who — like Arius — teach that Jesus had a pre-human existence as the Logos (“a God”), but not as the Second Person of the Trinity in the Nicene sense.

Christadelphians, who believe that Jesus' pre-natal existence was as a conceptual Logos, rather than an actual Son to God the Father.

Followers of the various churches of the Latter-day Saints, who believe in the unity in purpose of the Godhead but teach that Jesus is a divine being distinct from the Trinity.

Unificationists, who believe that Jesus was the incarnation of the pre-existent Logos, but who also affirm that God existed alone before conceiving his Ideal of Creation.

Muslims, who believe that Jesus was a prophet of the one God, but not himself divine.

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NOTE: There is much more history about Wulfila and the Arian Controversy that one can find in many places among the various historical writings of early Christianity. However, one must realize that much of what is reported in historical writings is mostly written by those called “Orthodox”, and they have the habit, right or wrong, of biased reporting and changing things they didn't agree with: **that must be seriously considered when doing research.**

“When I first started doing research I didn't know what I was going to find, what paths I may follow, or what the outcome may be. But it also means that I search, look into, investigate, and examine carefully whatever I encounter. Exploratory researches are always journeys into the unknown or unfamiliar territory, but unlike blind faith, they are open-eyed attempts to gather more information and thus expand the scope of one's knowledge.” Ben Swett.

We pray and hope that you, the reader, is open-eyed and open-minded enough to consider what is said in this rather lengthy article as you do your own research to see if it is true or not. We say to you as Augustine says, “***Do not follow my writings as holy Scripture. When you find in Holy Scriptures anything you did not believe before, believe it without doubt; but in my writings you should HOLD NOTHING FOR CERTAIN.***” (Quoted from the *Preface* of Augustine's *Treatise on the Trinity Doctrine*, 405 AD.)

In Christ's name,

Ken Fortier