

DIFFICULT PASSAGES

A closer look at those passages which are sited most often to “prove” our God is a Trinity

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Most recently edited March 2018

Scripture quoted from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

CHRIST AS GOD

John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” (See also Hebrews Chapter One.)

John 1:14 “And the Word 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.”

The Greek word “theos” (meaning “divine being”) is translated as “God” in our English Bible. The Word is with divine being. And the Word is divine being. The most logical way to understand this, is to understand that there are two “theos” here - two divine beings.

From John 1:14, we understand that “the Word” became the man Jesus Christ.

John 1:3 tells us the Word, created everything that was created. Obviously that means the Word existed before anything was created. He existed long before He became a human being. This is confirmed by the prayer of Christ spoken to His Father. “Glorify Me in Your presence, with the glory I had with You before the world was” (John 17:5).

Was the Word begotten from God, before He created everything, or has He always existed - without beginning - from eternity past? If the Word was begotten, then He has not always existed. He is God begotten from God. He was, and is, the literal “Son of God”. God the Father literally sent His begotten Son.

Some believe the Word became “the Son” only when conceived within the womb of Mary. I cannot agree. This would mean that God had no Son. God did not “send” His Son into the world. Rather the divine being later known as Jesus Christ, simply took on the role of a son.

Are there any other Scriptures to help us decide whether God literally beget a Son from out of Himself, and then sent His Son to the earth to be our savior?

John 16:25-27 “These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”

John 4:9 “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.”

John 4:14 “And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world.”

Proverbs 8:23 “I have been established [anointed] from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth. 24 When there were no depths I was brought forth, When there were no fountains abounding with water. 25 Before the mountains were settled, Before the hills, I was brought forth; 26 While as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, Or the primeval dust of the world. 27 When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep, 28 When He established the clouds above, When He strengthened the fountains of the deep, 29 When He assigned to the sea its limit, So that the waters would not transgress His command, When He marked out the foundations of the earth, 30 Then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; And I was daily His delight, Rejoicing always before Him, 31 Rejoicing in His inhabited world, And my delight was with the sons of men.”

The passage is a parody on wisdom. Christ is called “the wisdom of God” (*1Cor. 1:24*) and “wisdom from God” (*1Cor. 1:30*).

I believe the pre-incarnate Son of God is speaking through this passage. The One “brought forth” speaks as a contractor would. He is the Master Craftsman to create according to the design and will of the Architect (His Father).

Hebrews confirms Christ has been “anointed a priest forever” (*Hebrews 5:6, 6:20, 7:17, 7:20*). A priest was a mediator, and the Son of God would mediate between His Father and the creation. There is one Mediator between God and mankind, the man Jesus Christ (*1Tim. 2:5*).

IN THE BEGINNING

John 1:1-3 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”

Revelation 1:8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,’ says the Lord, ‘who is and who was [dead] and who is to come, the Almighty.’”

Revelation 3:14 “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, “These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God:”

Revelation 21:6 “And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.”

Three times Jesus calls himself “the Beginning”. He is the beginning of God’s creation, just as a wife is the beginning of a man’s family. Why? Because God would create through His Son. How can I compare the Son of God to a wife? 1 Corinthians 3 says God is head of Christ - just like a husband is head of his wife.

CHRIST - “THE ETERNALLY BLESSED GOD”

Romans 9:5 [Israelites] “of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all the eternally blessed God. Amen.”

[COMPARE] “to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen” (RSV).

The ancient Greek text contained no punctuation marks, and no upper/lower case letters. The meaning of the text changes depending on where you place punctuation. In the NKJV Christ is God over all, but in the RSV God is over all. Jesus Christ is not over God His Father, who is and always will be “head of Christ” (1Cor. 11:3, 1Cor. 15:24-28). Jesus himself said, “My Father . . . is greater than all” (John 10:29) and “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28).

EQUAL WITH GOD

Philippians 2:5 [Christ] “who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.” “robbery” - #725 - “*harpagmos*” - *a thing to be seized*

The Son of God did not consider it a thing to be seized, to be equal with God His Father.

In Hebrews 1:3 we find that the Son of God (prior to His incarnation) existed as “the brightness of His glory, and “the express image” of His Father’s person. An “image” is a copy. An “express image” is an exact copy. The Son of God existed as an exact copy of God His Father. God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, why would there need to be two - of Him? Answer: Because the Father could not become a human being, and then die, while at the same time “upholding all things”.

Some have interpreted the phrase “did not consider it robbery” to mean that Christ did consider Himself equal with God. Other translations do not convey this meaning. Christ did not consider it a thing to be seized upon, to be equal with God. He was content with His position as the Son, and the representative or “Word” of God. Lucifer on the other hand, sought to seize equality with God. Philippians 2:5 seeks to contrast Christ with Lucifer. One maintained respect for the Father as “head”. The other did not.

Other translations of Philippians 2:6:

NIV “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,”

NAS “who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,”

NAB “who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,”

While on this earth, Christ went out of His way to say that He did not consider Himself equal with God His Father. He said, “My Father is greater than all” (John 10:29). “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). “My teaching is not mine, but His Who sent me” (John 7:16). “The Son can do nothing of Himself” (John 5:19). “I have come in My Father’s name” (John 5:43). The Jewish leaders ignored all these statements and condemned Him as a blasphemer saying “You, being a Man, make Yourself God” (John 10:33). This was a false accusation!

John 5:23 “All should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” *NOTE: The Spirit is not honored.*

The reason why all men were to honor the Son as they honored the Father (John 5:23) was because the Son spoke for the Father. It was as if the Father Himself had spoken. According to Paul, God the Father is and always will be “the Head” of Christ (1Cor. 11:3, 1Cor. 15:28).

JESUS FORGAVE SIN -
SOMETHING ONLY GOD CAN DO.

Matthew 9:6 [Jesus speaking] “But that you may know that the Son of Man has power [authority] on the earth to forgive sins.”

John 5:22 “For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son.”

Matthew 28:18 "All authority has been given me, in heaven and in earth."

John 3:35 "For the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand."

God the Father acts through His Son. The Son is the agent of His Father - in creation, in mediation, in blessing, in judgment, and in execution of judgment. As the representative of the Father, He was "given" the authority (and the healing power) to forgive sins.

FROM ETERNITY

Has Christ always existed?

Micah 5:2 "But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days." NRS

Micah 5:2 ". . . whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." KJV

The words "from everlasting" are cited by those who believe that the Son of God had no beginning, but instead has always existed. They believe that He was one of three co-eternal divine persons who together make up "God".

*The Hebrew translated "goings forth" in the KJV (Strong's #4163) means "origin." This would mean that Christ originated from something, someone, or somewhere. **Jesus said, "I proceeded forth and came from God"** (John 8:42). **"I came forth from the Father** (John 16:28).*

The word translated "everlasting" (#5769) is from a root word meaning "to hide," thus pointing to what is hidden in the distant future or in the distant past. When the word is used to refer to the past, it generally points to the far distant past, but rarely to a limitless past.

*In Deut. 32:7 and Job 22:15 the word may refer to the time of one's elders. In Prov. 22:28; 23:10; Jer. 6:16; 18:15; 28:8 it points back somewhat farther. In Isa. 58:12, 61:4; Mic. 7:14; Mal. 3:4, and in the Aramaic of Ezra 4:15, 19, it clearly refers to the time just before the exile. In 1Sam. 27:8; in Isa. 51:9 and 63:9, 11, it refers to events of the exodus from Egypt. In Gen. 6:4, it points to the time shortly before the flood. None of these references has in it the idea of endlessness or limitlessness, but each points to a time long before the immediate knowledge of those living. The above explanation is found in **The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament** by Harris, Archer, Waltke who give the meaning of "everlasting" as simply "**most distant times**."*

My personal understanding is that time began when the Son was begotten. He was the beginning (Jn. 1:1), and He calls Himself "the Beginning".

“LET US MAKE MAN.”

Genesis 1:26 “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.’”

Genesis 3:22 “Then the Lord God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil.’”

Genesis 11:7 “‘Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.’”

Isaiah 6:3 “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?’”

“Us” is more than one, but not necessarily three. God the Father spoke these words to His Son, who was the agent of creation for His Father (1Cor. 8:6, Heb. 1:1-2).

BAPTIZING THEM - IN THE NAME

Matthew 28:19 “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

The Emperor Constantine commissioned and paid for a copying and compilation of the Scriptures known as the “New Testament”. The resulting Greek text is known as the “Byzantine”. New Scholarly work by those familiar with the ancient manuscripts, has revealed no Greek manuscript (or fragment) older than the time of Constantine, which contains the text of Matthew 28:19. One Aramaic manuscript survives. In that manuscript, Matthew 28:19 reads, “baptizing them in my name.” In other words, Christ commanded the disciples to baptize in HIS name. And many other passages confirm the disciples did just that.

Acts 2:38 “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Acts 8:16 “For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Acts 19:5 “When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Romans 6:3 “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?”

Galatians 3:27 “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:11 “But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”

*Eusebius of Caesarea wrote during the 4th century. He was a “friend” of Constantine. In his work “Ecclesiastical History, Book III, Cpt 5, Section 2”, he quotes Matthew 28:19 as “**make disciples of all the nations in my name**”.*

*Eusebius quotes the passage in the same way in “Oration in Praise of Emperor Constantine, Cpt 16, Sect. 8”. **He quotes the passage in the same way some 18 times.** Finally, near the end of his life, he quotes the passage just once, as “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”. He may have been influenced by his loyalty to the Emperor, or by fear of the Emperor. We just do not know. It is also possible, that someone altered that one quotation.*

Acts 4:12 “By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Revelation 4:8 “The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!”

Isaiah 6:3 “And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.”

The thrice repeated “Holy” is not necessarily a praise of three co-equal beings. The created beings cry “Holy, Holy, Holy” because the Lord God Almighty is the same “yesterday, today, and forever.”

ANOTHER COMFORTER

Who was the first Comforter? Answer: Jesus

John 14:16 “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you **another Helper**, that He may abide with you forever.” (NKJ)

The word translated as “Helper” in the NKJV and NAU, is translated as “Comforter” in the KJV, and as “Advocate” in the NET, NIV, and NRS. In the CJB it is “comforting Counselor” and in the CSBO it is translated simply as “Counselor”.

Let's fill in the rest of Jesus statement to his disciples.

John 14:15-20 "If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and **He will give you another** advocate [helper - comforter - counselor] to help you and be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him. (V.23) "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him" (NIV).

1. *The new Helper would be "with" them and "in" them.*

Jesus would "come to" them, and would "manifest" Himself to them.

Jesus would be "with" them.

Jesus would be "in" them.

Jesus would "baptize with" the Holy Spirit (John 1:33, Matt. 3:11, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16).

I believe Jesus is here speaking of His future glorified self.

He was after all, "made a life-giving spirit" (1Corinthians 15:45).

Yes. Jesus referred to the new Comforter as "He". "He will glorify Me" (John 16:14). This is perhaps the reason most often cited to teach a third divine person of the Godhead. But is it conclusive proof? When Jesus spoke of His future glorified self, He spoke of "He" and "His". He spoke in third person. (Ref: Mat. 16:27, 25:31; Mk 8:38, 9:31; Lk 9:26, Lk 18:8; Jn 6:62.)

The presence and power of the glorified Christ - with them and in them, would prove the truth of all that the man Christ Jesus had said. The future Christ would glorify the man Jesus.

2. *The Father also, would "come to" the one who loved Jesus.*

Jesus and His Father would make their home with the one who loves Jesus.

John echoed this statement when he wrote, "We abide in the Son and in the Father" (1Jn 2:24). "And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1Jn 1:3). Conversely, Jesus said "He who hates Me hates My Father also" (Jn 15:23-24).

Does this suggest the Spirit to come, would be an entirely different being from the Son of God? A third divine being? For me it does not. John does not mention any fellowship with the Spirit, or any hatred of a third divine being.

THE SPIRIT DOES MANY THINGS

I read a list the other day, of all the things that the Holy Spirit does. The Spirit intercedes for us. He teaches us. He brings things to our memory that Christ has said. He comforts us. He leads. He fills us. He can be tested, and lied to, and grieved. Yes the Spirit does all these things. But knowing what the Spirit DOES, does not tell us WHO the Spirit is. Jesus said, “God is spirit” (*John 4:24*). If the Father is God, then the Father “is Spirit”. Paul said there is “one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all” (*Eph. 4:6*). To be “through all and in all” the Father would need to be “spirit”. Jesus said, “My Father has been working until now, and I have been working” (*Jn 5:17*). He did not say the Holy Spirit has also been working.

THREE THAT BEAR WITNESS IN HEAVEN

1 John 5:7 “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”

These words are **not found** in any Greek manuscript older than the 16th century. Almost all modern translations make note of this. Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466 - 1536) was the famous scholar of Greek and Latin who published the first printed “Greek New Testament”. Erasmus parallel Latin/Greek translation with commentary, was used by Tyndale, who later translated the New Testament into English.

The “longer reading” of 1John 5:7 - known as “the Johnine Comma”, was omitted from the first two editions of Erasmus’ Latin text (1516, 1519). One of Erasmus’ most vocal critics - Stunica, charged that Erasmus’ text lacked the Trinitarian affirmation. Erasmus responded that he had not found any Greek manuscript containing these words, but - unwisely as it turned out - promised that if he were shown one Greek manuscript containing the words, he would insert them. A manuscript containing the “missing” words was promptly produced, probably written to order around 1520 by a Franciscan friar who took notation words from the margin of the Latin Vulgate and translated them back into the Greek text.

Erasmus became aware of this manuscript between May 1520 and September 1521. Under pressure from “the church”, he kept his promise and inserted the words of the Comma into his third edition (1522), but indicated in a lengthy footnote his suspicions that the Greek manuscript containing the disputed words had been written to order.

(Please see commentary on 1John 5:7-8 on BIBLE.org.)

OUR GOD IS ONE

Deuteronomy 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

"Sh'ma, Yisra'el! ADONAI Eloheinu, ADONAI echad" (CJB)

Mark 12:29 "Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.'"

Hebrew "echad" (Strong's #0259) meaning "one," "only," or "first"

Greek - heis (Strong's #1520) meaning "one"

I am fully convinced that God our Father is the One and only Head of all. He is the original divine spirit being. I worship Him as such. I worship Christ also BECAUSE God the Father has commanded us to do so (*Phil. 2:10-11, Heb. 1:6, Lk. 25:51-52*).

I recognize Christ's position as second to God His Father. He is "the Lamb." He now sits "at the right hand of the Father" (*Rev. 3:21*). The Father has placed Him there. Christ will - in the end, "be subject to" His Father, "that God may be all in all" (*1Cor. 15:28*). But has this not been His position from the beginning? When has He sought any other?

John 10:30 "I and My Father are one."

Was Christ saying that He and the Father are NOT two separate beings, each with an individual will? I don't believe so. Christ prayed that believers "also may be one in us". Does that make believers no longer separate living individual beings? No.

John 17:11 "Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are."

Jesus prayed that those who believe "may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in us" (*John 17:20-21*). If we may be "one" just as the Father and His Son are "one," this cannot mean we are absorbed into ONE entity, so that we no longer exist as individuals. It means that we may all share one spirit, so that we will love one another, may live in harmony with one another and share one purpose - to serve God. We will be unified in our worship and obedience of the One Supreme Being - the Father who is "above all".

*We pray this study will prove a blessing.
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