

Focus on the Kingdom

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Correction

In last month's issue we mistakenly attributed the quote "In other words, Jesus is not the Son of God because He was born of a virgin" to Dr. John MacArthur. It actually comes from Dr. Adrian Rogers (*Standing for Light and Truth*, 2003, p. 19).

I hope the shock value is not diminished! Luke 1:35 is to be preferred by far. Gabriel was superbly well-informed.

Lexical Facts about Elohim

(continued from last month)

Elohim (the Hebrew word for God), in fact, is singular in meaning when referred to the One God. This is shown by the singular verbs which normally follow, and by thousands of singular personal pronouns.

Elohim has a plural meaning when it refers to pagan "gods." Elohim has a singular meaning when designating a single pagan god, Milchom, Astarte, etc.

Elohim, El, Eloah, and Yahweh are all words for the true God and are identical in meaning, and singular in meaning when referring to the one true God. They are replaced, and thus defined, by singular personal pronouns, over and over again. The Greek word for God is "*O [the] theos [God]*," and it is always and invariably singular in meaning when referring, some 1300 times (!) to the One God, the Father of Jesus, the Son.

This information can be inspected in the Hebrew text, in translations and in all the standard Hebrew lexicons (Brown, Driver and Briggs, Kohler Baumgartner, Jenni and Westermann, etc.). For the New Testament, which is in Greek, we have many standard lexicons. One of the most famous is the one by Walter Bauer. The article in Bauer on God (*theos*) and Father (*pater*) provides excellent information. You will be impressed that there is a special name for the Father, which is GOD-Father, or God and Father. You will find no entry (because the word is absent from Scripture) for "God the Son"!

Those of us who followed the Armstrongs (Worldwide Church of God) in defining God rejected the testimony of history, of the Hebrew text and of the Hebrew lexicons and grammarians. We preferred to believe the teaching of those who had no formal training in languages, biblical or otherwise. We were taught to despise all scholarship. This was a colossal error and we learned the lesson (a valuable one) at great cost. In no

other field than "Bible" would you imagine entrusting yourself to a non-expert, who nevertheless claimed to know what he was saying. He was encouraged in this self-deception, and this continues, by trusting and gullible followers, who usually knew as little about Greek and Hebrew as Herbert Armstrong did. Armstrong's pontifications (like those of Victor Paul Wierwille of the Way International on a different subject) on the Sabbath in Colossians 2:16 are striking examples of straining the language to breaking point.

The Problem: How to Reconcile One with Two or One with Three

We have seen that *Elohim* meaning the One God will not yield to any attempts to force it into a support for a Trinity or God-Family of two or more. The fundamental problem remains for all subscribers to the Trinity or Binity ("two Gods in the God-Family") as to how three X's can be one X. This is logically impossible. But the Athanasian creed which speaks of the Father being God, the Son being God and the Holy Spirit being God, "and yet these are not three Gods but one God" asks us to indulge in illogical nonsense.

As Geoffrey Lampe, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge remarked with restrained British humor: "The classical statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, the so-called Athanasian creed, ends: 'This is the catholic faith, which unless a man believes it faithfully he cannot be saved.' This has been paraphrased in less dignified language: 'Accept my model or I'll do you,' or rather, 'This is God's model: accept it or He will do you.'"¹ The awful, threatening words of the Athanasian creed speak loudly about the spirit which had gripped the Church.

Think about this and warn your children. The churches have been amazingly cruel to those noble souls who challenged the extraordinary proposition that God is more than one Person and that Jesus is 100% God and 100% man. They burned dissenters, exiled them, defrocked them and even passed laws of Parliament against them. You can check this appalling history of senseless, murderous violence in the name of Jesus.

Back to our subject: What then if the Trinity or Binity means 3 X's or 2 X's = 1 Y? This is logically feasible, but what does it mean in terms of defining X and Y? You need all of this information, and more, if you are serious about winning the billions of souls on earth, who

¹ "What Future for the Trinity," *Explorations in Theology*, 8, SCM Press, 1981, p. 31.

for their own blessing need to understand who the one and only true God is.

On the admission of the best contemporary Trinitarian experts, no one has ever been able to explain *in what sense they mean God is one and in what different sense more than one*. Thus the leading exponent of the Trinity among contemporary evangelicals admits the desperation of the situation. Professor Millard Erickson wrote *God in Three Persons: A Contemporary Interpretation of the Trinity* (1995). By all means own this book and commit yourself to a thorough study of it.

First Erickson comments on the state of the Trinity in the mind of an average churchgoer: “It is a matter of not knowing whether they believe or disbelieve the Trinity because they do not know what the doctrine says.” No one has preached to them on this central doctrine.

“Christians who believe this strange doctrine seem incoherent.” (Is God pleased with that?!)

“We can make it partially understandable...”

“We may not be much closer to being able to articulate just what we mean by this doctrine [of the Trinity] than were the delegates to the Councils of Nicea and Constantinople” (p. 19).

Erickson later writes: “Although [Stephen Davis, a logician] does not dogmatically hold that the doctrine can never be shown to be coherent, he claims that this has not yet been achieved” (p. 256).

“Davis has examined the major contemporary explanations, and, having found them not to accomplish what they claim to do, has been honest in acknowledging that he feels he is dealing with a mystery. In so doing, he has perhaps been more candid than many of us, who **when pressed may have to admit that we really do not know in what way God is one and in what different way He is three**” (p. 258).

“To say the doctrine has been revealed is a bit too strong, however, at least with respect to the biblical revelation” (p. 258).

“It simply is not possible to explain [the Trinity] unequivocally. What must be done is to offer a series, a whole assortment of illustrations and analogies, with the hope that some discernment will take place. We must approach the matter from various angles, ‘nibbling at the meaning’ of the doctrine, as it were...It may also be necessary, in order to convey the unusual meaning involved in this doctrine, to utilize what analytical philosophers would term ‘logically odd language.’ This means using language in such a way **as intentionally to commit grammatical errors**. Thus, I have sometimes said of the Trinity, ‘He are three,’ or ‘They is one.’ For we have here a being whose nature falls outside our usual understanding of persons, and that nature can perhaps only be adequately expressed by using language that calls

attention to the almost paradoxical character of the concepts” (p. 268-270).

But this is desperation. Where does the Bible say that God breaks the rules of grammar in order to reveal Himself and how many He is? Erickson has surrendered the grammatical method. God speaks to us in terms which are meant to reveal truth to us, not confuse us. We are reminded here of G. T. Armstrong’s assertion that Elohim (God) must be taken as plural resulting in “Gods, he created” in Genesis 1:1.

I trust the reader will note the blatant polytheism! But millions did not flinch. How right Dr. Colin Brown of Fuller Seminary was when in a famous article on orthodoxy he noted that most churchgoers “postpone thinking about the Trinity [who God is!] for as long as possible...The other way of dealing with the Trinity is to practice tritheism [belief in three Gods], in all but name” (*Ex Auditu*, 1991).

So how many YHVH’s do you, as reader of these lines, believe in? If you say “One,” then one might immediately ask: “Well, you certainly know that the Father is YHVH. But you also seem required to believe, as an evangelical, Bible-believing, churchgoing member in good standing, that ‘Jesus is YHVH.’ That sounds awfully like two YHVH’s.”

How well will this match up when we face Jesus and his own statement, agreed to by a fellow Jew, that “the Lord our God is ONE LORD [Yahweh]”? You will find this classic statement of belief from Jesus in Mark 12:29. Jesus was confirming what every good Jew knows to this day. The Trinity should prevent Jews from accepting the Churches’ Jesus as Messiah. Jesus never claimed to BE God, a second God! ✧

The Precious Words of Daniel on the Future of the World Prior to the Arrival of Jesus with His Kingdom (Luke 21:31)

Jesus quotes from Daniel 11:31 onward and possibly from verse 21, where we start:

Daniel 11:21-12:13: “In his place will rise a wretch: royal honors will not be given to him, but rather he will insinuate himself into them at his pleasure and will gain possession of the kingdom by intrigue. Armies will be utterly routed and crushed by him, the Prince of the covenant too. Through his alliances he will act treacherously and, despite the smallness of his following, grow ever stronger. At his pleasure, he will invade rich provinces, acting as his fathers or his fathers’ fathers never acted, distributing among them plunder, spoil and wealth, plotting his stratagems against the fortresses — for a time. He will summon up his might and courage against the king of the south with a great army. The king of the south will march to war with a

huge and powerful army but will not succeed, since he will be outwitted by trickery. Those who shared his food will ruin him; his army will be swept away; many will fall in the slaughter. **The two kings**, seated at one table, hearts bent on evil, will tell their lies; but they will not have their way, for the appointed time is still to come. Then **the wretch** will return greatly enriched to his own country, his heart set **against the holy covenant**; he will take action and then return to his own country. In due time, he will make his way southwards again, but this time the outcome will not be as before. The ships of Kittim will oppose him, and he will be worsted. He will retire and take **furious action against the holy covenant** and, as before, **will favor those who forsake that holy covenant. Forces of his will come and profane the Citadel-Sanctuary; they will abolish the perpetual sacrifice and install the appalling abomination [Matt. 24:15, Mark 13:14, Luke 21:20] there. Those who break the covenant he will seduce by his blandishments, but the people who know their God will stand firm and take action.**

“Those of the people who are wise leaders will instruct many; for some days, however, they will stumble from sword and flame, captivity and pillage. And thus stumbling, they will receive little help, though many will be scheming in their support. Of the wise leaders some will stumble, and so a number of them will be purged, purified and made clean — until the time of the End, for the appointed time is still to come. **The king will do as he pleases**, growing more and more arrogant, considering himself greater than all the gods; he will utter incredible blasphemies against the God of gods, and he will thrive until the wrath reaches bursting point; for what has been decreed will certainly be fulfilled. Heedless of his fathers’ gods, heedless of the god whom women love, heedless of any god whatever, he will consider himself greatest of all. Instead of them, he will honor the god of fortresses, will honor a god unknown to his ancestors with gold and silver, precious stones and valuable presents. He will use the people of an alien god to defend the fortresses; he will confer great honors on those whom he acknowledges, by giving them wide authority and by parceling the country out for rent. When the time comes for the End, the king of the south will come against him; but **the king of the north** [not Rome] will come storming down on him [king of the south] with chariots, cavalry, and a large fleet. He will invade countries, overrun them and drive on. He will invade the Land of Splendor, and many will fall; but Edom, Moab, and what remains of the sons of Ammon will escape him. He will reach out to attack countries: Egypt will not escape him. The gold and silver treasures and all the valuables of Egypt will lie in his power. Libyans and Cushites will be at his feet: but reports coming from the East and the north will worry him, and

in great fury he will set out to bring ruin and complete destruction to many. He will pitch the tents of his royal headquarters between the sea and the mountains of the Holy Splendor. Yet he will come to **his end** [cp. Dan. 9:26b: “his end”] — there will be no help for him. At that time Michael will arise — the great Prince, defender of your people. That will be a **time of great distress, unparalleled since nations first came into existence [the great tribulation of Matt. 24:21]**. When that time comes, your own people will be spared — all those whose names are found written in the Book. Of those who are **sleeping in the Land of Dust [not conscious in heaven!]**, many will awaken, some to everlasting life [“the life of the age to come”], some to shame and everlasting disgrace. Those who are wise will shine as brightly as the expanse of the heavens, and those who have instructed many in uprightness, as bright as stars for all eternity. But you, Daniel, must keep these words secret and keep the book sealed until the time of the End. Many will roam about, this way and that, and wickedness will continue to increase.

I, Daniel, then looked and saw two other people standing, one on the near bank of the river, the other on the far. One of them said to the man dressed in linen who was standing further up the stream, “How long until the end of these wonders?” I heard the man speak who was dressed in linen, standing further up the stream: he raised his right hand and his left to heaven and swore by him who lives for ever, “A time and two times, and half a time; and all these things will be finished, once the crushing of the holy people’s power is over.” I listened but did not understand. I then said, “My lord, what is to be the outcome [the final stage]?” “Go, Daniel,” he said. “These words are to remain secret and sealed until the time of the End. Many will be cleansed, made white and purged; the wicked will persist in doing wrong; the wicked will never understand; those who are wise will understand. From the moment that the perpetual sacrifice is abolished and **the appalling abomination set up: a thousand two hundred and ninety days**. Blessed is he who perseveres and attains a thousand three hundred and thirty-five days. But you, go away and **rest**; and you will **rise** for your reward at the end of the days.” ✧

The Curse of the Capital

Most Bible readers pick up the Gospel of John and read there exactly what they are used to reading and understanding: “In the beginning was the Word.” The capital on word, “Word,” tells them that this must be a person, not a thing. Then, “and the Word was *with* God...” So that must be one person with another person, and we have at least two-thirds of the Trinity staring us in the face. Then, “The Word was God.” There it is! Two Persons who are both God. The trick is done

and “Bob’s your uncle,” to use the British idiom. “There you have it. The feat is accomplished.”

Not so quick! First of all there is no justification whatsoever for putting a capital letter on Word. The word “word” (not “Word”) has appeared countless times in the Hebrew Bible and never once meant a *spokesperson*. In the Greek original scriptures of the NT, too, there is no capital letter to justify “Word,” prior to the birth of Jesus. Scripture gives us just “word.”

Stay with “word” (not editorialized to “Word”), understood against its Hebrew background and understand the “word” of John 1:1 as the wisdom, purpose, self-expression, indeed immortality program of the One God. It is the Gospel, in fact, and the promise of immortality to be gained only in Christ. The “word” in the rest of the NT means the Gospel about 90% of the time. It is not just a synonym for the whole Bible!

If you insist on Word (*adding* your own capital letter), you unfortunately trick yourself into taking a further step. You are reading what is not there at all. It does not say “in the beginning was the SON.” That is your own imagination, borne no doubt of a long indoctrination.

The problem with “in the beginning was the SON” is that you are now ruining and contradicting Matthew’s and Luke’s deliberate and detailed account of the Son of God. Matthew and Luke describe **the origin** (*genesis*, Matt. 1:18) of the Son and as clearly as language can manage, they place the begetting=coming into existence of that Son of God in the womb of Mary, by miracle, some 2000 years ago.

For “origin,” *genesis*, see again Matthew 1:18. Yes, “genesis,” and we all know that this is the beginning! This is the beginning of the Son of God, born to Mary — the descendant of David, the long-promised Messiah of Israel and of the world, the head of the new creation.

“What is begotten IN [*en aute*] her is the work of the holy spirit” (Matt. 1:20). Notice not just “conceived,” although it was certainly that too, but “begotten, fathered, brought into existence, caused to come to be.”

“*In* her.” **In** Mary, not coming from outside her!

This was the classic moment when God brought into existence His unique Son, the beginning of the new creation. This is the moment when God became the Father of the Son of God, just as he had promised 1000 years before in 2 Samuel 7:14: “I **will be** his Father and he **will be** My Son” (note the future tenses). With this clear information well learned it is mistaken to set John in contradiction to Matthew and Luke!

It is wise then to heed the words of the distinguished professor of Systematic Theology at Fuller Seminary: “To read John 1:1 as if it said ‘In the beginning was the Son’ is patently wrong” (*Ex Auditu*, 1991).

Actually John is very helpful in his first epistle, written later. Lest one should misunderstand John 1:2 he issues this caution. He provides his own explanatory commentary: “From the beginning was life and that life was with the Father.” So “word,” John tells us, is really life, or the promise of life, the commandment for life (John 12:50; I John 2:25), and that promise of life (the great immortality Plan) was “with the Father.” It was with the Father as being the intention of the Father. It was “with the Father” and in his mind, just as Paul warned the Galatians to hang on to the Gospel which was “with” (*pros*) them (Gal. 2:5: same language as John).

If we read Word with a capital letter, a Person other than God, or a Son of God, or God the Son, we are making up our own version of the Bible and are slipping away from Truth. We then have an eternal **God the Son** alongside an equally eternal **God the Father**. How many Gods does that make? Evidently two. You know that if this is a chair and that is also a chair, that makes two chairs. No one will talk you out of that! But then why be talked into the amazing proposition that 1+1 = 1? It does not and never will. If the Father is God, and the Son is God, that makes two who are God, and this is two Gods!

We have all agreed to the simple proposition that 1+1=2. But when we read the Bible we have been taught another strange and confusing way of speaking. “One” has ceased really to mean one and “One plus one plus one,” we have been told, often very dogmatically, is really ONE!

Prodigious mental efforts and language gymnastics have been employed to try to squeeze two or three into one! But “Jesus is Yahweh, and the Father is Yahweh” makes two Yahwehs — one too many.

Jesus stated, as the most important belief of all, that “The Lord our God is *one* Lord” (Mark 12:29, see many translations). God is enumerated as “one single...” That is the meaning of “one” in English, Hebrew and Greek: “one single...” “Abraham was one single (*echad*) person” (Ezek. 33:24). “The Father,” said Jesus “is *the only one* who is true God” (John 17:3). Obama is currently the only one who is true President of the USA. No need for an army of linguists to explain that, and there ought to be no difficulty with John 17:3.

“The word was God,” we read — certainly not “the word was a G/god,” which would contradict Matthew and Luke and Hebrews chapter 1, as well as the rest of the NT. John likes the word “is.” He says that “God is love” and that “God is light.” He means of course not a one-to-one equivalence, but simply that God is full of love, epitomizes love, and God is full of light. So “the word [not Word] was God” means that the word, not surprisingly, was fully expressive of God’s mind and thinking. That is what “word” means. It means that God

revealed Himself through his verbal expression, His word.

“As a man thinks, so *is* he” says Proverbs 23:7. As God thinks and speaks, we find out about what is in God’s heart. In the beginning God was thinking and speaking and planning. Originally he said, “Let there be light.” That was God’s word, God speaking. So now in the New Covenant, expressed by God’s uniquely begotten Son, the son of Mary (John 1:14), God tells us about His light and His love. Jesus is the perfect expression of God’s mind. He is what the word of God (not yet the Son of God, not until John 1:14) became.

When Jesus the Son was begotten, brought into existence, we had a brand new and final expression of God. Since that moment of the Son’s begetting in Mary by miracle, we can get really close to the heart and mind of God — by listening to His unique Son. Yes, by listening to him teach, not just watching him die!

But that Son (Luke 1:35) is not “God the Son”; he is the Son of God, and the Bible, happily, provides its own simple and lucid explanation, definition of what Son of God means in the case of Jesus. Here it is in Luke 1:35: “Holy spirit and the power of the Highest will overshadow you, Mary, and *precisely for that reason*, the one brought into existence [begotten, fathered] will be called the Son of God.” For that reason precisely, and for no other reason!

Beware of reading into Luke an imagined “Word” assumed to be an eternal God the Son. That “eternal Son,” the Church has been telling you, had no beginning. There was never a time when he did not exist! That is a blatant contradiction of Gabriel’s announcement to Mary that the Son was about to come into existence in her womb, the result of a biological miracle worked by the one Creator God. That one Creator God was initiating His own *new* creation. Just as He had created the first Adam, so now He creates the final Adam. Both are called Sons of God as being the direct handiwork and creation of the One God, the Father. It is wise for us to join Luke and Matthew’s church, not force them into ours!

When Paul speaks of Jesus, the Son of God, he has always in mind the fact that Jesus was a human being, a man. Just as Adam was created to be the image of God and glory of God, the firstborn of the first creation, so Jesus is to be defined by the same “man” language.

Jesus is the image/form of God and the glory of God is revealed in him. He is the uniquely brought into existence (begotten) Son of God, because God was directly his Father, and he had no human father. Rather, the Son was the special and final creation of God.

When Paul described Jesus as the “Messiah Jesus” in Philippians 2:5 (that is how he introduces his subject) he has in mind of course “the **man** Messiah” Jesus. Paul, we remember, stated the greatest truth of the universe when

he said, “There is one God and one mediator between that one God and man, the **man** Messiah Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). That “man Messiah Jesus” is the subject of Paul’s reflection in Philippians 2. It was that *man* Messiah Jesus who was in the form of God. Of course. Paul knew that Jesus was in the image of God, and form here corresponds to visible image. (See for example the Greek of Num. 12:8 where “form” (RSV) is “glory.”) This is easy. Glory, form, image are the outward visible descriptions of visible human persons. Paul is not discussing in Philippians 2 (it had not entered his head) an invisible, non-human person, the Son. The *whole* point of Paul is lost if we do not recognize that his Son of God is the *visible* image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15).

Jesus is also the firstborn, preeminent Son whom God “brought into the world,” that is, whom God caused to be begotten as Luke 1:35 and Matthew 1:18, 20 describe. Heb. 1:6 speaks of the same event.

Fortunately, not only does John help us to understand his gospel with his “eternal life which was with the Father” (1 John 1:2), but he tells us that the Son of God, Jesus, was “begotten,” brought into existence. Just as Matthew and Luke pinpoint the marvelous moment in (not too distant) history when the Son of God was brought into existence (begotten), John equally speaks of the Son who was *begotten in time*. “He who was begotten” (the Son of God) keeps safe those who have been born again, the Christian believers. See 1 John 5:18, not the KJV, which works out of a corrupted version in that verse. Robertson’s famous *Word Pictures* is useful on 1 John 5:18. The verse recalls the prophecy of Isaiah 9:6: “A son will be begotten.”

To be God’s “firstborn Son” means to be God’s chief and preeminent Son. “Firstborn” were even in the OT not always *chronologically* the first to be born. Jesus is the first and most notable in the new creation. Ephraim was God’s firstborn and Isaac was Abraham’s firstborn, but not literally first to be born. Jesus is the firstborn for a very good reason defined by Psalm 89:27. Of the predicted Messiah, God announced: “I will make him my firstborn, that is, *the highest of the kings of the earth*.” The chief king.

“Firstborn” is thus *the* Messianic title for the Son of God. Jesus, miraculously begotten in Mary, was to be the chief ruler in God’s great royal immortality program. As such, he is the first of other firstborn kings, the faithful. Jesus was the “firstborn among many brothers” (Rom. 8:29). So then we are co-heirs with him for whom the universe was created. “If we suffer with him, we will reign as kings with him” in that future Kingdom (2 Tim. 2:12). Don’t imagine you are ruling as kings *now*! (1 Cor. 4:8). But do understand, said Paul, one of the elementary 101’s of Christianity — that “the saints are going to rule or manage the world” (see 1 Cor. 6:2).

We will achieve that blessed condition and status whether we are awake (alive) or sleeping (dead) when he arrives in glory (1 Thess. 5:10). In either case, as faithful, we will live together with him by being granted immortality. And there is only one way of being literally “with him,” that is, via the rapture/resurrection event (not PRE-trib rapture), which will happen when Jesus comes back at his Parousia (1 Thess. 4:17). By this process, by this means, thus (and thus only) we will get to be with him, i.e. in the Kingdom on the earth renewed.

If all this is foggy and unclear there is no need for that. Any shortfall you may experience in clarity can be remedied by conscientious reading, praying and meditation. But it takes work and time. It takes a hunger and a passion for truth without which our salvation is endangered: “Because a **love** of the truth they would not accept, in order to be saved, God will give them over to a lying spirit [demonic spirit, see 1 Tim. 4:1] so that they will come to believe what is false.” Read 2 Thessalonians 2:10-11 very often! ✧

From Correspondence

I wonder if you can help my wife and me understand some of the language used to describe Jesus. We are told he was “found in fashion as a man,” that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh,” and that he was the son of David “according to the flesh.” Do these statements about him seem redundant if he was obviously a man with no pre-existence? Why does it seem as though the writers had to “qualify” his humanness by such statements? I do realize that John and others were battling Gnostic ideas about Docetism, but it still seems like a rather strange way of clarifying that he was, in fact, a man. If they wanted that to be clear, wouldn't they have just said “and being a man” as opposed to “being found in fashion as a man/in the appearance of man”?

AB: Excellent question. He is the son of David according to the flesh, i.e., human descent, from Mary, and the Son of God by spiritual connection to God. He is the Son of God with POWER by resurrection (Rom. 1:4). But of course he is called “Son of God” hundreds of times in the gospels before his death.

The “divine” element of Jesus resides in the unique fact that God is his Father! He is not “just an ordinary man,” but the only human male (apart from Adam) without a physical father. Also without sin. An utterly unique human being, and also our model.

Luke 1:35 and Psalm 110:1 (*adoni*, always the non-Deity title, 195 times. The second lord is not ADONAI!) really settle all issues. And 1 Timothy 2:5. One God, one Man. Jesus appeared to many others like any ordinary man, while actually being the unique human being with no human father. “He came in the flesh” means he came a human person (in the sphere of humanity, flesh, really

human, “the man Messiah”). Note that he was like other MEN. His uniqueness is originally in the virgin birth.

1 John 4:2 reads actually “Jesus Christ as the one who came in the flesh.” If you don't believe in “*that Jesus*” (*ton Yeesoun*, 1 John 4:3) it is dangerous. Being in the flesh is being a human being. Jesus was put to death as a human being and then resurrected in the sphere of spirit (1 Pet. 3:18). He did not come “*into* the flesh” as Luther mistranslated 1 John 4:2, in the German “Luther Bible” (now corrected in modern German Bibles).

Does this help? If he preexisted *he could not and would not be human at all*, just dressed up. You are what you are according to ORIGIN (Matt. 1:18, *genesis*, origin). “Preexistence” (a fog word) actually implies a **non-human** existence, making the Son of God non-human in origin.

An angel *could not be* the Messiah, descendant of David, and so 7 million JW's are much deceived. You cannot *begin* as an angel and stop being an angel! You cannot begin as GOD and stop being GOD. Hebrews 1:13 informs us of the very simple fact that God said to *no angel at any time*, “You are My Son; today I have fathered you.” Jesus was fathered in Mary by biological miracle and thus cannot be an angel.

Daniel 10:13 says that Michael is “**one of** the chief princes” (= angels in Daniel), and this is a second decisive proof that Jesus is not Michael. Only a lineal descendant of David can qualify as Messiah and Michael is ruled out automatically.

If Jesus is YHVH that makes two YHVH's which is not biblical monotheism.

“The Lord our God is one single Lord” (Mark 12:29, as the Greek reads). That is not so hard, I think. “One” means one, and God is said to be one Person thousands and thousands and thousands of times! Orthodoxy is caught in a confusing contradiction trying to make God singular and plural at the same time. So they write $1+1+1=1$. Tell that to the judge when Jesus comes!

Correspondent replied: It does help, thank you. Don't get me wrong, I have been totally convinced that Jesus Christ was a man and not a hybrid God/ angel/man. It is just that, when initially exposed to the teaching that Jesus was not “inherently” divine, I argued that, as you said, “He is the son of David according to the flesh, human descent, from Mary, and the Son of God by the spirit.” My argument was that if he was “inherently” human because of his mother, then he must also be “inherently” God from his Father. Of course I totally glossed over many Scriptures which prove otherwise, including the very important connection with Messiah to Adam, whose Father was also God, and yet he was 100% human, and not God in any way.

The fog in my mind appears to be lifting.

AB: Your question was excellent, and I know the question well.

Note the fallacy: 100% God and 100% man! To be 100% God one has to have no beginning and no end. Luke 1:35 if believed solves all problems instantly.

But note what some evangelical standard writers say: **“The term Son of God used of Jesus has nothing to do with his birth from Mary. As the Son of God he was not born.”** Yes, that is what the standard text by Dr. Swindoll says. (Swindoll and Zuck, *Understanding Christian Theology*, p. 570). Then see if Mary and Gabriel agree! (Luke 1:35). And God never can be born and God never can die. Jesus the Son was born and he died. Jesus is Son of God, expressly because God was his Father by miracle.

Pity people don't ponder these easy things. Rather they wrote mind-boggling words like “The IMMORTAL dies” (Wesley's famous hymn “And Can it Be?”). This way they reinforced the confusion and falsehoods with singing!

Let us know how and when you get some friends to count up to ONE! “The Lord our God is one Lord” (Mark 12:29), not two Lords. Ask them how many YHVH's they think there are. If (as is probable) they say ONE, then ask how many this makes: “The Father is YHVH and Jesus is YHVH.” One or two? Alas, one plus one plus one will never equal ONE. But that is what they have been told in church.

It takes a bit of time to extricate oneself! But your friends will thank you for helping them out of the complexity.

Comments

“Thank you so very much for your Internet ministry. Your commitment to biblical truth, regardless of how unpopular it may be in most circles, has made a major impact on my spiritual trajectory. I believe God has used your teachings, along with those found on **Christianmonotheism.com**, to reveal truth to me.” — *Florida*

“My wife and I have been believers in Jeshua for over 60 years, and about 3 years ago I bought a copy of your book *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, which has with other material since, completely changed and simplified our understanding of our Messiah. We find that your *Focus on the Kingdom* letters each month help us, and seem to answer our questions just at the right time.” — *England*

“Thanks. Your *Focus on the Kingdom* has helped me get rid of the Trinitarian superstition.” — *Brazil*

“I really enjoy my magazine and would not want to miss it. I wish I could meet up with other truth-seekers in Perth but I can't find any one so far.” — *Australia*

“I sincerely thank you for *Focus on the Kingdom*. I was a former Jehovah's Witness. I need help to recover after 30 years of brainwashing.” — *Netherlands*

Jesus kept the Passover, before dying the next day, and on that occasion he introduced the New Covenant “Lord's supper” for the New Covenant Church. Jesus instituted, at that final Passover, the new festival for Christians, the Lord's Supper, kept when churches convened (certainly not just once a year!). I Cor. 11:17, 20.

Luke 22:7-13 provides the precious information about Jesus' participation in *the Passover* of Israel, just before he died the next day: “Then came the day of unleavened bread, when *the Passover* had to be killed. And Jesus sent Peter and John with these words: ‘Go and prepare us *the Passover*, so that we may eat it...When you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house that he enters. And you are to say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is the guest room where I can *eat the Passover* with my disciples?’” And he will show you a large upper room furnished. Prepare *the Passover* there.’ And they went and found exactly what he had told them. And they made ready *the Passover*” (Luke 22:7-13).

The classic commentary on the gospels is right to note this: “It is really an enigma how one could ever have found in this chronological datum of Luke, and in the words of Jesus in Matthew 26:18, a ground for the entirely unprovable conjecture that our Savior ate the Passover *a day earlier* other than other Israelites.” How true!

“Upon every impartial person the beginning of Luke 22 makes the impression that Luke speaks here of the definite day on which, according to the appointment of the law, *the Passover* lamb had to be slaughtered. Only on this day was the question of the disciples, Matthew 26:17, perfectly natural...

“Be it only granted to us to express our conviction — the result of special and repeated investigation — that as well according to the synoptics as according to John, our Lord on the **14th Nisan, at the same time with the other Jews, and at the time appointed by the Law, ate the Passover**, and on the 15th suffered the death on the cross. If we compare Luke with the other synoptics, we may then unite the accounts thus: that at a preliminary enquiry of the disciples as to where the Passover might be kept, our Lord gave Peter and John a definite command to go away to prepare the Passover” (*Lange's Commentary*, p. 333).

One would hope that the clear, united testimony of Matthew, Mark and Luke to the effect that Jesus ate the *Passover* at the time it was celebrated by Israel, would not be questioned. The biblical statement is utterly clear.