

DIFFICULT PASSAGES

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

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Scripture is from New King James Version unless otherwise noted.

CHRIST IS 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.”

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 a divine being, is translated “God.” The Son is a divine being. He is God begotten from (or out of) God, who became “the Father” when He beget the Son (Pro. 8:22-30). John says that Christ was “begotten of the Father.” He was the Word of God, before He became flesh.

Christ is our “Everlasting Father” (Isa. 9:6) but God is His Father (Pro. 8:22-30, 2 John 1:3). He is our “Mighty God” (Isa. 9:6) but THE Father is “His God” (Eph. 1:17, Rev. 3:12, Rev. 1:6). We might say that God the Father is our divine Grandfather.

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 other translations.] “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 a period - between sentences. In the NKJV Christ is God over all, but in the RSV God is over all. Of course Christ is God [divine] because He was begotten out of the Divine Father, and He is over all things to the congregation (Eph. 1:22). He is not however, over God His Father, who is “head of Christ” (1 Cor. 11:3).

From the sin of Eve and Adam, mankind was separated from the Father. This earth was in quarantine. Christ the Son, stepped in as Mediator. He became God in place of God. He led - as "the Angel of the LORD," appearing to Abraham, to Moses, to Joshua, to the parents of Samson and others. He spoke from Mt. Sinai. Finally - when He incarnated in human form and nature, the connection with God the Father was restored. His Spirit lived in Christ (a human being) and now flows through the glorified Christ to all who believe.

EQUAL WITH GOD

Philippians 2:5 [Christ] "who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God."

NOTE: "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.

Christ existed in the form of God. This is plain. In Hebrews 1:3 we find that he was "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His (the Father's) person." An "image" is a copy. An "express image" is an exact copy. God was omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, therefore the Son inherited these powers. I believe this means that Christ the Son existed both in bodily form and as Spirit. He was present and omnipresent, matter and energy, visible and invisible - just like His Father.

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 of God, 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 14:28). "My teaching is not mine, but His Who sent me" (John 7:16). I do "the works which the Father has given Me to finish" (John 5:36). "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).

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. When He spoke for His Father, it was as if the Father Himself spoke. According to Paul, God the Father is and always will be the Head, even 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."

John 5:30 "I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the Father who sent Me."

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."

The Son of God represented His Father to men, and as the representative of the Father, He was "given" the authority to forgive sins.

FROM ETERNITY

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 word translated “everlasting” in Micah 5:2 is sited 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 beings (Tri-theism), OR they believe that He is a second manifestation of the one divine being who has always existed (Mono-theism).

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

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, such usages generally point to something that seems long ago, but rarely if ever refers to a limitless past.

In Deut. 32:7 and Job 22:15 it 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 past 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 “eternity” defines that which existed before time began. “Time” is a created dimension. It was therefore created by the Son of God (Jn. 1:3, 1 Cor 8:6, Eph. 3:9, Col. 1:19). Since He existed before time, He could be said to have existed from “eternity.” That does not preclude His having been “begotten” from God the Father. “In the beginning” the Word was (Jn. 1:1). I believe His begetting WAS “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.

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 now 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 older than the time of Constantine, which contains Matthew 28:19. The page containing Matthew 28:19 was torn from every pre-Constantine Greek manuscript. One Aramaic manuscript survives. In that manuscript, Matthew 28:19 reads, “baptizing them in my name.” In other words, Christ commanded them to baptize in HIS name. And many other passages confirm that 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”. He 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. He finally quotes the passage 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.

NO OTHER NAME

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 and was and is to come.” He is God of the past, God of the present, and God of the future. He is the same “yesterday, today, and forever.”

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. The “longer reading” known as the Johannine Comma, was omitted from the first two editions of Erasmus’ Latin text (1516, 1519). One of Erasmus’ most vocal critics was Stunica, one of the editors of the Complutensian Polyglot, who charged that Erasmus’ text lacked the trinitarian affirmation of 1 John 5:7-8. 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 produced, probably written to order around 1520 by a Franciscan friar who took the words from the Latin Vulgate and translated them back into Greek. 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 1 John 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. We worship Him as such. We worship Christ also BECAUSE God the Father has commanded us to do so, (Phil. 2:10-11, Heb. 1:6, Lk. 25:51-52), but we do NOT worship Christ as THE “One who sits on the throne” - the source of all life (Rev. 4:11). We recognize Christ’ position as second to God His Father. He is “the Lamb.” He now sits “at the right hand of the Father” (Rev. 3:21) because the Father has placed Him there. Christ will in the end, “be subject to” the Father, “that God may be all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28).

John 10:30 “I and My Father are one.”

Was Christ saying that He is a manifestation of One divine being? Was He saying that He and the Father are NOT two separate beings, each with an individual will? How you understand this text will depend upon your personal belief, and your study of other relevant texts.

John 17:11 “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 Me, that they may be one as We are.”

A man and a woman are said to become “one” in marriage (Gen. 2:24). All mankind were said to be “one” before the LORD separated them into different language groups at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:6). The word in that context might mean “unified.” Jew and Gentiles were to become “one new man” (Eph. 2:14). Israel and Judah will become “one nation” in the kingdom of Messiah (Eze. 37:22).

If we may be “one” just the Father and Son are “one,” then this cannot mean that 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, and be in harmony and agreement with one another. We will be unified in our worship and obedience of the One Supreme Being - the Father who is “Head” of all - just as Christ taught us.

***We pray this study will prove a blessing.
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