



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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Volume X
Issue 235

46 Reasons Why Our Heavenly Father Has NO Equals or Co-Equals

Discussions about the doctrine of the Trinity tend to become very emotional. For that reason, it is essential to point out that the differences in the Trinitarian and non-Trinitarian beliefs are in regard to the identities of God, our Father, and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is important to clarify what is meant by the "Trinity," because many Christians do not have a full and clear understanding of what the doctrine of the Trinity is. The Trinity is not only that "Jesus is God," or "There are three: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." A standard definition of the Trinity (denominations differ somewhat) would be something like:

The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and these three make only one God. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are "co-equal" and "co-eternal" since they are all part of one God, but the Son is eternally begotten, while the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Son has two natures, and thus Jesus is both fully human and fully God.

This is what the doctrine of the Trinity is. However, it is our belief that this doctrine is not found in Scripture. In this short work we will set forth some of the reasons why we do not believe the Trinity is a biblical doctrine.

Please note that just because we believe that Jesus was not God does not mean that we believe Jesus was "just a man." The Bible testifies that He is the only begotten Son of God. As such, He has a special relation to God that the rest of mankind

does not have. He was born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life in complete obedience to God. He gave His life for the salvation of all men. He was raised by God on the third day. He ascended into heaven and now, having been given all authority by God, sits at God's right hand. In the future, He will be the Judge of the living and the dead. As exalted as Jesus is, He is not God, but rather the Son of God. The Bible says, "God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Since God "made" Jesus Lord, it cannot be that Jesus is co-equal with the Father. Jesus is not part of a co-equal "Trinity," but He is the only begotten Son of God.

There are many verses that, if read and believed in a simple, straightforward manner, should clearly convince any unbiased person that God and Jesus are two completely different and distinct beings. There are also many logical reasons that should cause us to doubt the doctrine of the Trinity.

What follows is a list of some reasons to believe that the Father is the only true God of Scripture and has no equal.

REASONS TO DOUBT THAT THE TRINITY EXISTS

1. The word "Trinity" is not in the Bible.
2. There is no clear Trinitarian "formula" in the Bible.
3. Trinitarians differ greatly in their definitions of the Trinity. The Eastern Orthodox Church differs from the Western traditions regarding the
(see **REASONS**, page 2223)

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12)
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

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REASONS (continued from page 2221)

relation of the Holy Spirit to the Father and the Son. Some television evangelists differ greatly from the Reformed Churches in their concept of Christ's divinity while He was on earth. Oneness Pentecostals say the classic formula of the Trinity is completely wrong. All of these claim that Christ is God and that the Bible supports their position; but there is no Trinitarian formula in the Bible, and Trinitarians themselves cannot agree on a definition. If one is to believe in the Trinity, how is he to know which definition is correct, since none appears in the Bible?

4. The Trinitarian contention that “the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, and together they make one God” is not in Scripture and is illogical. Trinitarians teach that Jesus is both 100 percent man and 100 percent God. We say that God can do the impossible, but He cannot perform that which is inherently contradictory. God is the inventor of logic and mathematics, disciplines He created to allow us to get to know Him and His world. It is the very reason why He said that He is “One God,” and why Jesus said that the witness of two was true and then said that He and His Father both were witnesses. God cannot make a round square, and He cannot make 100 percent + 100 percent = 100 percent, without contradicting the laws of mathematics that He designed.

**VERSES THAT SHOW A DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE NATURE OF GOD AND THE
NATURE OF CHRIST**

5. God is spirit (John 4:24), yet even after His resurrection Jesus said of Himself that He was not a spirit, but flesh and bone (Luke 24:39).

6. Jesus is very plainly called a man many times in Scripture: John 8:40; Acts 2:22; 17:31; 1 Timothy 2:5, etc. In contrast to this, the Bible says, “*God is not a man ...*” (Numbers 23:19), and “*... For I am God, and not man ...*” (Hosea 11:9).

7. Numbers 23:19 also specifically says that God is not a “*son of man.*” In the Gospels, Jesus is often called the “*son of man.*” If God became a human being Who was called the “*son of man*” this creates a contradiction. Some occurrences of the phrase

“*son of man*” in the New Testament are Matthew 12:40; 16:27-28; Mark 2:10; 8:31; John 5:27. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the “*son of man*” phrase is also used many times speaking of people (Job 25:6; Psalm 80:17; 144:3; Ezekiel 2:1, 3, 6, 8; 3:1, 3-4, 10, 17, 25). Human beings, including Jesus Christ, are called “*son of man,*” and are thus carefully distinguished from God, Who is not a “*son of man.*”

8. Jesus is called the “*Son of God*” more than 50 times in the Bible. Not once is He called “*God the Son.*”

9. A man (Adam) caused mankind's problems, and Romans 5:19 says that a man (Jesus Christ) will have to undo those problems:

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the One Man the many will be made righteous.

Some theologians teach that only God could pay for the sins of mankind, but the Bible clearly teaches that only a man, *i.e., the man* Jesus Christ could do it.

10. Jesus, the man, is the mediator between God and men. II Timothy 2:5 says,

*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, **the Man** Christ Jesus.*

Christ is clearly called a “*Man,*” even after His resurrection. Also, if Christ Himself was God, He could not be the mediator “*between God and man.*”

**VERSES THAT SHOW THAT GOD IS GREATER
THAN CHRIST**

11. Jesus called the Father “*My God*” both before and after His resurrection (Matthew 27:46; John 20:17; Revelation 3:12). Jesus did not think of Himself as God, but instead had a God just as we do. For example, He told Mary Magdalene to go to the brothers and tell them,

I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God (John 20:17). ▶

Thus Jesus' God is the same God as our God, the Father.

12. Jesus said, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). In direct contrast to these clear words from Jesus, the orthodox formula of the Trinity says that the Father and the Son are "co-equal."

13. It was God Who made Jesus "Lord." Acts 2:36 says, "God has made this Jesus ... both Lord and Christ." "Lord" is not the same as "God." "Lord" (the Greek word is *kurios*) is a masculine title of respect and nobility, and it is used many times in the Bible. If Christ was God, then by definition He was already "Lord"; so, for the Bible to say He was "made" Lord could not be true. To say that Jesus is God because the Bible calls Him "Lord" is very poor scholarship. "Lord" is used in many ways in the Bible, and others besides God and Jesus are called "Lord."

- a) Property owners are called "lord" (Matthew 20:8, *kurios* is understood as "owner").
- b) Heads of households were called "lord" (Mark 13:35, master = *kurios*).
- c) Slave owners were called "lord" (Matthew 10:24, *kurios* is understood as "master").
- d) Husbands were called "lord" (I Peter 3:6, *kurios* is understood as "master," "husband").
- e) A son called his father "lord" (Matthew 21:30, sir = *kurios*).
- f) The Roman Emperor was called "lord" (Acts 25:26, *kurios* is understood as "your Majesty").
- g) Roman authorities were called "lord" (Matthew 27:63, sir = *kurios*).

14. In the future, the Son will be subject to the Father.

When He has done this, then the Son Himself will be made subject to Him [God] Who put everything under Him, so that God may be All in all (I Corinthians 15:28).

Trinitarian dogma contradicts this by making Jesus "eternally equal to the Father."

15. Jesus recognized that the Father was the only true God. In prayer, He said to God,

... that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom You have sent (John 17:3).

For Jesus to have prayed this way surely meant that He did not consider Himself to be "the only true God."

16. Jesus was "sanctified" by God.

Do you say of Him Whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming," because I said, "I am the Son of God"?" (John 10:36).

Jesus was sanctified by God, but God does not need to be sanctified.

17. Philippians 2:6-8 has been mistranslated in many versions, but properly rendered, :6 says that Christ

did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.

Jesus Christ was highly exalted by God. The statement makes no sense at all if Christ was God, because then Christ would have been praised for not seeking equality with Himself.

18. It was clear that Jesus did not consider Himself equal with the Father. In John 5:19, He said,

The Son can do nothing by Himself; He can only do what He sees His Father doing (c.f. :30; John 8:28; 12:49).

19. There is only One who is "good," and that is God. In Luke 18:19, Jesus spoke to a man who had called Him "good," asking him,

Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.

If Jesus had been telling people that He was God, He would have complimented the man on his perception, just as He complimented Peter when Peter said he was "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Instead, Christ gave him a mild rebuke. Christ was not teaching the people that He was God.

20. I Corinthians 3:23 makes it clear that God is greater than Christ, just as Christ is greater than we are.

... and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.

21. If God is greater than Christ, then God is His leader just as Christ is our leader. This is exactly what the Bible teaches.

Now I want you to realize that the Head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the Head of Christ is God (I Corinthians 11:3).

It is obvious from this verse and I Corinthians 3:23 (above) that the Trinitarian “formula” that Christ and God are “co-equal” is not biblical.

22. When the disciples prayed to God in Acts, they called King David God’s “*Servant*” (4:25). Later in that same prayer they called Jesus “*Your holy Servant*” (4:30). It is very obvious that the first century disciples did not believe Christ was God, but thought of Him, like David, as a Servant of God (c.f. Matthew 12:18 and Acts 3:26, which also refer to Jesus as God’s “*Servant*”).

23. It was God Who did miracles and wonders through Christ (Matthew 9:8; Acts 2:22; 10:38). If Christ was God, the Bible would simply say that Christ did the miracles Himself without making reference to God. The fact that it was God supplying the power for the miracles shows that God is greater than Christ.

24. There are many verses indicating that Jesus’ power and authority was given to Him by the Father. If He was the eternal God, then He always would have had those things that Scripture says He was “*given*.” Christ was given “*all authority*” (Matthew 28:18). He was given “*a name above every name*” (Philippians 2:9). He was given work to finish by the Father (John 5:36). He was given those who believed in Him by the Father (John 6:39; 10:29). He was given glory (John 17:22, 24). He was given His “*cup*” [his torture and death] by the Father (John 18:11). God “*seated*” Christ at His Own right hand (Ephesians 1:20). Christ was “*appointed*” over the

Church (Ephesians 1:22). These verses and others like them make no sense if Christ is “co-equal” with the Father, but make perfect sense if Christ was the Messiah, “*a man accredited by God*” (Acts 2:22).

25. Despite all the people who speak of the “Deity of Christ,” the phrase never appears in the Bible, nor is Christ ever called “Deity.” “Deity” is from the Latin *Deus*, which means “God,” and the phrase, “the Deity of Christ,” as it is popularly (but not biblically) used, means “the ‘Godness’ of Christ.” However, Christ is not God: He is Lord, as many clear verses show. Colossians 2:9 says that in Christ the “*fullness of Deity dwells bodily*” (NRSV). This verse is stating that God (the Deity) placed all of His fullness in Christ, which is quite different from saying that Christ is Deity. Earlier in Colossians, the concept is made clear:

God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him” (Colossians 1:19).

That is true. John 3:34 says,

For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

The fact that Christ has “*all the fullness*” of God does not make Him God. In Ephesians 3:19, the Bible says that Christians should be filled with “*all the fullness of God*,” and no one believes that this makes Christians God. Furthermore, if Christ was God, it would make no sense to say that the fullness of God dwelled in Him, because, being God, He would always have the fullness of God. The fact that Christ could have the fullness of God dwell in Him shows that He was not God.

II Peter 1:4 says that through the great and precious promises “*you may participate in the divine nature.*” Having a “*divine nature*” does not make us God, and it did not make Christ God. The *NIV Study Bible* note on II Peter 1:4 says that it means only that “*we are indwelt by God through His Holy Spirit.*” Likewise Christ, Who was filled with Holy Spirit without limits, had the fullness of Deity dwelling in Him.

25. Ephesians 4:5-6 says there is ▶

one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

The “one Lord” is Jesus. The “one God” is the Father. There are clearly two separate beings represented here, not “one God” composed of Jesus and His Father. Furthermore, there is no verse that says that Jesus and the Father are “one God.”

27. I Corinthians 8:6 says,

yet for us there is but one God, the Father ... and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ.

If there is one God and one Lord, then there are two, and they are not the same.

28. Jesus called the Father, “the only God” (John 5:44). The *New American Standard Version* goes so far as to translate it as “the one and only God.” Jesus would not have said this had He believed that He Himself was God also.

29. Christ made a distinction between speaking against Him and speaking against the Holy Spirit.

And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven (Luke 12:10).

If both the Holy Spirit and Christ were co-equal persons in one God, then there would be no difference between speaking against Christ and speaking against the Holy Spirit.

30. Christ said His doctrine was not His Own.

My teaching is not My Own. It comes from Him Who sent Me (John 7:16).

Christ could not have said this if He was God, because the doctrine would have been His.

31. Jesus and God have separate wills.

not My will but Yours be done (Luke 22:42; c.f. John 5:30).

32. Jesus counted Himself and His Father as two, not “one.”

In your own law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. I am one who testifies for Myself; my other witness is the Father (John 8:17-18).

Jesus confirmed this truth in John 14:1 when He said,

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me.

There are literally hundreds of Scriptures like these that set forth Jesus and God as separate and distinct beings.

Whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son (II John 9).

Scripture clearly recognizes the Father and the Son, but not “both” of them as “one God.”

33. The Bible always portrays God and Christ as two separate beings. Examples are far too many to list, but here is one: When Stephen saw them just before his death, he saw “the son of man standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56).

34. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus is an “heir” of God, and a joint-heir with us (Romans 8:17 – *KJV*). If Christ is a “person” in the “Godhead” and co-eternal with the Father, then He cannot be an heir, because, as God, He is full owner of all, and there is nothing He could “inherit.” He simply would share eternal glory. By making Christ a co-heir with believers and an heir of God, the Bible makes it clear how much Christ is like us. We inherit from the Father, and Christ does too.

35. The Bible is clear that Jesus is the “image of God” (Colossians 1:15; II Corinthians 4:4). If Christ is the image of God, then He cannot be God, because you cannot be an image of someone and the real person at the same time. If you see a photograph of us, you see our image and you can learn a lot about us from it, but the image is not the real us. Christ is the image of God. We learn a lot about God from seeing Christ, but the simple fact that He is God’s image proves He is *not* God.

36. *“The only wise God”* receives His glory through Jesus Christ (Romans 16:27 – *“To the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ”*). To reference *“God”* apart from Christ and at the same time say that God was the *“only”* God is very clear: Jesus is not, and is not part of, the *“only”* God.

Trinitarian doctrine teaches that God and Christ (and the Holy Spirit) make up *“One God,”* but the Bible teaches that they are two distinct beings.

37. Jesus grew in wisdom, but God is all wise (Luke 2:52 – *“And Jesus increased in wisdom”*). Also, Jesus *“learned obedience”* (Hebrews 5:8). God does not need to learn.

38. Jesus had limited knowledge. For example, Mark 13:32 says,

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Although some Greek texts omit *“nor the Son,”* Trinitarian textual scholars now admit the phrase was in the original text of Mark. It was Trinitarian scribes who tried to have this phrase removed from the Bible, because it disagreed with their theology and they could not explain it.

Even after His resurrection, Jesus still receives knowledge from God as Revelation 1:1 indicates:

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him.

39. Scripture teaches that it was fitting that God should *“make”* Jesus *“perfect through suffering”* (Hebrews 2:10). God is, and has always been perfect, but Jesus needed to attain perfection through His suffering.

40. Jesus received the Holy Spirit at His baptism. If Jesus was God, and the Holy Spirit was God, then God would have been anointed by God. What purpose would this have served? We know why people are anointed, but what power could God give to Himself? Jesus was given the Holy Spirit just as believers are today.

41. Jesus was *“tempted in every way – just as we are”* (Hebrews 4:15), yet the Bible is clear that God cannot be tempted.

for God cannot be tempted by evil (James 1:13).

42. At times of weakness or difficulty, angels ministered to and strengthened Jesus. Luke 22:43 says,

An angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him [in the garden of Gethsemane].

Men need to be strengthened; God does not (c.f. Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:13).

43. Scripture teaches that Jesus died. However, God cannot die. Romans 1:23 and other verses say that God is immortal. Immortal means *“not subject to death.”* This term applies only to God.

44. Hebrews 4:15 says that when Jesus was on earth, He was *“just as we are.”* None of us would have the feelings, the doubts, the fears, etc., that we do if we were God. To say that God feels like I do is to make a mockery of God. Jesus was the expected Messiah of God, the Last Adam, a *“man accredited by God,”* as Acts 2:22 says.

45. Hebrews 2:10-11 says that Jesus is not ashamed to call us his *“brothers,”* because we have the same Father He does. The Bible teaches that we are *“brothers”* of Jesus and *“sons of God.”* The Bible never says or even infers that we are *“brothers of God.”*

46. Jesus’ disciples were commissioned to do *“greater works”* than He did. This would be absurd if Christ was God, because then the disciples would be commissioned to do greater works than God does. John 14:12 (NASB) says,

He who believes in Me [Jesus], the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.

God is God because of certain attributes that He has. If Jesus Christ was God, He would have to have the attributes of God. Most theologians agree that these attributes are: unoriginated, self- ▶

existent, immortal, unchanging, omniscient, all wise, all good, all-powerful and omnipresent. Yet Jesus denied every one of these.

He was *not* unoriginated: Christ was begotten of God.

The Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself (John 5:26).

He was not self-existent.

I live because of the Father (John 6:57).

He was not immortal. Jesus died, and God resurrected Him.

He was not unchanging. He grew and learned, and He died and rose in a new and different body.

He was not omniscient. There were things He did *not* know (see # 38 above).

He was not all-wise. Jesus “*grew in wisdom*” (see # 37 above).

He was not all-good. He said the only One good was God (see # 20 above).

He was not all-powerful. Whereas “*nothing is impossible with God*” (Luke 1:37), Christ said “*the Son can do nothing by Himself*” (John 5:19).

He was not omnipresent. After Lazarus died, Jesus told His disciples, “*I am glad I was not there*” (John 11:15).

The attributes of God are what make Him God, just as there are certain attributes that make a man what he is. There is a common saying that “if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, then it’s a duck.” This could easily be applied here. God “walks and quacks” like God. Jesus “walks and quacks” like a man, and Scripture says very clearly that He is a man. We assert that the Bible is clear in its teaching about Who God is and Who Christ is, and we ask Christians to carefully consider what they believe and why.

We also think that believing that Jesus is God, “the Holy Spirit” is God, and the Father is God actually demeans the only true God. Making God one of three co-equal “persons” takes from Him His exalted position as the only true God, the Creator of the universe, the Author of the plan of Salvation, the Father of Jesus Christ, and our one God.

Besides robbing God of His exalted position as God Supreme, believing that Jesus is God also demeans Him. One cannot appreciate how great Jesus really was until you make an effort to live like He did for even one day. His courage, mental tenacity, love and great faith are unparalleled in human history. His true greatness is lost if you believe He is God, for “*with God all things are possible.*” Believing Jesus is God also demeans God because Jesus Himself said, “*My Father is greater than I.*”

Believing that Christ is God also means that He could not have sinned [which makes sense given that “God” cannot sin]. Christ must have been able to sin, for Scripture says he was “*tempted in every way just as we are.*” Christ went through life like each human does, with doubts, fears and concerns, and with the possibility of sin. To believe that Jesus could not have sinned makes it impossible for us to identify with Him.

By restoring the Father to His unique and singular position as God, we give Him all the worship, credit, respect and awe He deserves as the one true God. By restoring Christ to His position as the Man accredited by God, the only-begotten Son of the Father, the Last Adam, the One Who could have sinned but stayed obedient, the One Who could have given up but loved us so much that He never quit, the One Whom God highly exalted to be our Lord, we give Jesus Christ all the worship, credit, respect and awe that He deserves, and we can draw great strength and determination from His example.

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