

# The Inerrancy of The New Testament

*by*

*Dr. Robert Schiermeyer*

## **THE INERRANCY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Evangelical Christianity holds to the doctrine of New Testament inerrancy. This doctrine states that the original New Testament writings were inspired of God and without error.

Evangelical Christian scholars acknowledge that none of the original manuscripts (the “autographs”) are available today. The earliest manuscripts available to us are from hundreds of years later; in fact, the earliest full edition of the New Testament dates from about 350 AD (page 81, **THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**, 2nd edition, paperback, 1995, by Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, Michigan). Additionally, a significant amount of textual variation exists among the earliest manuscripts currently available (ibid, page 29). Christianity accepts by faith that the manuscripts we have today are accurate copies of the original manuscripts. Christianity believes that, despite numerous variants available today, the text of the original “autograph” text can be reconstructed, without error, from the multitude of variant manuscripts available today.

What if errors exist in the New Testament manuscripts we have today? What portions are trustworthy and which are not? How can inerrancy be assumed in the original manuscripts if errors exist in the ones we have today? The seriousness of this issue cannot be underestimated. If only documentable error exists, then the validity of the entire New Testament comes into question.

## **VERIFYING THE NEW TESTAMENT**

New Testament textual scholars frequently cite statistics that demonstrate that the Greek text of the New Testament is >99% accurate. That is, they believe that through careful comparison and analysis of the various manuscripts available today, they have been able to reproduce the original autographs with >99% accuracy.

That may, or may not, be true. Since none of the original autographs exist, how do we truly know if they have accurately reproduced them? But the statement does not answer a more fundamental question: is the text inerrant? What does it matter if an errant text can be reproduced with 100% accuracy?

Therefore, the critical question to be answered is: How much of the New Testament is verifiable? Are there statements that the New Testament makes that can be compared to other reliable sources as to the reliability and inerrancy of those statements?

Why is this important? Consider the following analogy. Someone approaches you with the deal of a lifetime: an offer to sell you 1,000 diamonds at an unbelievable bargain price. He has ten of the diamonds that you can scrutinize. The other 990 will be delivered after the transaction is closed. No refunds allowed. But when you take the ten “diamonds” to a gemologist, you discover that five of the ten were cubic zirconium. What is your level of confidence that the other 990 “diamonds” are actually diamonds?

That is the dilemma of the New Testament. Much of the information is not subject to verification. There are sermons, parables, and teachings that are not subject to verification

as to accuracy or inerrancy. But there are some things, like the ten “diamonds”, that can be checked out.

What if the things that can be checked out, like the ten diamonds, prove to be less than accurate? What if they are not diamonds? That makes the other information, which we have to accept on faith, like the other 990 diamonds, suspect.

What will be used as “reliable, comparative sources?” The first source would be the Old Testament. The New Testament requires the accuracy and validity of the Old Testament. Therefore, for purposes of verifying the accuracy and inerrancy of the New Testament, the Old Testament would be a reliable comparative source.

A second source would be historical documents, such as Josephus or other historians, or products of research (archeology, etc.) Of course, when these sources contradict what the New Testament states, some people would rather accept the New Testament account rather than the conflicting account. I realize that this would be a source of controversy. But, if the only reason to reject the reliable source is because it conflicts with what the New Testament says, then the discrepancy needs to be dealt with.

A third source of verification, in a limited way, would be the New Testament itself. Does the New Testament make statements that are contradictory within itself? Does the New Testament make any statements that are mutually exclusive? In other words, does the New Testament make statements that could not both be true; for one to be true the other must be false.

This third technique of verification is limited for the following reason. If the New Testament does not make any contradictory and mutually exclusive statements, that are not verifiable by an external source, then that would only demonstrate the internal consistency of the New Testament, but not its accuracy or inerrancy. But if the New Testament does make contradictory and mutually exclusive statements, that would demonstrate its inaccuracy and its errancy. This technique can only harm, not help, the verification of the reliability of the New Testament.

Therefore, those portions of the New Testament that are quotations from the Old Testament, or that are historical details for which we have a reliable source to check its accuracy will be considered. Also included will be the contradictory and mutually exclusive statements in the New Testament.

Very little of the New Testament can be subject to this kind of verification. Extremely little of the letters or epistles, except for scripture quotations, cover material that can be verified. The reasons are obvious: they are sermons and exhortations. There is slightly more information in the four gospels and the Book of Acts that is verifiable. But once again, most of the material in those writings are also not subject to verification by their very nature. They are sermons and teachings.

The following are verses in the New Testament that seemingly call into question the inerrancy of text of the New Testament. The King James Version (KJV) of the Bible will be used. [Words in italics are words that are not in the original manuscript (Hebrew or Greek) but that the editor of the KJV added to help clarify what he thought was the meaning of text.]

## STEPHEN'S SPEECH

Stephen's speech in Acts 7 has several significant discrepancies from the record of events in the Old Testament.

The first discrepancy is the number of Jacob's family that went down to Egypt.

### Acts 7:14

Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, **THREESCORE AND FIFTEEN [75]** souls.

### Genesis 46:27

And the sons of Joseph, which were r in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were **THREESCORE AND TEN [70]**.

### Exodus 1:5

And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were **SEVENTY** souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already.

### Deuteronomy 10:22a

Thy fathers went down into Egypt with **THREESCORE AND TEN** persons.

The Old Testament clearly records that **70** souls went down into Egypt, **not 75** as Stephen stated.

The second discrepancy is the location of the burial site for Jacob. Stephen says it was at Shechem but the scripture says it was at the cave of Machpelah where Abraham and Isaac were buried.

### Acts 7:15-16

<sup>15</sup> So **JACOB** went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, <sup>16</sup> And were carried over into **SHECHEM**, and laid in the sepulcher that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Shechem.

### Genesis 50:13

For his sons carried him [Jacob] into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of **MACHPELAH** which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a burying place of Ephron the Hittite, **BEFORE MAMRE**.

Jacob was buried at the cave of Machpelah, along with Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Leah. Stephen stated that Jacob was buried at Shechem. (Note: Hebron, where the cave of Machpelah is located, is >50 miles from Shechem)

The next discrepancy in Stephen's speech is about who purchased the burial site and who it was purchased from.

Acts 7:16

And were carried over into **SHECHEM**, and laid in the sepulcher that **ABRAHAM** bought for a sum of money of the sons of **EMMOR** *the FATHER* of **SHECHEM**.

Genesis 23:17-18

<sup>17</sup> And the field of **EPHRON** which was in **MACHPELAH**, which was before **MAMRE**, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure <sup>18</sup> Unto **ABRAHAM** for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

Genesis 33:18-19

<sup>18</sup> And **JACOB** came to Shalem, a city of **SHECHEM**, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram and pitched his tent before the city. <sup>19</sup> And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of **HAMOR** [Emmor] **SHECHEM'S FATHER**, for a hundred pieces of money.

Abraham bought the cave of Machpelah, and the field of Mamre that it was on, as a burial place for Sarah and himself Abraham bought the cave and the field from Ephron the Hittite. Jacob bought a field near Shechem. Jacob bought that field from Hamor (Emmor), the father of Shechem. Stephen's statements concerning the burial are in conflict with the Old Testament accounts.

Stephen also has discrepancy concerning when Abraham left Haran to live in the land of Canaan.

Acts 7:3-4

<sup>3</sup> And said unto him [Abram] Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. <sup>4</sup> Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Haran and from thence, **WHEN HIS FATHER WAS DEAD, he removed him into this land**, wherein ye now dwell.

Genesis 11:26

And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Genesis 12:4

So Abram departed, **as the Lord had spoken unto him**; and Lot went with him; and Abram was **SEVENTY AND FIVE YEARS OLD** when he departed out of Haran.

Genesis 11:32

And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years and Terah died in Haran..

Abram was born when Terah, his father, was seventy (70) years old. Abram left Haran when he seventy five (75) years old. That means that Terah was 145 years old

(70+75=145) when Abram left Haran. But Terah live until he was 205. Therefore, Abram left Haran 60 years (205-145=60) **BEFORE** Terah died

In order for Abraham to leave Haran after Terah's death, Abraham would have had to have been born when Terah was 130 years old (205-75=130). Abraham's fathering of Isaac at age 100 would have been no big deal by comparison (Genesis 17:17). Stephen's record of the events conflicts with the scriptural record.

## THE INFANCY NARRATIVES

The infancy narratives of the New Testament, as recorded in the gospels of Matthew (chapters 1-2) and Luke (chapters 1-3) contain conflicting information.

Understanding the historical context of the New Testament raises serious questions about the accuracy of the New Testament narratives. Consider, for example, the dating of Jesus' birth.

## WHEN WAS JESUS BORN?

### Matthew 2:1,22

<sup>1</sup> Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem... <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod...

### Luke 2:1-2

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. <sup>2</sup> (And this tax was when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

Matthew tells us that Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great. We know that Herod the Great is being referred to because Archelaus is mentioned as his son, ruling after him. Historians have been able to tell us that Herod the Great reigned from 37 BC to 4 BC when he died.

However, Luke tells us that Jesus was born while Cyrenius was governor of Syria. Luke tells us that the birth of Jesus coincided with a worldwide taxation from Rome. Historians have learned that the tenure of Cyrenius as governor of Syria was short; he was only governor (legate) of Syria for 2-3 years. Historians have been able to accurately determine Cyrenius's tenure as 6-8 AD. They have also determined the date of the taxation as 6-7 AD.

That is at least a ten year discrepancy. Matthew says Jesus was born no later than 4 BC (probably 5-6 BC) while Luke says he was born no earlier than 6 AD.

However, according to ancient records, the census and taxation taken by Cyrenius only involved the region of Judah. it did not include the region of Galilee. According to John P. Meier, in his book *A MARGINAL JEW: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (chapter 8: The Origins of Jesus of Nazareth, p205-252), "Attempts to reconcile [the infancy narratives] with the facts of ancient history are hopelessly contrived (p213)."

Luke 1:32-33 says that God is going to give Jesus the throne of his father David. Luke also says that Jesus will rule over Jacob for ever. But God had already made those exact same promises to Solomon!

## **JESUS or SOLOMON?**

### Luke 1:31-33

<sup>31</sup> And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: <sup>33</sup> And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

### Acts 7:46-47

<sup>46</sup> Who [David] found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. <sup>47</sup> But Solomon built him a house.

### Hebrews 1:5

For unto which of the angels said he at anytime, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.

### II Samuel 7:12-16

<sup>12</sup> And when thy [David] days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He shall build a house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup> I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If [when] he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: <sup>15</sup> But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. <sup>16</sup> And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.”

### I Chronicles 17:3-4,11-14

<sup>3</sup> And it came to pass the same night, that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, <sup>4</sup> Go and tell David my servant, Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not build me a house to dwell in:... <sup>11</sup> And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>12</sup> He shall build me a house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. <sup>13</sup> will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took *it* from *him* [Saul] that was before thee: <sup>14</sup> But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever; and his throne shall be stablished for evermore

### I Chronicles 22:7-10

<sup>7</sup> And David said to Solomon. My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build a house unto the name of the Lord my God: <sup>8</sup> But the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build a house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight. <sup>9</sup> Behold, a son shall be born to thee [David], who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest

**NOTE THE OLD TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT OF THE PROMISE TO DAVID:**

I Kings 8:18-20

<sup>18</sup> And the Lord God said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build a house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. <sup>19</sup> Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; **but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name.**

<sup>20</sup> **AND THE LORD HATH PERFORMED HIS WORD THAT HE SPAKE, and I AM RISEN UP IN THE ROOM OF DAVID MY FATHER, AND SIT ON THE THRONE OF ISRAEL, AS THE LORD PROMISED. AND HAVE BUILT A HOUSE FOR THE NAME OF THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL.**

II Chronicles 6:8-10

<sup>8</sup> But the Lord said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build a house for my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart: <sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house; but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name. <sup>10</sup> THE LORD THEREFORE HATH PERFORMED HIS WORD THAT HE HATH SPOKEN: **FOR I AM RISEN UP IN THE ROOM OF DAVID MY FATHER AND AM SET ON THE THRONE OF ISRAEL AS THE LORD PROMISED. AND HAVE BUILT THE HOUSE FOR THE NAME OF THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL.**

God clearly stated that David's seed, whom God explicitly identified as Solomon, would sit on David's throne. God also called Solomon his son. Hebrews seems to misappropriate the clear promise made to Solomon and applies it as a prophesy to Jesus.

The two genealogies of Jesus as recorded by Matthew and Luke pose two significant problems.

First, God said He would establish the kingdom of David through Solomon. Therefore, the messiah must not only be a descendant of David. he must also be a descendant of Solomon.

However, Luke's genealogy does not list Solomon in the genealogy of Jesus. Luke lists Nathan, another son of David. Therefore. Luke's genealogy is essentially worthless in establishing Jesus as the prophesied messiah according to the Jewish scriptures.

from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. <sup>10</sup> He shall build a house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.

I Chronicles 28:2-7a

<sup>2</sup> Then David the king stood up upon his feet, and said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people: As for me, I had in mine heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: <sup>3</sup> But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build a house for my name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood. <sup>4</sup> Howbeit the Lord God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel for ever: for he hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father he liked me to make me king over all Israel. <sup>5</sup> And of all my sons, (for the Lord given me many sons,) he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. <sup>6</sup> And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever.

Luke 3:31-32a

Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son **OF NATHAN**, which was the son of David, which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Boaz...

Matthew solves that genealogy problem by making sure that the ancestry of Jesus goes through Solomon.

Matthew 1:6-7

And Jesse begat David the king, and David begat SOLOMON of her that had been the w of Uriah and Solomon begat Rehoboam...

However, now the second problem surfaces: Matthew lists Jeconiah as an ancestor of Jesus. Why is that a problem? God cursed Jeconiah and stated that no descendant of his would ever sit on the throne of David or rule in Judah again.

Matthew 1:11-12

<sup>11</sup> And Josiah begat Jeconiah and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: <sup>12</sup> and after they were brought to Babylon, **JECONIAH** begat Salathiel; Salathiel begat Zerubbabel;

Jeremiah 22:29-30

<sup>29</sup> O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. <sup>30</sup> Thus saith the Lord, write ye this man [**JECONIAH**] childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for **NO MAN OF HIS SEED** shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah.

Remember that Luke said that God would give Jesus the throne of his father David and that he would rule of the house of Judah forever!

Luke 1:31-33

<sup>31</sup> And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: <sup>33</sup> And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

The genealogy of Matthew poses another serious problem.

### **WAS IT 14 GENERATIONS or 17 GENERATIONS?**

Matthew created another problem with the genealogy of Jesus when he stated that there were only 14 generations from David to the Babylonian captivity.

Matthew 1:17

So **ALL** the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

However, there were seventeen generations from David until the carrying away into Babylon. — Matthew left out three generations and three kings.

Matthew 1:8-9

<sup>8</sup> And Asa begat Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begat Jehoram; and Jehoram begat Uzziah; <sup>9</sup> and Uzziah begat Jotham, and Jotham begat Ahaz; and Ahaz begat Hezekiah;

I Chronicles 3:10b-13a

<sup>10</sup> ...Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, <sup>11</sup> Joram [Jehoram] his son, Ahaziah his son, Joash his son, <sup>12</sup> Amaziah his son, Azariah [Uzziah] his son, Jotham his son, <sup>13</sup> Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son,...

Matthew left out three kings: Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. The combined duration of the time period excluded by Matthew was 72 years (II Chronicles 22-25). Making the triplet of fourteen years each is nice, but not if you are going to say **ALL THE GENERATIONS** were fourteen in each period. Additionally, Matthew said that there were 42 generations from Abraham to Jesus (14x3=42), but he only listed 41 kings.

Matthew 1:22-23 says that Jesus was born of a virgin in fulfillment of a prophecy from the prophet Isaiah. This will be dealt with in the section on the New Testament use of Isaiah.

Matthew 2:13-14 then records that Joseph, the father of Jesus, was warned in a dream to take Jesus and his mother and flee to Egypt so that King Herod wouldn't harm him. When King Herod died, Jesus returned from Egypt; Matthew says that his return was the fulfillment of a prophecy by the prophet Hosea. But was it?

### OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON

Matthew 2:15

<sup>15</sup> And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

Hosea 11:1

<sup>1</sup> When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

Exodus 4:22b

Thus saith the Lord, Israel *is* my son, even my first born.

Hosea described a past event, the exodus of God's first born, Israel, out of Egypt. It was not a prophecy about Jesus.

Even more important are the mistranslations by the KJV.

Hosea 11:1 KJV

<sup>1</sup> When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

Hosea 11:1 (Corrected)

<sup>1</sup> When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and since Egypt I have cried out to my son.

The most critical mistranslation is that the KJV failed to translate the preposition (Lamed) attached to the word "My son". The word the KJV translates "out of" is the

Hebrew preposition (Mem) that usually means “from”. “From” can refer to a geographic location or it can refer to a point in time: “since.” Also, the verb “called” means to “cry out” or “proclaim” It does not mean to summon or to beckon.

The correct translation makes the narrative of Hosea 11 flow much better. Hosea 11:2-3 and onward discusses Israel’s rebellion to God and His persistent calling out to them.

Matthew’s infancy narrative also contains the story of King Herod brutally slaughtering all the baby boys in the region of Bethlehem that were two years of age and younger.

Matthew 2:16

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked by the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

Matthew then said that Herod’s activity was in fulfillment of a “prophecy” from the prophet Jeremiah. But was it?

### **SLAUGHTER OF BABIES or THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY**

Matthew 2:17-18

<sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, <sup>18</sup> In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

Jeremiah 31: 15-17

<sup>15</sup> Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, *and* bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children because they *were* not. <sup>16</sup> Thus saith the Lord; REFRAIN THY VOICE FROM WEEPING, AND THINE EYES FROM TEARS: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; AND THEY SHALL COME AGAIN FROM THE LAND OF THE ENEMY. <sup>17</sup> And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.

Jeremiah was describing the Babylonian captivity. The Jewish exiles walked past Rachel’s tomb on the way to Babylon. She wept for them. But God told her NOT TO WEEP. Her children would return to their land. That verse was not describing or prophesying the slaughter of innocent babies.

Lastly, Matthew’s infancy narrative concludes with the return of Jesus from Egypt to live in the town of Nazareth. Matthew says that this also was a fulfillment of prophecy. But was it?

## WHERE'S THE PROPHECY?

### Matthew 2:23

And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

### Old Testament

Nowhere in the Old Testament does a prophet, any prophet, say what Matthew claims.

The town of Nazareth, and the term Nazarene, are not mentioned anywhere in the Old Testament. That makes it difficult to reconcile the apparent discrepancy between Matthew's claim that Jesus dwelt in Nazareth in order to fulfill a prophecy and the Old Testament lack of such a prophecy.

The gospels not only don't agree on the year that Jesus was born, the gospels also don't agree on what day Jesus died on.

## WHAT DAY WAS JESUS CRUCIFIED ON?

### John 18:28

Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hail, lest they should be defiled; but that they might EAT THE PASSOVER.

### Luke 22:7-8

Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat.

### John 19:14

And it was the PREPARATION OF THE PASSOVER, and about the sixth hour: and he [Pilate] saith unto the Jews, Behold your King.

### Mark 14:12,26

<sup>12</sup> And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the Passover?... <sup>26</sup> And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

### Matthew 26:17,30

<sup>17</sup> Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to EAT THE PASSOVER?...

<sup>30</sup> And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives

John clearly has Jesus being tried and crucified on the preparation day for Passover, the 14th of Nissan, when the Passover lamb is slaughtered. John's final meal was not a Passover seder, it was a regular meal. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the last supper as a Passover seder. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all have Jesus being tried before Pilate and being crucified on the day after the last supper; the day of Passover, the 15th of Nissan.

The noted Christian scholar of the Old Testament, James C. Vanderkam, said in *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Vintage Books, 1993. ed Hershel Hanks, p 195:

The synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), on the one hand, and John on the other, place the Last Supper on different dates. The synoptics place the Last Supper on a Friday and treat it as a Passover meal; John, however, puts it on a Thursday before Passover, and dates Jesus' death to the next day - at a time when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered.

John had a theological mission in his recounting of the death of Jesus. He wasn't concerned with telling an accurate historical narrative. Rather, he wanted to portray Jesus as the passover. Therefore, he had him "sacrificed" at the same time as the passover lambs were being slaughtered for the passover seder meals.

Bottomline: the gospels don't agree on which day Jesus died!

### **THE RESURRECTION NARRATIVES**

The resurrection narratives are also a source of conflicting information, some of which seem to be irreconcilable.

### **HOW MANY WOMEN WENT TO THE TOMB?**

Matthew 28:1

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary

Mark 16:1

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome

Luke 24:10

Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them

John 20:1

Mary Magdalene

The differences in the narratives can be explained simply because not all members of the tomb visitation team were named.

### **WHEN DID THE WOMEN GET TO THE TOMB?**

Matthew 28:1

As it began to dawn

Mark 16:2

At the rising of the sun

Luke 24:1

Very early in the morning

John 20:1

When it was yet dark

Once again the difference in the narratives can be explained, albeit with a little more difficulty. John said it was dark. The others are at varying degrees of twilight to sunrise.

## HOW MANY ANGELS [ MEN] WERE AT THE TOMB?

<u>Matthew 28:2-5</u>	<u>Mark 16:5</u>	<u>Luke 24:4</u>	<u>John 20:1</u>
One angel	One young man	Two men	None

This is more difficult to explain. In fact, it appears to be irreconcilable. John said that when Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb that it was dark and no one was there. The others all record someone at the tomb when the women arrived. However, Luke actually records that what the women saw was a vision. [Perhaps John was right, there were no angels (or men), only visions.]

### Luke 24:23

And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also SEEN A VISION OF ANGELS, which said that he was alive.

## WHERE WERE THE ANGELS AT THE TOMB WHEN THE WOMIEN ARRIVED?

<u>Matthew 28:2</u>	<u>Mark 16:5</u>	<u>Luke 24:3-5</u>	<u>John 20:1-2</u>
One angel, sitting on the stone outside	One young man, inside, sitting on the right	Two men standing inside	No angel present.

According to John, no angel was present. The others have one or two angels or men inside or outside. Perhaps there were four angels: one sitting on the stone outside, one sitting inside on the right, and two standing inside. But Matthew, Mark, and Luke only recorded the one(s) they wanted to mention, much like the women who comprised the tomb visitation team. But that still doesn't explain why John said that no angel, or man, was present either outside or inside. That certainly seems to be irreconcilable.

## WERE THE WOMEN TOLD THAT JESUS WAS RESURRECTED?

<u>Matthew 28:6</u>	<u>Mark 16:6</u>	<u>Luke 24:4-6</u>	<u>John 20:2</u>
Yes, the Angel said, he is risen	Yes, the young man said, he is risen	Yes, two men said, he is risen	NO, they have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they laid him.

John records that Mary Magdalene arrived to an empty tomb with the stone rolled away and no one present. She concluded that the body of Jesus was taken by someone. She then goes to the disciples and tells them that the body of Jesus is missing, that someone has taken it. The other writers all record that angels (or men) were present at the tomb when she arrived and that the angels (or men) advised her that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

John's account must have occurred first, in all the other accounts the women leave the tomb knowing that Jesus was resurrected. Consider the following scenario: Mary

Magdalene went to the tomb and found it empty. She then went and told the disciples that the body of Jesus was missing. She then went and told the other women. She then returned to the tomb with the other women and only then did she encounter the angels (or men) that told her that Jesus was risen as recorded by the other gospels. Is that scenario possible?

Mark 16:1,3

<sup>1</sup> And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. <sup>3</sup> And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?

Luke 24:1,10

<sup>1</sup> Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. <sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James...

Mark 16:1 and Luke 24:1 state that the women were b. spices to anoint the dead body of Jesus. If Mary Magdalene had already been to the tomb and knew the body was missing, why would they bring spices to anoint a missing body?

Mark 16:3 goes on to say that the women discussed among themselves who would roll away the stone. If Mary Magdalene had already been to the empty tomb, then she knew that there was no reason to worry about who would roll the stone away.

Mark's account poses another difficulty. The two most ancient full manuscripts of the New Testament (Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus) **did not** include Mark 16:9-20. That means that Mark's gospel originally ended with verse 8.

Mark 16:8

And they [the women] went out quickly, and fled from the sepulcher; for they trembled and were amazed: **NEITHER SAID THEY ANYTHING TO ANY MAN** for they were afraid.

According to the most reliable versions of Mark's gospel, the women never told anyone about their encounter at the tomb.

## WHEN DID PETER RUN TO THE TOMB?

Luke 24:6,10-12

<sup>6</sup> He is not here, but is risen. <sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. <sup>11</sup> And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. <sup>12</sup> Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulcher; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

John 20:3-9

<sup>2</sup> The she [Magdalene] runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter... and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him. <sup>3</sup> Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulcher. <sup>6</sup> Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulcher, and seeth the linen clothes lie, <sup>7</sup> And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the line clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. <sup>9</sup> For as yet they knew not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead.

Luke said that Peter ran to the tomb after being told by Mary Magdalene, and the other women, that Jesus was resurrected. John, on the other hand, said that Peter ran to the tomb after Mary Magdalene, and the other women, told him that someone took the body and they didn't know where it was.

In Luke's account Peter had been told that Jesus was resurrected. In John's account Peter had no idea that Jesus had been resurrected. This seems to be irreconcilable.

### **WHERE WERE THE DISCIPLES TO MEET JESUS: JERUSALEM or GALILEE?**

Matthew 28:7

Galilee

Mark 16:7

Galilee

Luke 24:33,49

Remain in Jerusalem

John 21:1

Galilee

### **HOW MANY DISCIPLES DID JESUS APPEAR TO INITIALLY?**

Matthew 28:16

The ELEVEN  
disciples

Mark 16:9-13

First to Mary Magdalene,  
then unto another two,  
then the ELEVEN

Luke 24:13,33

First to two, then to  
the ELEVEN

John 20:14,24

First to Mary, then to  
the TEN (Judas died,  
and Thomas was not  
present)

Paul said that Jesus appeared to Cephas, then to the TWELVE.

I Corinthians 15:5

And that he [Jesus] was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

Once again John is at variance with the others. John records the doubting Thomas' narrative. John said that Thomas wasn't present the first time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples. Since Judas was dead, that means that only ten were present, not eleven, and certainly not twelve. But Paul's letters are the earliest writings, predating all the gospels. Who is right?

The resurrection narratives pose discrepancies that seem irreconcilable: how many angels (or men) were present (or were they just visions); whether the women knew Jesus was resurrected or just that his body was missing; when did Peter run to the sepulcher; how many disciples were present when Jesus appeared to them: 12, 11, or 10; and whether they were to stay in Jerusalem or go to Galilee. John's gospel has the greatest variance with the other gospels. However, Paul's statement is at variance with all the gospels and predates all of them.

### **THE NEW TESTAMENT (MIS)USE OF ISAIAH**

The New Testament attempts to portray Jesus as the messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. Many of the key prophecies used by the New Testament come from the book of Isaiah. Analysis of those verses is very important. (The reader is strongly encouraged

to consult a Hebrew grammar text to check-out independently the assertions I will make concerning “correct” Hebrew translations.)

Matthew allegedly quotes from Isaiah in an attempt to prove that the birth of Jesus was in fulfillment of scriptural prophecy.

Matthew 1:22-23 (KJV)

<sup>22</sup> Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, <sup>23</sup> Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 7:14-16 (KJV)

<sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. <sup>15</sup> Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

<sup>16</sup> For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

Isaiah 7:14-16 (corrected)

<sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, THE YOUNG MAIDEN IS WITH CHILD [she conceived], and she is delivering a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. <sup>15</sup> Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

<sup>16</sup> For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

## VIRGIN or YOUNG MAIDEN?

The Hebrew word that the KJV translates as virgin (Almah: Ayin-Lamed-Mem-Hey) is more correctly translated as young maiden. Hebrew has a specific word for virgin: Betulah. Most virgin females are young women, but not all young women are virgins. [Even the Greek word used in the Septuagint, parthenos, is not specific for virgin; it was used to describe Dinah after her rape by Shechem (Gen 34:2-4).]

The masculine form of the same word (Elem: Ayin-Lamed-Mem) is used in the OT and has no sexual connotation whatsoever. Rather, it merely describes, as would be expected, a young man or boy.

I Sam 17:56

And the king said, Inquire thou whose son **THE STRIPLING** is.

I Sam 20:22

But if I say thus unto **THE YOUNG MAN**, Behold the arrows *are* beyond thee, go thy way: for the Lord hath sent thee away.

The word Almah is used seven times in the OT. In every situation the word could be appropriately translated as “young woman.” However, there are times that it could not possibly be translated as “virgin.” For example:

Proverbs 30:18-20

<sup>18</sup> There be three *things which* are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: <sup>19</sup> **the way of** an eagle in the air; **the way of** a serpent upon a rock and **the way of** a man with a maid [almah].

<sup>20</sup> Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.

What do the first three things have in common? They leave no discernable trace of their actions. Determining the path an eagle has flown after it has flown away or the course of a snake after it slithered over a rock (as opposed to slithering over sand or grass) or determining the course of a ship in the sea after it has gone by is not readily (or easily) attainable. So it is with a man and a young woman. The evidence for sexual relations is not readily visible or easily attainable. The key to connecting verse 20 with verses 18-19 is the term, the way of. Verse twenty is an amplification of the way of a man with an Almah, in particular, with the adulterous young woman. So almah here clearly refers to a non-virgin.

John R. Kohlenberger III in his work, *The Interlinear NIV Hebrew-English Old Testament* (Zondervan), commented specifically on the translation of the word Almah (p xii):

Similarly, in Isaiah 7:14, because the MV translators chose ‘the Virgin to translate the Hebrew word HaAlmah, the interlinear reflects this choice rather than using ‘the young woman,’ which might be the better option linguistically, contextually, and theologically. This “proves” only that the NIV agrees with the word choice of some versions - e.g., KJV, Living Bible, NASB - as opposed to the choice of other versions - e.g., Good News Bible, Jerusalem Bible, and RSV. It does not prove that HaAlmah means ‘the virgin.’”

Kohlenberger seems to be of the opinion that “the young maiden” was the better option than “the virgin” LINGUISTICALLY, CONTEXT AND THEOLOGICALLY There are numerous other non-Jewish translations of Isaiah 7:14 (besides the ones Kohlenberger listed) that do not translate HaAlmah as “the virgin.”

The term ALMAH does NOT denote sexual status. A virgin can be an Almah and a non-virgin can be an Almah. Therefore, the best translation of the Hebrew word Almah is young maiden, not virgin.

Hebrew also has a definite article: THE (Ha). The use of the definite article (HaAlmah) implies an object known to the speaker and the listener: **THE** young woman. It was a young woman known to both Ahaz and Isaiah.

### **SHALL CONCEIVE or HAS CONCEIVED?**

The Hebrew word that the KJV translates as shall be with child (Matthew) or shall conceive (Isaiah) (HARAH: Hey-Resh-Hey) is more correctly translated as: is with child. Grammatically, the word HARAH is in the perfect (past) tense and it literally means has conceived.” It means that there is a fetus in the womb of the mother. The young woman was already with child (is pregnant; has conceived), the birth and the naming were the only things in the future.

How can it be demonstrated that the word HARAH actually does mean “has conceived?” How is that exact same word translated elsewhere in the Bible? The word HARAH is used 11 times in the Bible. They all refer to someone who has conceived. someone who is with child, someone who is pregnant. Four examples will suffice:

Genesis 16:11 (KJV)

And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art **WITH CHILD** (HARAH), and thou shalt bear a son, and thou shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.

II Samuel 11:5 (KJV)

And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am **WITH CHILD** (HARAH). [The word “conceived” is the same Hebrew word, HARAH, in a conversive Vav form: V’Tahar.]

Isaiah 26:17 (KJV)

Like a woman **WITH CHILD** (HARAH), that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord.

Jeremiah 31:8 (K.JV)

Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman **WITH CHILD** (HARAH) and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.

The KJV of the Bible itself consistently translates the word HARAH as “with child,” meaning “has conceived” or “is pregnant.”

### **SHALL DELIVER or IS DELIVERING**

The Hebrew word that the KJV translates as **and shall bring forth** (V’Yoledet) is actually a feminine participle. The Hebrew word is derived from the verb (YLD) that means to deliver. The participle refers to an ongoing process. The word should be translated: **she is delivering**. It can refer to any point along the delivery process, from the initial phase (the idea) all the way to delivery of the final product (in this case, birth.)

Once again, let’s see how that word (V’Yoledet) is translated elsewhere in the Bible. That exact word is only used two times in the Bible: Isaiah 7:14 and Jeremiah 3 1:8.

Jeremiah 31:8 (KJV)

Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child **AND HER THAT TRAVAILETH WITH CHILD** (V’Yoledet) together: a great company shall return thither.

Clearly the word (VYoledet) is referring to a woman in active labor: travaileth with child. However, that participle can also refer to an earlier phase of the delivery process, as early as when the idea for the product is first formulated. The same verb participle (Yoledet) is also used two times in the Bible [The V’ (Vav) is a conjunction and, when translated. usually means “and”.]

Genesis 17:19 (KJV)

And God said, Sarah thy wife **SHALL BEAR** (Yoledet) thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him.

Therefore, the words V’ Yoledet and Yoledet refer to the process of delivering a product, in this case a child. Since God committed Himself to initiating the process, the

word Yoledet in Genesis 17:19 should more correctly be translated: is delivering. Once the pregnancy is included into the process, it limits the time frame to the nine month gestation of a woman.

By the way, the Hebrew way to say she will deliver is Yolad'Tuh (as in Genesis 16:11). The writer of scripture had a choice in the words used. He could have used the imperfect (future tense) form, but he specifically chose the participle form.

What is the context of Isaiah 7:14-16? What was going on in the land of Israel when God sent Isaiah to King Ahaz with the promise of the child?

## THE PROMISE

### Isaiah 7:1-9 (KJV)

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* **REZIN** the king of Syria, and **PEKAH** the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. <sup>2</sup> And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with wind. <sup>3</sup> Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; <sup>4</sup> And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of **REZIN** with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah [**PEKAH**]. <sup>5</sup> Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, <sup>6</sup> Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, *even* the son of Tabeal:

<sup>7</sup> Thus saith the Lord God. It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. <sup>8</sup> For the head of Syria *is* Damascus, and the head of Damascus *is* Rezin and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. <sup>9</sup> And the head of Ephraim *is* Samaria, and the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established [correct translation of the Hebrew for verse 9: If you will not believe\*, it is because you do not have faith\* (\*the same Hebrew root word).]

God spoke to Ahaz through Isaiah the prophet. God promised a sign (verses 14-16) to confirm the promise to Ahaz that he would not be completely overwhelmed by his enemies. God promised (vs. 6-7) that his enemies would not annex Judah, and that a foreign king, the son of Tabeal, would not sit on the throne of Judah.

Did God promise that Judah would not experience trouble? No. God only promised that the evil plan of Rezin and Pekah to annex Judah and put the son of Tabeal on the throne would not come to pass. God kept that promise.

What was the sign that God promised Ahaz?

Isaiah 7: 16

For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

A sign is a visible, documentable event. As demonstrated from Proverbs 30:18-20, sexual status is not easily discernable or readily attainable. Therefore the status of virginity is not a sign. A virgin birth, if it could be documented, might be a miracle, but it would not be a sign.

Additionally, in order for the sign' to be a sign for Ahaz it had to at least occur in his lifetime, not 700 years later. The defeat of Ahaz's enemies before a specified period of time was the sign. The conception and birth of a child was not the sign.

The Lord promised that before the promised child was old enough to refuse the evil and choose the good, the two kings that Ahaz feared would be destroyed. THAT was the sign. What was the purpose of the sign? To confirm the promise in Isaiah 7:1-9.

God fulfilled the sign he promised to Ahaz:

II Kings 15:30a

And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Ramaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead.

II Kings 16:9

And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him [Ahaz]: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried *the people of* it captive to Kir and slew Rezin.

The sign that God promised came to pass, all in just a few years: before the child promised as the time marker of the promised sign, who was already conceived, knew enough to reject evil and choose good.

### A PARALLEL PROPHECY

Isaiah used the developmental age of a child in another prophecy, just **twelve** verses later. The same steps occur: conception, delivery, and naming. The mother names the child in the first prophecy, whereas father names the child in the second prophecy. Then comes the developmental milestone (that would serve as the time marker) followed by the actual sign.

Isaiah 7:14-16

<sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, the young maiden has conceived, and she is going to deliver a son, and she shall call his name Immanuel. <sup>15</sup> Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

Isaiah 8:3-4

<sup>3</sup> And I went unto the prophetess; and she conceived, and bare a son. Then the Lord said to me, Call his name Mahershalhashbaz. <sup>4</sup> For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father, and My mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria.

Consider the parallel structures of the prophecies:

- 1) the conception; 2) the birth of a son; 3) the naming of the son;
- 4) developmental milestone to serve as time clock: 5) The sign to be fulfilled. The symmetry of the prophecies is striking!

No one would say that the "sign" in the prophecy of 8:3-4 was the conception and birth of a boy. Why does Matthew and Christianity say that The conception and birth of a boy is the "sign of 7:14-16?"

A developmental milestone was used in both prophecies as the time clock for fulfillment of the prophecy. In the first prophecy, the promised sign is to be accomplished before the child can “refuse the evil, and choose the good” whereas in the second prophecy it is before the child “shall have knowledge to cry My father, and My mother.”

Isaiah 7:14 records that the mother would name the child Emanu-el. However, the New Testament has no record of Jesus ever being named or called Emmanuel. The New Testament does record Mary naming her baby son, but that name was not Emmanuel.

It is interesting to note that in Isaiah 8:9-10, when speaking to Israel’s enemies, Isaiah uses the exact same Hebrew words (Emanu-el) that are used in Isaiah 7:14.

Isaiah 8:9-10

<sup>9</sup> Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. <sup>10</sup> Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us [Emanu-el]

It was common practice in the Old Testament for people to have multiple names given them. The name this child was given very likely was not the name commonly used for calling the child. Rather, it was probably a secondary (extra) name given to indicate what God would demonstrate during his lifetime: that God was with the children of Israel to defend them from their enemies.

Isaiah 7:15-16 records that the child would eat butter and honey. However, the NT does not record Jesus eating butter and honey. Once again it is interesting to note that Isaiah described, just a few verses later, those that would eat butter and honey. The child would not be the only one to eat butter and honey. All those surviving the onslaught of the enemies of Israel would eat butter and honey. It is clear that the promised child would experience, and survive, the onslaught of the enemies of Israel.

Isaiah 7:22

And it shall come to pass, for the abundance of milk *that* they shall give, he shall eat butter: for butter and honey shall everyone eat that is left in the land.

Therefore, Isaiah 7:14-16 is actually a prophecy about the pregnancy of a young woman known to both Isaiah and Ahaz. It only appears to be about Jesus when mistranslated and taken out of context. Jewish tradition says that the young woman was actually Isaiah’s wife. Isaiah 8:18 certainly seem to support that view.

Isaiah 8:18

Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me *are* for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of Hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

Just as the prophet Hosea’s children were for signs to the ten northern tribes of Israel (Hosea 1:4-9) so also the prophet Isaiah’s children were to be signs for what God was going to do to the two southern tribes of Judah.

There are those that acknowledge that this prophecy was for Ahaz and was fulfilled in his lifetime as I have described. But, they go on to say that the prophecy was a ‘double’ prophecy. By that they mean that it had a ‘secondary’ fulfillment; not only was there the historical fulfillment but there was also a second future fulfillment. They believe that it

can not only be applied to the child in Ahaz's time but that it can also be applied to Jesus.

However, the sign was death of the enemies of Ahaz (Rezin and Pekah) before the promised child reached a certain developmental milestone. The promise was that a foreign power would not annex the land and put a foreign ruler in control, not the conception and birth of a child. Was Israel, in the time of the New Testament, delivered from foreign (Roman) domination before Jesus was old enough to reject the evil and choose the good? Were two enemy kings that were trying to control Israel forsaken by their countries? Clearly this could not have been a double prophecy.

Some will claim that Jesus delivered Israel from its "spiritual" enemies, thus fulfilling the prophecy. However, the prophecy stated that the sign would be fulfilled before the promised child was old enough to reject the evil and choose the good. According to Christianity, Jesus accomplished his work at his crucifixion. That was long **after** Jesus was old enough to reject the evil and choose the good. Therefore, Isaiah 7:14-16 could not be a prophecy about Jesus even in a spiritualized sense.

In an attempt to salvage the spiritual allegory, others will say that the prophecy was fulfilled before Jesus was old enough to refuse the evil and choose the good, **long** before. By that they mean it was done before Jesus was even born! But that would nullify the whole purpose of the sign being the death of the enemies of Ahaz before the child reached a certain developmental milestone. If those enemies would have died naturally long before Jesus (the alleged promised child) was born, why bother with a time clock? That makes the reference to the developmental stage of the child irrelevant and totally meaningless.

Therefore, Isaiah 7:14-16 could not possibly be referring to Jesus, either literally or figuratively.

Matthew again (mis)quotes from Isaiah.

Matthew 4:14-16

<sup>14</sup> That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, <sup>15</sup> The land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, *by* the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; <sup>16</sup> the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light **IS** sprung up.

Isaiah 9:1-2 (corrected Hebrew)

<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the dimness *shall not be* such as was in her vexation, when at the first he [the king of Assyria] lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. <sup>2</sup> The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them **HATH** the light shined.

The entire passage of Isaiah, in context:

Isaiah 9:1-7 (correct Hebrew translation)

<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the dimness *shall not be* such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and **afterward did more grievously** afflict *her by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. <sup>2</sup> The people that **walked** in darkness **have** seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them **hath the light shined**. Thou **hast multiplied** the nation *and not increased* the joy: the

joy in harvest, *and as men* rejoice when they divide the spoil. <sup>4</sup> For thou **hast broken** the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the days of Midian. <sup>5</sup> For every battle of the warrior *is* with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood: but *this* shall be with burning *and* fuel of fire. <sup>6</sup> For unto us a child **WAS BORN** unto to us a son **WAS GIVEN** and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name **IS CALLED** wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah was speaking of an enemy of Israel [Sennacherib the king of Assyria] that had attacked the districts of Zebulun and Naphtali in the northern regions of Israel. The first attack was light but the second attack was much more grievous and included the inland regions east of the Jordan. The Jews in those regions were in [spiritual] darkness because they chose to fear the pagan king instead of God and His Law. But now they witnessed the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem, and Judah, from Sennacherib because of the righteousness of King Hezekiah. They saw a great light.

Isaiah 8:13,17,20

<sup>13</sup> Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself and *let* him be your fear, and *let* him be your dread... <sup>17</sup> And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him... <sup>20</sup> To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

God had previously delivered Israel from the Midianites in a miraculous manner (Judges 7) God delivered Israel from the Midianites **without the power of the sword**. Now He was going to deliver Israel from their current enemies in a similar manner.

Isaiah 9:4-5

<sup>4</sup> For thou **HAST broken** the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, **AS IN THE DAYS OF MIDAIAIN**. <sup>5</sup> For every battle for the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but *this* shall be with burning and fuel of fire.

There is probably no more quoted verse during the Christmas season than Isaiah 7:14, except perhaps Isaiah 9:6. Isaiah 7:14 was mistranslated and taken out of context. What about Isaiah 9:6?

**A CHILD IS [ BE] BORN or A CHILD WAS BORN?  
A SON IS [ BE] GIVEN or A SON WAS GIVEN?  
HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED or HIS NAME WAS CALLED?**

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a child **IS BORN\*** unto to us a son **IS GIVEN\*\*** and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name **SHALL BE CALLED** wonderful, counselor. the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace. [NIV: \*shall be born, \*\* shall be given]

Isaiah 96 (corrected)

For unto us a child WAS BORN (YooLaD), unto to us a son WAS GIVEN (NeeTaN): and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name WAS CALLED (VaYeeKRa ShMo) a wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting father, the prince of peace.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Names are important in the Old Testament. The word EL means power. The word ELOHIM is the plural of EL and means powers. The words EL and ELOHIM are commonly used to refer both to the one true God of Israel and to false gods. False gods are natural forces that seem to have power. Since God is the true source of all power, He can rightly be referred to as the ultimate ELOHIM.

The one true God of Israel is also called Y-H-V-H. That name is used exclusively for the one true God. It is only in the singular, never in the plural.

Many people in the Old Testament incorporated one of the names of God into their names. The syllables EL and YAH refer to the names of God and are clues that the persons name refers to an attribute of God. The letters may or may not be apparent in the English rendering of the name, but when it is sounded out it becomes readily apparent. Some examples include: Daniel, Joel, Samuel, **Elijah**, **Elisha**, **Eli**, **Eliezer**, Ishmael, **Jeremiah**, **Zechariah**, **Obadiah**. **Zephaniah**, **Isaiah**, **Jeconiah**, and **Hezekiah**. Occasionally God's name will be at the front of the name as Jonathan (**Yahnatan**).

The name did not impart divine attributes to the person so named so that they became God. Rather, it gave them a mission to live up to.

Kings often had names that meant to indicate what their reign would, or did, accomplish. Many times kings were called more than one name. Hezekiah's purpose was to get Judah (the two southern tribes) to trust in their heavenly father, the almighty God, the one who could deliver them, and bring peace to the land. Hezekiah means God is my strength. God demonstrated just that. He delivered Judah in the time of Hezekiah. He miraculously delivered them from their enemies and established peace in the land. God did it just as in the days of Gideon when He delivered Israel from the Midianites.

Isaiah 9:6 speaks of a child that **was** born (not will be born) that would have the government upon his shoulders. His name would be the mighty God...Hezekiah. He would establish peace and justice. He would cause the nation to trust in God as their strength and as their eternal, heavenly father. Hezekiah had multiple missions and names to live up to. Hezekiah lived up to his names. The people saw a great light because of him.

Isaiah 9:6 is not quoted in the New Testament (perhaps the writers of the NT knew that this verse could not possibly apply to Jesus.) However modern Christianity claims that this verse does apply to Jesus. That is only possible if the verse is improperly translated and taken out of context.

## THE SUFFERING SERVANT

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is a discourse on God's suffering servant. Christianity regards this passage as one of the premier passages prophesying Jesus' life and death. Many verses in the New Testament reference this discourse:

### Matthew 8:17

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

Mark 15:28

And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

Luke 22:37

For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

I Peter 2:21-25

<sup>21</sup> For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: <sup>22</sup> Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: <sup>23</sup> Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: <sup>24</sup> Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the shepherd and bishop of your souls.

It has been shown that both Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6 were mistranslated, taken out of context, and inappropriately applied to Jesus. What of Isaiah 53, Gods suffering servant?

## ISAIAH 53

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

<sup>13</sup> Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. <sup>14</sup> As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: <sup>15</sup> So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider. <sup>1</sup> Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? <sup>2</sup> For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground: he hath no form or comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup> He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief and we hid as it were our faces from him, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup> Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. <sup>7</sup> He was] oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he openeth not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 (corrected)

<sup>13</sup> Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. <sup>14</sup> As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: <sup>15</sup> So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider. <sup>1</sup> Who bath believed our report? Them to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed. <sup>2</sup> For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground: he hath no form or comeliness: and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that ye should desire him. <sup>3</sup> He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup> Surely he bath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone away; we have turned every one to his own way: and the Lord hath laid on him [accepted his prayers for] the iniquity of us all. <sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep

dumb, so he opened not his mouth. <sup>8</sup> He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was **HE** stricken. <sup>9</sup> And he made his **GRAVE** with the wicked, and with the rich in his **DEATH**, because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth. <sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him he hath put *him* to grief: **WHEN THOU SHALT MAKE HIS SOUL AN OFFERING FOR SIN**, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup> He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: **BY HIS KNOWLEDGE shall my righteous servant justify many**; for he shall bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup> Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. <sup>8</sup> He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off from the land of the living: for the transgression of my people a plague befell **THEM**. <sup>9</sup> And he made his **GRAVE** with the wicked, and with the rich in his **DEATHS**, because he had done no violence, neither was *any* deceit in his mouth. <sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief **IF HIS SOUL ACKNOWLEDGES GUILT**, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup> He shall see the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: **BY HIS KNOWLEDGE shall my righteous servant justify many**; for he shall bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup> Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The foremost questions that need to be answered when studying this scripture are: 1) Who is being spoken of? and 2) Who is speaking? The one being spoken of is “My servant,” God’s servant.

### WHO IS GOD’S SERVANT IN ISAIAH 53?

Throughout the scriptures many people are referred to as God’s servant. To understand who is being referred to as God’s Servant in Isaiah 53, the immediate context must be analysed. Isaiah 40-66 is a distinct unit of scripture. It is messianic and includes the four “servant songs” of which Isaiah 53 is the fourth. Therefore, to understand who the servant of Isaiah 53 is, we must look at who is identified as the servant in the rest of Isaiah 40-66.

#### Isaiah 41:8-9

<sup>8</sup> But thou, **ISRAEL**, *art* **MY SERVANT, JACOB WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN**, the seed of Abraham my friend. <sup>9</sup> *Thou* whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou *art* **MY SERVANT I HAVE CHOSEN THEE**, and not cast thee away.

#### Isaiah 44: 1-2

<sup>1</sup> Yet now hear, O **JACOB MY SERVANT**; and **ISRAEL, WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN**:  
<sup>2</sup> Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O **JACOB MY SERVANT**; and thou Jesurun, **WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN**.

#### Isaiah 44:21

Remember these, O **JACOB AND ISRAEL for thou art MY SERVANT**: I have formed thee; **THOU ART MY SERVANT; O ISRAEL**, thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

Isaiah 45:4

For **JACOB MY SERVANT'S** sake, and **ISRAEL MINE ELECT**, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.

Isaiah 48:20

Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it *even* to the end of the earth; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed **HIS SERVANT JACOB**.

Isaiah 49:3

And said unto me, **THOU ART MY SERVANT, O ISRAEL**, in whom I will be glorified.

The chapters leading up to Isaiah 53 has God identifying His servant as Jacob; Israel whom he has chosen. Matthew misquotes Isaiah 42:1-2 and takes it Out of context, saying that the servant was Jesus. Matthew also changed Isaiah's perfect (past) tense word (**I have put**) into a future tense (**I will put**) just as he did with Isaiah 7:14.

Matthew 12:17-21 (KJV)

.<sup>17</sup> That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying,<sup>18</sup> **BEHOLD MY SERVANT**, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: **I WILL PUT** my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.<sup>19</sup> He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.<sup>20</sup> A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.<sup>21</sup> And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

Isaiah 42:1-4 (Corrected)

<sup>1</sup> **BEHOLD MY SERVANT**, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom, my soul delighteth; **I HAVE PUT** my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.<sup>2</sup> He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

We know who is being spoken of in Isaiah 53 (Israel/Jacob), but who is doing the speaking in Isaiah 53?

### WHO IS SPEAKING?

God is the speaker in Isaiah 52:13-15. The reference to "my servant" establishes that God is the speaker. However, in the Isaiah 53:1-10 the speaker could not be God.

Who are the speakers in Isaiah 53:1-10? God described a turn of events in Isaiah 52:12-15 that would take place at the end of time. It would be something totally unbelievable. God's servant would be exalted. The servant that everyone and smitten of God, was actually His beloved. Who does Isaiah say will express utter disbelief in this totally unexpected turn of events? The Kings of the Gentile nations (Isaiah 52:15)!

Therefore, the servant is Israel and the speakers are the Kings of the Gentile nations. What do the Gentiles say? That Israel, the Jewish people, were despised and rejected; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief The Gentiles hid their faces from him; they esteemed him not. Israel bore their griefs and carried their sorrows; they esteemed him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. Israel was wounded for their transgressions and

bruised for their iniquities. The chastisement of their peace was upon him; by his stripes they were healed. The Gentiles considered that they were like sheep that had gone astray. They say that the Lord accepted the prayers of Israel on their behalf.

### SINGULAR VERSES PLURAL

The word servant implies that the person being spoken of is a single person. However, God referred to Jacob and Israel as his **servant**. God also called his servant (singular) his witnesses (plural). A group of people can be viewed as a single entity but a single entity cannot be viewed as a group.

Isaiah 43:10a

Ye *are* my **WITNESSES**, saith the Lord, and **MY SERVANT** whom I have chosen:

God referred to his people in the singular (**HIM**) in Isaiah 52, immediately preceding Isaiah 53. God alternated from referring to them in the plural to referring to them in the singular.

Isaiah 52:4-6 (KJV)

<sup>4</sup> For thus saith the Lord God, **MY PEOPLE** went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed **THEM** without cause. <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that **MY PEOPLE** is taken away for nought? They that rule over **THEM** make **THEM** to howl, saith the Lord; and my name continually every day is blasphemed. <sup>6</sup> Therefore **MY PEOPLE** shall know my name: therefore *they shall know* in that day that I *am* he that doth speak: behold, *it is I*.

Isaiah 52:4-6 (corrected)

<sup>4</sup> For thus saith the Lord God, **MY PEOPLE** went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian oppressed **HIM** without cause. <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that **MY PEOPLE** is taken away for nought? They that rule over them make **HIM** to howl, saith the Lord; and my name continually every day is blasphemed. <sup>6</sup> Therefore **MY PEOPLE** shall know my name: therefore *they shall know* in that day that I *am* he that doth speak: behold, *it is I*.

We now know that the Kings of the Gentile nations are the ones speaking in Isaiah 53. They are speaking about Gods servant: His people Israel. Failing to properly understand who is speaking, and who is being spoken of leads to erroneous translations, and erroneous conclusions, based more on theology than grammar.

### SUFFERING BECAUSE OF ANOTHER

Isaiah 53:5-6

<sup>5</sup> But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him [accepted his prayers for] the **INIQUITY** of us all.

Israel has a special mission. They are to be a kingdom of priests and a light unto the nations. The role of Aaron and his sons to the nation of Israel parallels the role of Israel to the nations of the world.

Aaron and his sons were the priests to the nation of Israel. They have a special mission and responsibility. Israel as a nation is a kingdom of priests to the world, a light unto the nations; they also have a special mission and responsibility. Just as Aaron and

his sons have the spiritual responsibility of the nation of Israel, Israel has the spiritual responsibility of the world.

Numbers 18:1

And the Lord said unto Aaron, **THOU AND THY SONS** and thy father's house with thee **SHALL BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THE SANCTUARY: AND** thou and thy sons with thee **SHALL BEAR THE INIQUITY OF YOUR PRIESTHOOD.**

Isaiah 53:5-6 takes on a new significance when understood in relationship to what God said to Aaron in Numbers 18:1 Just as Aaron and his sons were to bear the iniquity of the sanctuary and the priesthood for the nation of Israel, so also **ISRAEL WAS TO BEAR THE INIQUITY OF THE WORLD.**

Who are the “we like sheep?” The Gentile nations. The Gentile nations have gone astray and Israel bears their iniquity.

There is an additional insight into Isaiah 53:6. All the Christian translations translate the Hebrew word (HeFGeA) as “laid on him.” ArtScroll, one of the premiere Jewish publishing houses, also translates it similarly as “inflicted upon him.” However, another premiere Jewish publishing house, Judaica Press, translates it: “**ACCEPTED HIS PRAYERS**”.

The KJV translates that same root word as “made intercession” just six verses later in the same discourse!

Isaiah 53:12 (KJV)

Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and **MADE INTERCESSION** for the transgressors.

Interestingly, Artscroll translates that same word in 53:12 as: “**he prayed for**”; Judaica Press translates it as “interceded for.” The KJV, Artscroll, and Judaica Press all understand that the word is related to making intercession for another.

The verse itself has an unusual construct because the subject of the verb is in the causative voice, meaning that God (the subject) is making something happen. The word literally means “to touch against”. Perhaps a better translation would be:

Isaiah 53:5-6 (corrected)

But he as wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for (because of) our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord made our sins to smite (to touch against) him.

It was the sins of the Gentile nations but God's servant (Israel) felt the effect of their sins. God's servant suffered because of their sins.

Isaiah 53:8 is a widely quoted verse to prove the substitutionary death of Jesus. However, that is based upon a critical mistranslation.

Isaiah 53:8

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people **HE** was stricken.

Isaiah 53:8 (corrected Hebrew)

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? For he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people a plague befell **THEM**.

The word translated HE (LaMo) is 3rd person, **plural**: **THEM** (3rd person singular is Lo). Who are ‘MY’ People? Since the Gentile Kings are the speakers, “my people” refers to the Gentile nations. “**THEM**” refers to God’s servant: Israel.

Scripture many times goes back and forth from plural to singular and back to plural when describing a group of people. That is because a group of people can be referred to as a singular entity. But it never describes an individual in the plural. Therefore, Isaiah 53:8 could not possibly be referring to Jesus.

Isaiah 53:9 is another verse that is mistranslated: what is plural in the Hebrew has been translated in the singular.

Isaiah 53:9

And he made his **GRAVE** with the wicked, and with the rich in his **DEATH**, because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

Isaiah 53:9 (corrected)

And he made his **GRAVE** with the wicked, and with the rich in his **DEATHS**, because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

It is God’s servant Israel who made his **GRAVE** with the wicked, and with the rich in his **DEATHS**.

Some will point to the second half of Isaiah 53.9 to prove that it could not possibly be talking about Israel. But notice what the prophet Zephaniah said:

Isaiah 53:9b

...because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

Zephaniah 3:13a

The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth:

Zephaniah confirms that Isaiah’s description of God’s servant, Israel, is correct. God uses the term remnant throughout history to describe those Jews who were faithful to the covenant. It was always a minority of the Jews; hence they were called a remnant.

Isaiah 53:10 is mistranslated to imply that God offered up Jesus as a sin offering. The correct translation reveals that the servant had to voluntarily acknowledge his guilt. The Hebrew word is **ASHAM**, which means guilt or trespass offering (Lev 5); the word for sin-offering is **Chatas** (Lev 4)!

Isaiah 53:10 (KJV)

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: **WHEN THOU SHALT MAKE HIS SOUL AN OFFERING FOR SIN**, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper his hand.

Isaiah 53:10 (corrected)

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: **IF HIS SOUL ACKNOWLEDGES GUILT** [Asham], he shall *see* his seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper his hand.

A critical error in translation was made. IF God's servant acknowledges his guilt, for no man sinneth not (Eccl 7:20), THEN the servant shall see his seed. Repentance is the key to a relationship to God (see section on sin and atonement). It is a conditional statement, not a predestined event. [Also, the word ASHAM (guilt) is used not CHATAS (sin).]

The word seed (Zera) is used in the scripture to mean literal, physical descendants, never figurative or allegorical descendants. That is because Zera is the word used for plant seeds as well as the seed of man (sperm). Zera was never used in the scriptures to refer to sons (or descendants) in a spiritualized sense. When the scripture wanted to refer to spiritual descendants, as opposed to physical descendants, it would use the term son (Ben).

Jesus had no seed in the scriptural sense, at least the New Testament does not record Jesus producing any physical children. He may have had spiritual sons, but did not have physical seed.

Neither were Jesus' days prolonged upon the earth. In fact, they were quite short. He lived approximately 33 years on the earth; not exactly long life, even for that time (Rabbi Hillel the Great, who lived in the NT era, lived over 100 years).

### **JUSTIFIED BY KNOWLEDGE or BY BLOOD?**

Isaiah 53:11

He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall he satisfied: **BY HIS KNOWLEDGE shall my righteous servant justify many**; for he shall bear their iniquities.

God says that his servant will justify many **BY HIS KNOWLEDGE**. That is not exactly orthodox Christian theology.

### **SUMMARY OF ISAIAH 53**

Isaiah 53 is about the people of Jacob, Gods servant; Israel whom He has chosen. God's servant will suffer unspeakable horrors that would lead the world to believe that God had rejected them. The world would think that Israel was suffering for its own sins when in fact Israel was suffering for the sins of the world. That is why the Gentile nations will be utterly shocked to see Israel exalted by God above all the nations.

## CLEAR AND CONSISTENT

Do the scriptures really depict Israel a despised, mocked, scorned, forsaken, afflicted, humiliated, oppressed without cause, wounded, like sheep to the slaughter, bearing the iniquity of the nations and bearing the shame of the nations? Or is Isaiah 53 the only such depiction?

Consider what Isaiah says in the chapters immediately preceding Isaiah 53 (chapters 49-52) and in the chapters immediately following Isaiah 53 (chapters 54-62):

### Isaiah 49:7,13-15

<sup>7</sup> Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to **him whom man despiseth**, to **him whom the nations abhorreth**, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. <sup>13</sup> Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his **afflicted**. <sup>14</sup> But Zion said, the Lord hath **forsaken** me, and my Lord hath **forgotten** me. <sup>15</sup> Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she would not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, **yet I WILL NEVER FORGET THEE**.

### Isaiah 52:4-5

<sup>4</sup> For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; and the Assyrian **oppressed them without cause**. <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that **My people is taken away for naught**? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the Lord; and my name continually every day *is* blasphemed.

### Isaiah 54:4-7,11

<sup>4</sup> Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the **shame** of thy youth and thou shalt not remember the **reproach** of thy widowhood anymore. <sup>5</sup> For thy maker *is* thy husband; the Lord of hosts is His name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. <sup>6</sup> For the Lord hath called thee as a woman **forsaken** and **grieved** in spirit, and wife of youth, when thou wast **refused**, saith thy God. <sup>7</sup> For a small moment have I **forsaken** thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. <sup>11</sup> O thou **afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted**, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundation with sapphires.

### Isaiah 60:14-15

<sup>14</sup> The sons also of them that **afflicted** thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that **despised** thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. <sup>15</sup> Whereas thou hast been **forsaken and hated**, so that no man went through *thee*, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

### Isaiah 61:6-7

<sup>6</sup> But ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: *men* shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. <sup>7</sup> For your shame ye *shall have* double; and *for* **confusion** they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

### Isaiah 62:2-4,12

<sup>2</sup> And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all the kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. <sup>3</sup> Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a diadem in the hand of thy God. <sup>4</sup> **Thou shalt no more be termed FORSAKEN; neither shall thy land be called DESOLATE**: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee; thy land shall be married.

## WHAT DO THE OTHER PROPHETS SAY?

### Ezekiel 34:15-16.29-30

<sup>15</sup> I will feed my **flock**, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. <sup>16</sup> I will seek that which was **lost**, and bring again that which was **driven away**, and will bind up *that which was broken*, and will strengthen that which was **sick**: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. <sup>29</sup> And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and **they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, NEITHER bear the shame of the heathen any more.** <sup>30</sup> Thus shall they know that I the Lord their God *am* with them, and *that they*, even the house of Israel, *are* my people, saith the Lord God.

### Ezekiel 36:6,15

<sup>6</sup> Prophecy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, **because ye have borne the shame of the heathen.** <sup>15</sup> Neither will cause *men* to hear in the **shame of the heathen** any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord God.

### Jeremiah 30:8,10,17

<sup>8</sup> For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, *that* I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and I will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: <sup>10</sup> Therefore, fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make *him* afraid. <sup>17</sup> For I will restore thy health unto thee, and I will heal thy wounds, saith the Lord; because they called thee an **OUTCAST**, *saying*, This *is* Zion, whom no man seeketh after.

### Zechariah 8:13

<sup>13</sup> And it shall come to pass, *that* as ye were **a curse among the heathen**, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and you shall be a blessing: fear not: *but* let your hands be strong.

### Zechariah 11:4,7

<sup>4</sup> Thus saith the Lord my God; feed the flock of the slaughter; <sup>7</sup> And I will feed the flock of slaughter, *even* you, O poor of the flock.

### Psalms 44:11-22

- <sup>11</sup> Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat [for slaughter]; thou hast scattered us among the heathen.
- <sup>12</sup> Thou sellest thy people for naught, and dost not increase thy wealth by their price.
- <sup>13</sup> Thou makest us a reproach oirr neighbors, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us.
- <sup>14</sup> Thou makest us a byword among the heathen, a shaking of the head among the people.
- <sup>15</sup> My confusion is continually before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me,
- <sup>16</sup> for the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth; by reason of the avenger.
- <sup>17</sup> **ALL THIS IS COME UPON US;** yet we have not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant.
- <sup>18</sup> Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way;
- <sup>19</sup> though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.
- <sup>20</sup> If we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god;
- <sup>21</sup> shall not God search this out? For He knoweth the secrets of the heart.
- <sup>22</sup> Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long; **WE ARE COUNTED AS SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER.**

### Zechariah 1:15

And I am very sore displeased with the heathen *that are* at ease: for I was but a little displeased [with Israel], and they [the Gentiles] helped forward the affliction [the Gentiles went overboard while being used of God to punish Israel.]

### Isaiah 40:1-2

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she has received of the Lords hand double for all her sins [thanks to the Gentiles.]

### Zephaniah 3:14-15,18-20

<sup>14</sup> Sing, O daughter of Zion, shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. <sup>15</sup> The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, *even* the Lord, *is* in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. <sup>18</sup> I will gather *them that are* sorrowful for the solemn assembly, *who* are of thee, *to whom* the **reproach of it** [the nations] *was* a burden. <sup>19</sup> Behold, at that time I will undo all that **afflict thee**; and I will save her that **halteth**, and gather her that was **driven out**; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been **put to shame**. <sup>20</sup> At that time will bring you *again*, even in time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord.

It is a clear and consistent theme in the scriptures that Israel is the suffering servant of God as depicted in Isaiah 53. Only by mistranslating, and taking out of context, can Isaiah 53 be applied to Jesus. Therefore, the New Testament quotations of, and references to, Isaiah 53 (as well as Isaiah 7:14 and other messianic prophecies) are problematic because they have either mistranslated the text or taken the text out of context in an attempt to apply it to Jesus.

## **OTHER PROBLEM VERSES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

### **JEREMIAH or ZECHARIAH?**

#### Matthew 27:9-10

<sup>9</sup> Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by **JEREMIAH** the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; <sup>10</sup> and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

#### Jeremiah

Jeremiah never said what Matthew claims. The closest thing to it is from the prophet Zechariah.

#### Zechariah 11:12-13

<sup>12</sup> And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. <sup>13</sup> And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

Matthew stated that Jeremiah prophesied Judas' return of the money and the subsequent use of that money to buy a field. But, Jeremiah never made such a prophecy. Matthew seems to have confused Jeremiah for Zechariah. However, even Zechariah's prophecy doesn't even say what Matthew claims.

## WAS DAVID ALONE? WAS IT ABIATHAR or AHIMELECH?

### Mark 2:25-26

<sup>25</sup> And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David. when he had need, and was ahungered, **he, and they that were with him?** <sup>26</sup> How he went into the house of God in the days of **ABIATHAR the high priest**, and did eat the showbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him.

### I Samuel 21:1,6

<sup>1</sup> Then came David to Nob to **AHIMELECH** the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David and said unto him, **Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?...**

<sup>6</sup> So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the showbread...

### I Samuel 22:9,20

<sup>9</sup> Then answered Doeg, the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul. and said. I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob to AHIMELECH the son of Ahitub...

<sup>20</sup> And one of the Sons of AHIMELECH the son of Ahitub, named ABIATHAR, escaped, and fled after David.

### I Samuel 14:3

And Ahiah [Ahimelech], the son of Ahitub...the Lord's priest in Shiloh, wearing an ephod...

Only the high priest wore the ephod. Therefore, Ahimelech, Abiathar's father, was the high priest. Abiathar was not the high priest, at the time of David's incident, as Mark records.

## HOW MANY DIED: 24,000 or 23,000?

### I Corinthians 10:8

Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day **THREE AND TWENTY THOUSAND.**

### Numbers 25:1,9

<sup>1</sup> And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. <sup>9</sup> And those that died in the plague were **TWENTY AND FOUR THOUSAND.**

The only Biblical source for the number of fatalities is Numbers 25:9. Where did Paul get his information that 23,000 died? Perhaps the real number is 23,500 and Paul rounded the number down instead of up. But the only scriptural number given is 24,000!

## ONE DONKEY or TWO?

### Matthew 21:1-7

<sup>1</sup> And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway **YE SHALL FIND AN ASS TIED, AND A COLT HER**: loose *them* and bring *them* unto me. <sup>3</sup> And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of **THEM** and straight way he will send **THEM**. <sup>4</sup> All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, <sup>5</sup> Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and **SITTING UPON AN ASS, AND A COLT THE FOAL OF AN ASS**. <sup>6</sup> And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, <sup>7</sup> And **THEY BROUGHT THE ASS, AND THE COLT** and put on **THEM** their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.

### Luke 19:29-35

<sup>29</sup> And it came to pass, when he was come to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, <sup>30</sup> saying, Go ye into the village over against *you*; in the which at your entering ye shall find **A COLT** tied, whereon yet never man sat: **LOOSE HIM** and bring *him hither*. <sup>31</sup> And if any man ask you, why do ye loose *him*? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of **HIM**. <sup>32</sup> And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them. <sup>33</sup> And as they were loosing **THE COLT**, the owners thereof said unto them, why loose ye **THE COLT**? <sup>34</sup> And they said, The Lord hath need of **HIM**. <sup>35</sup> And they brought **HIM** unto Jesus: and they cast their garments upon **THE COLT**, and they set Jesus thereon.

Matthew said that the disciples brought back TWO donkeys: the ass and her colt (the foal of an ass). Matthew also implies that Jesus straddled the two animals as he rode into Jerusalem (quite a feat.) Luke said that the disciples only brought back ONE donkey for Jesus to ride on. Who is right? They can't both be true. Matthew states that this incident was in fulfillment of prophecy. What did that prophecy say?

### Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon **AN ASS**, [and] upon **A COLT** the foal of an ass.

Zechariah's prophecy actually stated that the messiah would be riding upon a single animal: an ass. That ass would be a colt, the foal of an ass. Luke has the more correct version. Matthew confused the clarification as to the type of ass the messiah would ride for a second animal. The word [and] is not in the Hebrew translation.

## THE DEATH OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

The account of the death of Judas Iscariot poses two significant problems.

### Matthew 27:5

And he [Judas] cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and **HANGED HIMSELF**.

### Acts 1:18

Now this man [Judas] purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and **FALLING HEADLONG, HE BURST ASUNDER IN THE MIDST, AND ALL HIS BOWELS GUSHED OUT**.

Matthew and Luke vary as to how Judas killed himself Matthew said he hung himself whereas Luke said he fell headlong and his guts burst open. Can a hanging victim fall “headlong”?

Matthew 27:6-7

<sup>6</sup> And the chief priests took the money... <sup>7</sup> And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in.

Acts 1:18

Now **THIS MAN [JUDAS] PURCHASED A FIELD WITH THE REWARD OF INIQUITY;** and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

An even more disconcerting discrepancy in the Judas narrative is that Matthew said that Judas returned the money and that the chief priests used the money to buy the field. Luke, in the book of Acts, said that Judas himself bought the field with the money he got from his iniquity. But Luke said he never returned the money.

### **DID THEY or DID THEY NOT HEAR the VOICE?**

Acts 9:7

And the men which journeyed with him [Saul] stood speechless, **HEARING A VOICE**, but seeing no man.

Acts 22:9

And they that were with me [Saul] saw indeed the light and were afraid, **BUT THEY HEARD NOT THE VOICE** of him that spake to me.

The verses make no mention of comprehension, only of hearing a voice. Did they, or did they not, hear the voice?

### **WHAT WAS SPRINKLED WITH BLOOD?**

Hebrews 9:19-23

<sup>19</sup> For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled **BOTH THE BOOK, AND ALL THE PEOPLE**. <sup>20</sup> Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. <sup>21</sup> Moreover he sprinkled with blood **BOTH THE TABERNACLE AND ALL THE VESSELS OF THE MINISTRY**. <sup>22</sup> And **almost all things** [the vessels of ministry] are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. <sup>23</sup> *It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things [the tabernacle and vessels of ministry] in the heavens should be purified [dedicated] with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Exodus 24:6-8

<sup>6</sup> And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. <sup>7</sup> And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. <sup>8</sup> And Moses took the blood, and **SPRINKLED IT ON THE PEOPLE**, and said, behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.

Exodus 30:25-29a

<sup>25</sup> And thou shalt make it an **OIL OF HOLY OINTMENT**, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be a holy anointing oil. <sup>26</sup> And **THOU SHALT ANOINT THE TABERNACLE** of the congregation therewith,

**AND THE ARK** of the testimony, <sup>27</sup> **AND THE TABLE** and all his vessels, **AND THE CANDLESTICK** and his vessels, **AND THE ALTAR OF INCENSE**, <sup>28</sup> **THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING** with all his vessels, **AND THE LAVER** and his foot. <sup>29</sup> And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy:...

The Old Testament never records Moses sprinkling the Book of the Law, the Tabernacle, or the vessels of the tabernacle with blood. When performing the various sacrifices sacrificial blood was sprinkled at the base of the altar of the outer court, but that was standard procedure, not a matter of dedication. As noted in Exodus 30, the tabernacle and all its vessels were dedicated by being **ANOINTED WITH HOLY OIL for dedication, NOT WITH BLOOD.**

The previous verses have disturbing discrepancies. Other verses in the New Testament contain disturbing errors due to misquotation, mistranslation. or being taken out of context.

### **REGARDED THEM NOT or FAITHFUL LOVER?**

#### Hebrews 8:8-9

<sup>8</sup> For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: <sup>9</sup> not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt because they continued not in my covenant, **AND I REGARDED THEM NOT**, saith the Lord.

#### Jeremiah 31:31-32

<sup>31</sup> Behold. the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: <sup>32</sup> Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring Them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, **ALTHOUGH I WAS A HUSBAND [a lover] UNTO THEM**, saith the Lord.

The book of Hebrews seems to say that God rejected (regarded not) his people because of their disobedience to the Law of Moses. However, Jeremiah's original quotation says that God was a husband unto them. Jeremiah did not say that God rejected them. Hebrew's version is exactly opposite from the original meaning of Jeremiah.

### **A BODY PREPARED or EARS OPENED?**

#### Hebrews 10:5-7

<sup>5</sup> Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, **BUT A BODY HAST THOU PREPARED ME:** <sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. <sup>7</sup> Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.

#### Psalms 40:6-8

<sup>6</sup> Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; **MINE EARS HAST THOU OPENED:** burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. <sup>7</sup> Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, <sup>8</sup> **I delight to do thy will, O my God: THY LAW IS WITHIN MY HEART.**

Hebrews seems to imply that it was the sacrifice of a body that God wanted. However, what Psalms said was that God wanted our ears opened to hear his Torah so we would keep his commandments.

### REPENTANCE BEFORE or AFTER THE MESSIAH COMES?

Romans 11:26

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it written, There shall come Out of Zion the Deliverer, and **shall turn away** ungodliness from Jacob.

Isaiah 59:20

And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and **unto them that turn** from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.

Paul's letter to the Romans seems to say that Israel would repent **after** the messiah comes; that they would repent because of what the messiah does. However, Isaiah actually said that the Redeemer shall come to them after they **already had repented**. Isaiah 40:3-4 describes the same thing.

### COMMANDMENTS OF MEN or ROTE MEMORY?

Matthew 15:7-9 (also Mark 7:6-7)

<sup>7</sup> *Ye* hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, <sup>8</sup> This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. <sup>9</sup> **BUT IN VAIN THEY DO WORSHIP ME, TEACHING FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.**

Isaiah 29:13 (correct Hebrew)

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, **AND THEIR FEAR TOWARD ME IS AS A COMMANDMENT OF MEN LEARNED BY ROTE MEMORY.**

The gospel writers seem to be equating the Oral Law with the commandments of men in an attempt to discredit the Oral Law of the Jews. However, Isaiah was actually rebuking Israel because their worship was perfunctory, from rote memory, not from the heart.

### SECRETS REVEALED or ALWAYS KNOWN?

Matthew 13:35

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

Psalms 78:1-4

<sup>1</sup> Give ear, O my people, *to* my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. <sup>2</sup> will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old. <sup>3</sup> **WHICH WE HAVE HEARD AND KNOWN,** and our fathers have told to us. <sup>4</sup> We will not hide *them* from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.

Matthew seems to be saying that Jesus was teaching truths that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world; that no one knew them. That is not what Psalm 78, which he was quoting, said.

Jesus did not teach things that had “been kept secret from the foundation of the world”. The Jews knew and understood the ‘dark sayings of old’; they passed them on from generation to generation.

## **LOOK ON HIM WHOM THEY HAVE PIERCED or LOOK TO ME BECAUSE OF THE ONE PIERCED?**

John 19:37

And again another scripture saith, **They shall look ON HIM WHOM THEY PIERCED.**

Zechariah 12:10-11 (correct Hebrew)

<sup>10</sup> And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and **They shall look TO ME BECAUSE OF THE ONE WHO WAS PIERCED**, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. <sup>11</sup> In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, **AS THE MOURNING OF HADADRIMMON in the valley of Meggido.**

The death of a great leader will result in mourning. That leader will have achieved a great victory in God’s name, but he will be the only casualty on God’s side. The mourning for him will be as the mourning that occurred when the righteous king Josiah died in the valley of Meggido and all Jerusalem mourned grievously over his death. As a result, all the people will turn to the one true God and worship him, because of the one who was pierced. They are not going to look to, but because of, the one that was pierced.

Additionally, the pronouns alone preclude the KJV, or other Christian translations, of Zechariah 12:10 from being correct.

Zechariah 12:10 (KJV)

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look **UPON ME** whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn **FOR HIM**, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness **FOR HIM**, as one that is in bitterness for *his* first-born.

Zechariah 12:10 (IF KJV correct)

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look **UPON ME** whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn **FOR ME**, as one mourneth for *his* only *son*, and shall be in bitterness **FOR ME**, as one that is in bitterness for *his* first-born.

In order for the KJV, and other Christian translations, to be correct, the highlighted pronouns would have to be: UPON ME, FOR ME, FOR ME! It is clear from the pronouns alone, not to mention the context, that the Jewish translation is correct: they shall look to me because of the one who was pierced.

## THEY HAVE PIERCED or LIKE A LION?

### Psalm 22:16

For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: **THEY PIERCED** my hands and my feet.

### Psalm 22:16 (correct Hebrew)

For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: **LIKE A LION** they are at my hands and feet.

This mistranslation is cited because NT study bibles reference it to support the claim that Jesus was pierced. The word “ari” is correctly translated earlier (vs. 13) and later (vs. 21) as lion.

## STUMBLING STONE or SURE FOUNDATION?

### Romans 9:32-33

<sup>32</sup> Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; <sup>33</sup> As it is written, Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

### Isaiah 28:15 (correct Hebrew)

Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste [panic].

Why did Paul misquote Isaiah? It wasn't a stumbling stone, it was a sure foundation. And Isaiah did not say that whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed; rather, Isaiah said that he that believeth shall not panic. What had God established in Zion? The Law of Moses; the Torah. He that believeth it shall not panic.

### Isaiah 2:3

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: FOR OUT OF ZION SHALL GO FORTH THE LAW [TORAH], and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Additionally, Paul clearly related the stumbling stone to the crucifixion of Jesus.

### I Corinthians 1:23

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews A STUMBLING BLOCK, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

But anyone familiar with the topography of Jerusalem knows that Golgatha (where Jesus was crucified) is not colocated with Mt. Zion or the temple mount. Hebrews even confirms that Jesus was crucified outside the city.

### Hebrews 13:12

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

## DO NOT ADD TO OR TAKE AWAY FROM THE LAW OF GOD

### Deuteronomy 4:2

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.

### John 13:34

A NEW COMMANDMENT I give unto you...

### Deuteronomy 12:32

What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: **THOU SHALT NOT ADD THERETO NOR DIMINISH FROM IT.**

Jesus gave a new commandment. That was contrary to God's explicit command. It doesn't matter how wonderful the purpose or how lofty the ideal; Jesus disobeyed God's explicit directive. The implication is that the Law of God was imperfect, it needed additional commands. But the Law of the Lord is perfect. The teaching of Jesus on what defiles a man also illustrates the same problem.

## WHAT DEFILES A MAN?

### Mark 7:14-15,19b

<sup>14</sup> And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one *of you*, and understand: <sup>15</sup> **THERE IS NOTHING FROM WITHOUT A MAN, THAT ENTERING INTO HIM CAN DEFILE HIM:** but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man...(added in the NAS & MV)... <sup>19b</sup> In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean".

### Matthew 15:10-11

<sup>10</sup> And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear and understand: <sup>11</sup> **NOT THAT WHICH GOETH INTO THE MOUTH DEFILETH A MAN;** but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

### Leviticus 11:44-47

<sup>44</sup> For I *am* the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, **AND YE SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY; NEITHER SHALL YE DEFILE YOURSELVES** with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. <sup>45</sup> For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; ye shall **THEREFORE, BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.**

<sup>46</sup> This *is* the law of the beasts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth: <sup>47</sup> **TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CLEAN AND THE UNCLEAN,** and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten.

### Leviticus 20:25-26a

<sup>25</sup> Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. <sup>26</sup> And ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy...

Ezekiel 22:26

Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and the profane, **NEITHER HAVE THEY SHOWED DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CLEAN AND THE UNCLEAN**, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

Jesus clearly states that what a man eats (“goeth into the mouth”) does not defile him. But God clearly states the opposite point of view in Leviticus and Ezekiel. God did not condone evil coming forth from within man, but he also gave strict rules of dietary matters for the Jews. God said that the Jew must learn to discern between the clean and the unclean; that which is permissible to eat and that which is not. God said that keeping his dietary laws were a requirement, a necessity, to be holy as he is holy. The New Testament portrays Jesus as being in violation of both the Torah and his own teaching (Matthew 5:17-19).

## KEEPING THE LAW

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

<sup>11</sup> For **this commandment** which I command thee this day, it **IS NOT HIDDEN FROM THEE**, neither *is* it far off. <sup>12</sup> It *is* not in heaven, that thou shouldest say. Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, **AND DO IT?** <sup>13</sup> Neither *is* it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it **AND DO IT?** <sup>14</sup> But the word *is* very nigh unto thy mouth, and thy heart, **THAT THOU MAYEST DO IT**

Romans 10:6-8

<sup>6</sup> But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) <sup>7</sup> Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ AGAIN from the dead.) <sup>8</sup> But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith, which we preach;

Why did Paul misquote Deuteronomy and take it out of context? Deuteronomy was not talking about the messiah. It was talking about the keeping of the Law of Moses. But more critically, Paul left out the key phrase... **THAT THOU MAYEST DO IT**. God expected the Jews to keep the Law; it was not too difficult for them to do.

But what does the New Testament say about the ability of Jews to keep the Law?

Acts 15:10

Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke [the Law of Moses] upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we [Peter and the Jews] were able to bear?

Luke 1:6

And they [Zechariah and Elizabeth] were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Peter seems to say that it was impossible to keep the law. Yet, Luke records that Zechariah and Elizabeth kept it blamelessly.

## WAS JOHN THE BAPTIST ELIJAH?

Jesus said that John the Baptist was the reincarnation of Elijah; that he had come in the ‘spirit and power’ of Elijah. What if Jesus was the ‘spirit and power’ of Solomon? Was Jesus the reincarnation of Solomon? Not according to Matthew and Luke.

### Matthew 12:42

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, **A GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE.**

### Luke 11:31

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, **A GREATER THAN SOLOMON IS HERE.**

What about John: was he really the reincarnation of Elijah?

### Matthew 11:11a,14

<sup>11</sup> Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist [not even Jesus?]:... <sup>14</sup> And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elijah, which was for to come.

### Matthew 17:11-13

<sup>11</sup> And Jesus answered, and said unto them, Elijah truly shall come **AND RESTORE ALL THINGS**. <sup>12</sup> But I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. <sup>13</sup> Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

### Mark 9:12-13

<sup>12</sup> And he [Jesus] answered and told them. Elijah verily cometh first, **AND RESTORETH ALL THINGS**; and how it is written of the son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. <sup>13</sup> But I say unto you, that Elijah is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

### Luke 1:16-17

<sup>16</sup> And many of the children of Israel shall he [John the Baptist] turn to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup> And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Elijah is to return and usher in the messianic age. Jesus said that John the Baptist was, in fact, the fulfillment of that prophecy. The return of Elijah was to accomplish several things: the restoration of all things, turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the Just.

Did John the Baptist accomplish those things? History would certainly indicate that he did not: - In fact, Jesus himself said that he did not fulfill them. Jesus said that the people did not recognize John and put him to death. But Elijah was not put to death by those who opposed him. John certainly did not seem to be the ‘spirit and power of Elijah’.

Additionally, Mark said that when Elijah returned that he would be mistreated by men and put to death (see Mark 9:13 above). Where was that ever prophesied in the Old Testament?

More importantly, John the Baptist **DENIED** that he was Elijah.

John 1:19-21

<sup>19</sup> And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? <sup>20</sup> And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. <sup>21</sup> they asked him, What then? ART THOU ELIJAH? And he saith, I AM NOT. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, no.

Finally, the word Hebrew word for “messiah” literally means “anointed one”. When Christians use the word “anointed” they often mean: “filled with the Holy Ghost” or “special empowering” or “special relationship to G-d”, etc. However, the word originally meant a literal “anointing” with oil, Christianity redefined it in allegorical terms, having denied the literal definition.

Every king of Israel was a messiah. They were all anointed with oil on the head by a prophet. The final messiah will be a king anointed by Elijah the prophet. That is one of the reasons why Elijah has to come before the messiah: to anoint him as king.

Christianity claims that Jesus is a king now. They claim that he is the seed of David and will sit on David’s throne forever. But to be a king one has to be anointed by a prophet. And to be the final messiah, one has to be anointed by Elijah the prophet.

Jesus said that John the Baptist was Elijah. John, of course, denied that. But, if John was Elijah, when did he ever anoint Jesus as the kingly messiah? The only person to anoint Jesus with oil was a female prostitute, not exactly how the Law prescribed it. Why are the gospels so quiet on this critical matter? Why was Jesus never anointed with oil in accordance with the Law?

Only by denying the literal meaning of Messiah (‘anointed one’) can Christianity dare to refer to Jesus as a messiah. They violate the very meaning of the word. Jesus fails the most elementary test of being a kingly messiah: he wasn’t anointed.

### WHAT ABOUT THOSE MIRACLES?

Miracles play a large part in the New Testament gospel narratives. Christians often ask me: “What are you going to do with the miracles Jesus did? They prove he was who he said he was.” The New Testament does seem to teach that the miracles were evidence that Jesus was a prophet of God and that we should believe in him and his message accordingly.

John 10:37-38

<sup>37</sup> If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. <sup>38</sup> But if I do, though you believe not me, **BELIEVE THE WORKS: that you may know and believe** that the Father *is* in me, and I in him.

John 13:19

Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am *he*.

Acts 2:22

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you **BY MIRACLES AND WONDERS AND SIGNS**, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

John 3:1-2

<sup>1</sup> There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, <sup>2</sup> The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, **WE KNOW THAT THOU ART A TEACHER COME FROM GOD: FOR NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES THAT THOU DOEST, EXCEPT GOD BE WITH HIM.**

However, using miracles to establish ones credentials seems to be in complete opposition to what God said in the Law of Moses. God knew that miracles never brought the lasting desired effects: only adherence to His Law did that.

Deuteronomy 12:32-13:5a

<sup>32</sup> What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it. <sup>1</sup> If [correct Hebrew: **when**] there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and **GIVETH THEE A SIGN OR WONDER,** <sup>2</sup> **AND THE SIGN OR WONDER COME TO PASS,** whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; <sup>3</sup> Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet. or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proveth [is testing] you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. <sup>4</sup> Ye shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him. **AND THAT PROPHET,** or that dreamer of dreams, **SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH,** because he hath spoken to turn you away from God,...

The last verse of chapter twelve is clearly part of the narrative of the false prophet. In fact, the last verse of chapter twelve in the Christian Bible is the first verse of chapter 13 in the Jewish Bible. Remember, the chapter and verse divisions of the Bible are of Christian, not Jewish, origin. Those divisions often make sense, but not this time.

What does the narrative say? Miracles are **NOT** the basis for believing someone's message or that he was sent from God. God is just testing you. The only basis for believing someone is the message: do they teach you to keep the Law of Moses?

Every false religion claims that they have miracles, visions, and answers to prayer that validate their beliefs. Since all religions have miracles, miracles cannot prove any one of them.

Therefore, if Nicodemus was the Pharisee and a teacher of the Law as the New Testament claims, he could not possibly have said what the New Testament claims. For Nicodemus (or Peter or Jesus) to do so would be a complete rejection of the clear and unequivocal command of God.

## THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

How do Christians respond to the previous discrepancies? Most Christians deny the significance of the discrepancies. They deny that the discrepancies are real, saying they only appear to be discrepancies. The discrepancies are often managed by an appeal to ‘faith which justifies everything and resolves all contradictions. Cardinal Newman, although a Roman Catholic, provides the classic Christian response that is embraced by evangelical Christianity:

“a reader who came to the inspired text by himself beyond the influence of that acceptance which happily encompasses, would be surprised to be told the prophet’s words, ‘a virgin shall conceive, etc.’ or ‘let all the angels of God worship him,’ refer to our Lord.”

Cardinal Newman acknowledges that the simple, straight-forward interpretation of the passages would not allow for the traditional Christian interpretation. So Cardinal Newman continues:

“We readily submit our reason on competent authority, and accept certain events as an accomplishment of prediction **which seems very far removed from them** [i.e. the immediate context doesn’t support the Christianized interpretation]...Nor do we find a difficulty when St. Paul appeals to a text of the Old Testament which stands otherwise in our Hebrew copies [i.e. Paul misquotes]...We receive such difficulties on faith and leave them to take care of themselves. Much less do we consider mere fullness in the interpretation, or definiteness, or again strangeness, as sufficient reason for depriving the text, or the action to which it is applied, of the advantage of such interpretation [i.e. we like our interpretation and application of the verses.. .proof-texting at its finest!]. We make no objection that the words themselves come short of it [i.e. there is no basis for the Christian interpretation or application in the text itself.], or that the sacred writer did not contemplate it [i.e. change of original intent], or that a previous fulfillment satisfies it [i.e. the ‘secondary fulfillment theory].” (Cardinal Newman: *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, p.103, cited by Weiss-Rosmarin in *Judaism and Christianity*, p112.)

Most Evangelicals use Cardinal Newman’s defense. That does not imply that Christian Bible scholars are not aware of the erroneous character of the traditional Christian interpretation. But, if I they were to acknowledge that the Jewish interpretation was correct, then the key doctrines of the faith would be invalidated.

William Nichols, Professor Emeritus of Religious Studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and a non-Jew, in *Christian Antisemitism*, summarized the dilemma:

“We learned in earlier chapters that the belief in Jesus as the Messiah awaited by the Jewish people was originally justified by a radical rereading [misinterpretation] of the Hebrew scriptures that in due course transformed them into the Christian Old Testament. Reversing this reading and returning the Scriptures to their original guardians would presumably entail giving up the new reading of the texts that were used in justification of the infant church’s messianic claim for Jesus. Once the Old Testament resumes its role in Christian eyes as the Jewish scriptures, so that Christians must now read it [interpret it] in much the same way as Jews do, they will in effect have given up the biblical basis for the claim that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. BUT, renouncing the belief that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah because of its lack of biblical support would deprive Christianity of a vital link with Jewish symbols and with the history of revelation, the very thing these theologians do not wish to abandon.” (p383)

“If Christians must now acknowledge the continuing validity of the covenant [that God made] with the Jewish people, they must likewise acknowledge the right of the people of the Old Covenant to their own scriptures and to their own interpretation of them. As we saw, Chrysostom thought **such an acknowledgement would simply invalidate Christianity.** (p419)

The Patristic Era (the Church Fathers) of Christianity (100-500 AD) was noted for its allegorizing of scripture. According to *The New Jerome Bible Commentary* (p1154):

“In the early Christian writings of the 2nd century, we find evidence of a very free spiritual exegesis. Yet, even more restrained exegetes like Justin and Tertullian, **RANSACKED THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR PROOF TEXTS** referring to Christ [what did the unrestrained exegetes do?]....Origen probably had more influence on patristic exegesis than any other single figure, although later his theological orthodoxy became suspect....Origen's exegesis was unrestrainedly allegorical, and he is usually blamed for denying the literal sense of the scripture....Augustinian exegesis swept into the west....Tyconius laid down the rule that every verse in the Old Testament could be interpreted in a Christian way. Augustine epitomized this approach.”

Accurate interpretation of the Hebrew text is not what Christianity wanted. Rather, Christianity wanted to ‘proof text’ their theology, no matter how fantastic a misinterpretation of the original text was required to support their theology. Rather than start with the scriptures to develop their theology, the Church Fathers did it the other way around. The Church Fathers started with their theology and then ransacked the Old Testament for proof texts in an attempt to prove their theology.

Some Christian scholars are honest enough to admit that the discrepancies cited previously are real. Professor Moehlman, a protestant theologian, states quite clearly that the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament is dishonest.

“the perversion of the original meaning of the Old Testament passages by the employment of allegory has been a continuous Christian affliction. This disease has ever been epidemic in Christianity, and no cure is known. It exists in countless forms according to the whim of its employer. Those suffering from it become thoroughly dishonest interpreters of the Old Testament without knowing it.” (Conrad Moehlman, *The Christian-Jewish Tragedy*, p141, cited by Weiss-Rosmarin, *ibid*, p111.)

However, the views of Professor Moehlman are considered as heretical by evangelical, fundamentalist Christians. Professor Moehlman is crying: ‘the emperor has no clothes’ but the people would rather accept ‘by faith’ that the emperor is wearing clothes.

The years of the Patristic Era were the formative years of Christian theology. That theology was cemented at the Council of Niceae in 325 AD. Modern Christianity assumes that the doctrines of the faith accepted today are rooted in the Jewish scriptures, when in fact they are rooted in theology. Evangelical Christians need to understand that the doctrines they have today are based upon erroneous, dishonest interpretations of the Jewish scriptures.

“The problem thus highlighted stems from the fact that traditional orthodoxy, while it claims to find its origins in the scriptures, in fact contains elements drawn from a synthesis of scripture and neo-platonism. The mingling of Hebrew and Greek thinking was set in motion first in the second century by an influx of Hellenism through the church Fathers [Patristic Era]” (Buzzard and Hunting: *The Doctrine of the Trinity*; Atlanta Bible College, Morrow, Georgia).

“It is clear to us, and we hope that we have made it clear in these pages to others, that there is often a great difference between Christian theology and Biblical theology...Neither Catholic nor Protestant theology is based upon biblical theology.” (Norman Snaith: *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament*, as cited by Buzzard and Hunting, *ibid*, p59).

## THE NEW TESTAMENT POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS MILIEU

Understanding the political and religious environment of the New Testament era is critical to appreciating the development of Christianity and some of the narratives of the New Testament.

Prior to the Babylonian Captivity the Jewish people had two distinct leadership elements: the king (political) and the prophets (spiritual). The priests were teachers of the law, as commanded by the Law of Moses (Deut 33:10, Lev 10:8-11), but the priests were only leaders if they were prophets, not just because they were priests. The priests, although involved with the necessary worship functions at the temple, were not the de facto leaders of the people.

After the Babylonian Captivity the era of the prophets ended (Malachi was the last prophet) and their spiritual leadership and authority was replaced by the Men of the Great Assembly (and eventually the Great Sanhedrin). The political leadership was given to the appointee of the controlling foreign power.

The last surviving member of the Men of the Great Assembly, Simon the Righteous, was also the High Priest at the time of Alexander the Great. When Alexander the Great conquered Israel he placed the political power of the Jewish people in the hands of Simon the Righteous. It is probably because Simon already had the effective leadership of the country as the sole surviving member of the Men of the Great Assembly, and as the High Priest, that Alexander the Great officially conferred that authority upon him.

It is not entirely clear why the Greek leaders after Alexander the Great continued to place the political leadership in the office of the high priest. Perhaps (knowing the prestige of the office of high priest) the Greeks placed the political authority in the office of the high priest in hopes that they thereby could control both the political and spiritual leadership of the Jews.

Pagan temples were the centers of pagan worship and the pagan high priests and pagan chief priests were both the spiritual leaders and the spiritual authorities. But that is not how the spiritual life of Israel was structured.

The true spiritual leadership and authority of the Jews lay not in the priesthood and the temple, but rather with the successors to the prophets: the Torah scholars and sages. Consequently, the appointment of Simon as the political leader by Alexander the Great did not adversely impact the spiritual life of the Jews. That is because Simon was a righteous man and a very effective spiritual and political leader. However, once the office of the high priest became politicized, serious problems were in the making.

Wherever the Greeks imposed their rule on other nations, they also brought along their culture and religious views. Most of those nations readily embraced the Greek philosophy and culture. The land of Israel was no different. The Greek culture became attractive to many Jews and they began to abandon the traditions of their fathers. Although initially the Jews were given freedom of religion under Alexander the Great, the later rulers of the Greek empire changed that. Ultimately the Greeks attempted to impose idolatry on the Jewish people which led to the Hasmonean (Maccabean) revolt. The festival of Hannukah celebrates the Hasmonean victory of the Jews over Greek paganism.

The spiritual leadership of the Jewish people ultimately fell on the shoulders of one person, the leader of the Great Sanhedrin. To counter the potential deleterious effects of having all the religious and spiritual power in one person, the Jews divested the power into two offices as it had been prior to the Babylonian captivity.

From the time of the Hasmoneans (165 BCE) to the destruction of the second temple (70 CE), the spiritual leadership of the nation rested in two offices (called the Zugos: pair). They were the Dean of the Great Sanhedrin (Av Beis Din), and the president of the Sanhedrin (the Nasi, or prince), who was a descendant of King David. (The Zugos about the time of the birth of Jesus were Rabbi Hillel (the Nasi) and Rabbi Shammai (the Av Beis Din)).

Two major religious groups developed in Israel as a result of the Hellenistic (Greek) influence imposed on Jews by the Greeks who conquered the land of Israel (about 300-250 BC). The two parties were the Pharisees (Parushim = “Separated Ones”) and the Sadducees (Tzadokim = “Righteous Ones”). A third group is described by Josephus as existing at the time of the NT era: the Essenes. It is not clear when the Essene movement originated but it seems to date to the same time period.

Josephus details the differences between the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Essenes (*Antiquities of the Jews*: Book 13, chap 10, para 6; Book 18, chap 1, para 1-5; *Wars of the Jews*: Book 2, Chap 8, para 2-14). The New Testament never mentions the Essenes, but does give a brief synopsis of the differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Acts 23:7-8

<sup>7</sup> And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided. <sup>8</sup> For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees confess both.

There was also a fourth sect of religious Jews described by Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews*: Book 18, chap 1, para 6; *Wars of the Jews*: Book 2, Chap 8, para 1).. “These men agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they in inviolable attachment to liberty; and they say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord.” According to Josephus, Judas the Galilean was the author of this sect and it was started about the time of the Roman taxation taken by Cyrenius (Luke 2:2). It is either this Judas, or one of his descendants, that Rabbi Gamliel referred to in the New Testament book of Acts.

Acts 5:37

After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

There has been much discussion as to whether or not the Jewish religious community at Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, was an Essene community or some other religious sect, possible pious Sadducees. One of the main issues involved was that of celibacy. It is commonly taught that the Essenes were celibate and since the group at Qumran was not a completely celibate group that it could not have been an Essene community. However, Josephus tells us that “there is another order of Essenes who agree with the rest [of the Essenes] as to their way of living, and customs, and laws, *but differ from them in the point of marriage*” (*Wars of the Jews*: Book 2, ch 8, para 13.) They could have been an Essene sect.

Based upon recent research on the Dead Sea Scrolls (*Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls* by Lawrence Schiffman and *James the Brother of Jesus* by Robert Eisenman), the Sadducees of the Hasmonean era seem to have developed into two factions: one extremely pious and nationalistic and the other more willing to accommodate foreign control and not nearly as zealous of ritual purity.

Since the NT never mentions the Essenes or the “fourth” sect directly, I will limit my discussion to Pharisees and Sadducees. However, the reader should keep in mind that the Essenes did exist, as did the “fourth” sect of Judaism. It may very well be that some of the Sadducees of the NT might actually be Essenes and some of the Pharisees in the New Testament might actually be members of the “fourth” sect.

The pious, zionistic group of Sadducees was extremely messianic. Therefore I will refer to them as Messianic Sadducees. [These may, in fact, be the Essenes that Josephus described and may have lived at Qumran.] The other group of Sadducees was more in line with the picture of the Sadducees painted by Josephus and the NT (which I will refer to as Establishment Sadducees.)

Just as the Sadducees can be subdivided into two groups, so also can the Pharisees be subdivided into two groups. The “fourth” sect founded by Judas the Galilean will be referred to as “Messianic Pharisees.” It is not inconceivable that the “zealots” of the New Testament could be either the messianic Pharisees (“fourth” sect) or messianic Sadducees (Essenes) or both.

The Pharisees embraced traditional Torah Judaism, including the written and oral law. They were most concerned with the practice of their religion and therefore were willing to accommodate foreign control as long as they were able to freely practice their religion. That is a trend seen throughout Jewish history in the diaspora. Of course, the Jews of today that survived in the diaspora are the legacy of the Pharisees, and so that would make sense.

As mentioned, the high priest, especially from the time of the Hasmoneans on, was not necessarily considered the spiritual leader of the people. The high priest was a functionary of an important part of Jewish life, but did not play a major role in the day to day spiritual life of the Jewish people and was not overly involved in the decisions of Law.

The Establishment Sadducees disregarded the oral traditions and laws. They were the religious counterparts to the assimilated hellenists: those that embraced the Greek culture. These Sadducees only accepted the written law, the five books of Moses (they did not accept the authority of the rest of the Old Testament). They felt no need for Torah scholars or sages to interpret the Law of Moses since each man could read the Torah for himself and decide what he must do. [Note: Josephus states that the original Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures, the Septuagint, was only comprised of the five books of Moses, not the entire Old Testament. Preface to *Antiquities of the Jews*, paragraph 3].

The Messianic Sadducees [Essenes?] on the other hand were ultraobservant, pious Jews. Contrary to their Establishment counterparts that Josephus and the NT describe, they believed in the resurrection of the dead and in the Oral Law (as evidenced in the

Dead Sea Scrolls). They felt the Establishment Sadducees and the Pharisees were too lenient and accommodating with the Gentile influence. They were behind many of the messianic uprisings (as were the Messianic Pharisees) in the days preceding the NT and the two major wars with Rome (66-70 CE and 132-135 CE). They were destroyed as a sect (as were the Messianic Pharisees) within Judaism during the two wars with Rome and passed from the scene after those two wars. Hence the Mainline Pharisaical traditions have dominated the Jewish world in the diaspora.

The Establishment Sadducees put great emphasis on the temple and the sacrificial system. They felt that strict adherence to the letter of the law, especially in regard to ritual purity, was critical to satisfy God's requirements.

The temple service was of secondary importance to the Pharisees. They felt that Torah study and knowledge, along with a pious Torah lifestyle, were more important than the temple and its sacrificial service. Indeed, having just survived many years without a temple, or a sacrificial system, they knew that the key to the Jewish spiritual life lay in Torah knowledge and Torah living, not the temple. In fact, the Pharisees did not have a fanatical love for the second temple. They knew that it had to be destroyed before the Messiah could return and build the third, and final, temple (Ezekiel 40-48). Also, the second temple was lacking several critical items (such as the Ark, the Menorah, and the Shekinah Glory) that the first temple had and the third temple would have.

The Messianic Sadducees would have no part of the temple service. They felt the service had been compromised. They felt that the priesthood was defiled and the service invalid.

The Establishment Sadducees were invariably collaborated with whatever foreign power occupied the land. These Sadducees did not believe in an after life; the here and now was all that mattered. They believed that as long as they satisfied the minimum requirements of the Law, they felt free to do as they pleased to enhance their lives in the here and now. Therefore, the Establishment Sadducees tended to be predominantly of the wealthy class. They strove to control the office of the high priest and the chief priestly functions. When a foreign power controlled the land, they would often bribe their way into the offices desired. The one requirement that the foreign power imposed on them was to keep the people in line; no sedition or rebellion would be tolerated.

As you can see, the Establishment Sadducees were very politically active and not particularly religious in the traditional Jewish sense. These Sadducees, it seemed, were religious because they had to be; it was expedient to be religious.

The Pharisees were extremely religious, like the Messianic Sadducees, but differed with the Messianic Sadducees on the issue of foreign rulership and Gentile offerings at the temple (which the Pharisees allowed.) Politically, however, since they were willing to accommodate foreign rulership, they had more in common with the Establishment Sadducees.

The Messianic Pharisees, as Josephus pointed out, differed with the other Pharisees only on the issue of foreign rulership. They were in agreement with the Messianic Sadducees on that point. But they differed with the Messianic Sadducees on the issue of the temple service. (It was a complicated time in Jewish life!)

The high priest in the days of the New Testament was not a legitimate high priest (a descendant of Aaron through Zadok). Rather, he was invariably a Sadducee that had bought the office (from the Romans and/or Herod). That was true, not only of the high priest, but also of the chief priests in the New Testament. (Which is why the Messianic Sadducees were opposed to the temple service.)

Acts 5:17

Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation.

How would the Pharisees and Sadducees have reacted to someone claiming to be the messiah? The Pharisees would have no problem with someone making that claim, as long as they were an observant Jew. The Pharisees would not automatically label someone a heretic simply for claiming to be the messiah. The Pharisees looked forward to, and longed for the coming of, the messiah. The hope of the messiah was traditional Pharisaical teaching. And the Messianic Sadducees, of course, also eagerly awaited the messiah.

The Pharisees would find nothing offensive or blasphemous in someone's claim to be the messiah. But to any one individual's claim to be the messiah, they took a wait-and-see attitude.

Acts 5:34-40a

<sup>34</sup> Then stood there up one in the council, **A PHARISEE**, named **GAMALIEL**, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and **COMMANDED TO PUT THE APOSTLES FORTH A LITTLE SPACE**. <sup>35</sup> And he said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. <sup>36</sup> For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. <sup>37</sup> After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. <sup>38</sup> **AND NOW I SAY UNTO YOU, REFRAIN FROM THESE MEN AND LET THEM ALONE**: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: <sup>39</sup> But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. <sup>40</sup> And to him they agreed:...

It is obvious from the narrative that Gamaliel did not view the Nazarene messianic movement as heretical or he would not have given them any space. Rather, he viewed the Nazarene messianic movement in the same way that he viewed the other messianic movements of his day that he described (Theudas and Judas).

Of course, the messiah of Jewish expectation was a man, not deity, and therefore someone's claim of being the messiah was not intrinsically a basis for the charge of blasphemy or being labeled as a heretic as Christianity seems to think the New Testament teaches. Ironically, the Pharisees considered the Establishment Sadducees heretics but the Pharisees did not consider the followers of messianic movements as heretics.

Nor would the Pharisees be offended by a wanna-be messiah's claim they he would destroy the temple. According to traditional Pharisaical teachings, the temple had to be destroyed before the messiah came. Then the third, and final, temple could be built.

The Establishment Sadducees, on the other hand, did not believe in the coming messiah. These Sadducees viewed messianic movements with distrust because the movements fomented sedition and rebellion to the foreign power that they were dependent on for

their power, wealth, and influence. Since all the high priests and chief priests of the New Testament era were these type of Sadducees, they also were extremely distrustful and antagonistic of messianic movements.

The New Testament records the Pharisees being favorably disposed to the messianic movement that Jesus initiated (although Christianity generally views the New Testament as depicting Jesus in opposition to the Pharisees). The New Testament also clearly depicts the high priest and the chief priests, as well as the other Establishment Sadducees in active opposition to the messianic movement of Jesus and his followers.

The Establishment Sadducees would be very disturbed by anyone's messianic claims. That meant rebellion against the powers to be. Likewise, these Sadducees took great offense with anyone threatening to destroy their power base: the temple and the priesthood.

The high priest and the chief priests also took any messianic claims seriously because it could mean their jobs and/or their lives. The Romans sold the office to the highest bidder with the provision that they keep the Jewish people submissive to Roman authority. The Romans would get someone else to do the job if they couldn't. Additionally, if the messianic movement was successful, they would also be out of a job, and probably lose their lives for their collaboration with the Romans. This is exactly what happened with the Jewish revolt against Rome in 66 AD. The Messianic Jewish movements slaughtered the Establishment Sadducee leaders that they felt had betrayed their God, Torah, and the Land of Israel.

Awareness of the actual political-religious environment of the New Testament makes some New Testament passages difficult to comprehend. The actors recorded seem to be mixed up.

Suppose someone were to say: the republicans are making the conservatives angry. The republicans want to lower income taxes, balance the budget, cut the capital gains tax, reform welfare, ban gays in the military, ban abortions, shrink the federal government, and increase defense spending. You would be a bit puzzled. That is because that is what the conservatives traditionally stand for already. How would the conservatives find them offensive?

That is exactly the dilemma in the New Testament. Many of the so-called problems that Jesus had with the Pharisees weren't issues to the Pharisees, it is what they had been teaching all along. The defense that Jesus used for eating corn on the Sabbath was a well known traditional Pharisaical argument. The Pharisees would not have had a problem with his defense. But the Establishment Sadducees would not have accepted his argument because it was against the literal interpretation of the Law. The roles appeared to have been mixed up in the recording of the event.

Similarly, the phrase that Jesus used: "man is not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man", was not new with Jesus as Christianity supposes. That was traditional Pharisaical teaching. Man was supposed to violate the Sabbath to save a life. In fact, man was supposed to lie and/or steal if it was the only way to save a life. However, the Sadducees were literal interpreters of the Law and they would not have allowed healing or 'harvesting' on the Sabbath, even to save a life. The Sadducees believed in a literal

eye-for-an-eye whereas the Pharisees always understood it to mean compensation not the literal taking of an eye.

Much of the teachings in the *sermon on the mount* are traditional Pharisaical teachings. The Pharisees would have had absolutely no problems with them. However, the Establishment Sadducees would have gone ballistic (and they did.) Jesus is clearly portrayed as an orthodox, observant Pharisee, once you know what the Pharisees really believed and taught.

Another difficulty relates to the authority of the high priest. In Judaism, the high priest has no legal or spiritual authority; he is strictly a functionary. In New Testament times, the only legal authority the high priest had was by virtue of the Roman authorities. That makes understanding Saul's letter of authority from the high priest to go to synagogues in Damascus and arrest followers of the Nazarene sect very problematic.

Damascus was not under Roman rule at that time. It was under Nabatean control (II Corinthians 11:32; King Aretas was a Nabatean), and the Nabateans, at that time, were part of the Parthian empire. The high priest, even with Roman sanction, did not have any legal jurisdiction in Damascus. He also did not have any authority under Mosaic Law to issue such an order. Even Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator in Jerusalem, had no jurisdiction in the region of Galilee under Herod's control (Let alone Damascus [which is why he sent Jesus to Herod for trial.]

Rabbi Gamaliel, the son of Rabbi Hillel, was the leader (Nasi) of Pharisaical Judaism at the time that Paul lived. Paul claimed that he studied Judaism at the feet of Gamaliel.

Acts 22:3a

I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in Tassus, *a city* in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city  
**AT THE FEET OF GAMALIEL...**

Why would Paul, who claimed to be a Pharisee, go directly against the expressed wishes of his supposed mentor, and the leading Pharisee of his day, by persecuting the Nazarene messianic movement? Remember, it was Gamaliel who said:

Acts 5:34,38

<sup>34</sup> Then stood there up one in the council, **A PHARISEE**, named **GAMALIEL**, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and **COMMANDED TO PUT THE APOSTLES FORTH A LITTLE SPACE...** <sup>38</sup> **AND NOW I SAY UNTO YOU, REFRAIN FROM THESE MEN AND LET THEM ALONE**: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

Why would a supposed ultraorthodox Pharisee (Paul) team up with a heretical (Sadducee), illegitimate high priest to persecute those that Rabbi Gamaliel, his alleged mentor, tolerated? Remember, this was before Saul's conversion., while he was still an alleged Pharisee.

Paul said that he was 'a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee':

Acts 23:7

But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, **I AM A PHARISEE, THE SON OF A PHARISEE**: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

Paul also said that he was born a Roman citizen:

Acts 22:28

And the chief captain answered, with a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But **I WAS FREE BORN.**

That means that Paul's father had to have been both a Roman citizen and a Pharisee. That is extremely unlikely. The Pharisees did not align themselves in any way, shape, or form with the idolatrous Roman Empire. The Pharisees believed Rome to be descended from Esau and an 'evil empire.' The Pharisees may have tolerated foreign rulership but they did not join or align themselves with it.

Paul said that he was "a man *which am* a Jew born in Tarsus." The Ebionites (an early Jewish Christian sect) claimed that Paul was actually born of Gentile parents ("God-fearers") and converted to Judaism. Perhaps that is what Paul meant: I am a man (a Gentile) that became a Jew. [Robert Eisenman, in his book: *James the Brother of Jesus*, gives compelling evidence that Paul may have been a close relative of Herod! That could explain some rather interesting details in the NT: Acts 22:28; 23:16-35; Rom. 16:10-11; II Cor. 11:32.]

The claim of the Ebionites may seem outrageous. But consider what Paul said about himself in his letter to Timothy.

I Timothy 1:15

This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save **SINNERS**: of whom **I AM CHIEF.**

Romans 5:8

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while **WE were yet SINNERS**, Christ died for us.

Who were the 'sinners' that Paul was speaking of? The New Testament gospels record Jesus dining with 'sinners'. The Pharisees were disturbed by this behavior, they believed it to be contrary to the Law of Moses. Why was it a problem to them? Let's see how the New Testament gospels use the word 'sinners'.

Matthew 9:10-13

<sup>10</sup> And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and **SINNERS** came and sat down with him and his disciples. <sup>11</sup> And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and **SINNERS**? <sup>12</sup> But when Jesus heard that he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. <sup>13</sup> ...for I am not come to call the righteous, but **SINNERS** to repentance.

Mark 2:15-17

<sup>15</sup> And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and **SINNERS** sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. <sup>16</sup> And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and **SINNERS**, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and **SINNERS**? When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I am come not to call the righteous, but **SINNERS** to repentance.

Luke 5:30-32

<sup>30</sup> But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and **SINNERS**? <sup>31</sup> And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. <sup>32</sup> I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Luke 15:1-2

<sup>1</sup> Then drew near unto him all the publicans and **SINNERS** for to hear him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth **SINNERS** and eateth with them.

Matthew 11:19a

The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and **SINNERS**...

Luke 7:34

The Son of man is come eating and drinking: and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and **SINNERS**!

Christianity assumes that those ‘sinners’ were merely sinful Jews. But is that a valid assumption? Whoever these sinners were, the Pharisees deemed it inappropriate for Jesus and his disciples to be dining with them. Some of the publicans were Jews and some were Gentiles hired by the Romans. But who were the **SINNERS**? What does Peter say about these issues?

Acts 10:28a

And he [Peter] said unto them [Gentiles] Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation...

Peter states the same position that the NT describes that the Pharisees took: that it is unlawful to fellowship and eat with Gentiles (actually this was the position of the Messianic Sadducees. Was Peter an Essene?). Perhaps the Pharisees were distressed **because** the ‘sinners’ weren’t Jews, but rather they were Gentiles.

Matthew 26:45

Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now; and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed **into the hands of SINNERS**.

Mark 14:4

And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed **into the hands of SINNERS**.

Luke 18:31-32a

<sup>31</sup> Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them. Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished, <sup>32</sup> For he shall be delivered **unto the GENTILES**...

Matthew and Mark say that Jesus was to be betrayed “into the hands of **SINNERS**”. Luke said that Jesus was to be delivered “unto the **GENTILES**”. Clearly they were referring to the same thing: the **SINNERS** were **GENTILES**.

Luke 6:32-35

<sup>32</sup> For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? For **SINNERS** also love those that love them. <sup>33</sup> And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? For **SINNERS** also do even the same. <sup>34</sup> And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? For **SINNERS** also lend to **SINNERS**, to receive as much again. <sup>35</sup> But **LOVE YOUR ENEMIES...**

Additionally, Luke's connection of **SINNERS** to **YOUR ENEMIES** strongly implies that the 'sinners' in that discourse were none other than the Gentile Romans, the current enemies of the Jews.

Paul seems to confirm that opinion when he distinguishes Jews from the **SINNERS OF THE GENTILES**.

Galatians 2:15

We *who are* Jews by nature, and not **SINNERS OF THE GENTILES**.

It is clear that the Gospels only use the term 'sinners' to refer to Gentiles, not Jews. Paul also differentiates Jews from "sinners of the Gentiles." Paul's statement that he was the "chief of sinners" strongly infers that the Ebionites were right. Paul was a Gentile, albeit one that converted to Judaism.

Paul seems to alternately align himself with the Jews and then with the Gentiles. Paul seems to be quite a chameleon. How could this be? Perhaps, indeed, the outrageous claim of the Ebionites wasn't so outrageous. Perhaps that is why Paul said:

I Corinthians 9:20-21a

<sup>20</sup> And unto the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews, to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; <sup>21</sup> To them that are without the law [Gentiles] as without the law...that I might gain them that are without the law.

The only way that Paul could be such a chameleon would be if he was intimately familiar with, by experience, both the Gentile and the Jewish lifestyles. Something he could not have had if he was truly born a Pharisee and was a Pharisee of Pharisees'.

Therefore, the only legitimate way to make sense of the New Testament narratives concerning Paul's life and actions is to come to the conclusion that Paul was not a Pharisee at all. He may have converted to Judaism and may have attempted to become a Pharisee, but he clearly never became one. He was a Sadducee that worked on the police force of the high priest. He was a bounty hunter for the high priest. The New Testament fabricated Paul's religious heritage (or concealed part of it, because of his Herodian connection, as Robert Eisenman postulates.)

Why would the New Testament attempt to portray Jesus as opposing the Pharisees and then attempt to portray Paul as a 'super' Pharisee? It's really quite simple. The Pharisees were the guardians of Torah Judaism. For Christianity to depict itself as the fulfillment and replacement of Judaism it was necessary to portray Jesus in opposition to the guardians of what was perceived as True Judaism. Then Christianity had to portray Paul as a traditional Pharisee who 'saw the light' and converted to 'true Judaism' [Christianity]. Neither portrayal is correct.

## PHARISEES AND HYPOCRITES

Christianity has long equated the term ‘pharisee’. the term ‘hypocrite’, as if the two words were synonymous. Historical information sheds additional light on the misconception that the Pharisees were the “hypocrites” of the New Testament era. This may seem a bit tedious, but don’t skip over it. It is extremely critical to understand. (Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*, Book 13, chapter 12 – Book 14, chap 1 and *Wars of the Jews*, Book 1, chap 4-7)

Alexander Yannai was one of the last of the Hasmonean dynasty that ruled the Jews prior to Roman intervention in Israel. He reigned from 103-76 BC. He married Shlomis Alexandra, the widowed wife of his elder brother, according to the levirate law. She was the sister of the leading Pharisee of that time. Alexander was initially friendly to the Pharisees but as time went on and the Pharisees openly criticized his actions (which were ruthless and unscriptural) he eventually sided with the Sadducees and was openly hostile to the Pharisees and orthodox Judaism.

Shlomis Alexandra was destined to succeed her husband as regent of Judah. She reigned for 10 years until her death in 66 BC. Shortly before his death, Alexander Yannai apparently moderated his view concerning the Pharisees. When giving her advise on ruling over the Jews, he told Shlomis: “Fear not the Pharisees, nor even the Sadducees, but only fear the hypocrites, who disguise themselves as Pharisees. They commit deeds as evil as Zimri and somehow expect a reward as great as Phineas\* (Talmud. Sotah 22b).” (\*Numbers 25:6-14)

The hypocrites disguised themselves as Pharisees, not as Sadducees. According to Alexander Yannai, there seemed to be two types of Pharisees’ just a few years before the New Testament times: true Pharisees and hypocrites (who weren’t really Pharisees at all.) The hypocrites were politically ambitious opportunists who cloaked themselves with religious piety but were morally corrupt (power, ego, etc.) in their personal lives (Jeroboam of the Old Testament would have been the prototypical hypocrite.)

Establishment Sadducees were Jews who essentially despised orthodox Judaism but maintained an appearance of Judaism in order not to be rejected by the people. The Judaism they embraced was watered down and deviated from traditional Judaism. The people never embraced them as spiritual leaders. The people looked to the Pharisees as their spiritual leaders (Acts 5:34), although the Messianic Sadducees were the popular leaders in the uprisings because the Pharisees generally resisted political uprisings.

The hypocrites that Alexander Yannai warned Shlomis of had much more savvy than the Sadducees. They understood that the real leadership of the people was spiritual, not political. They also understood that the people would never embrace an Establishment Sadducee as their spiritual leader, only a Pharisee or Messianic Sadducee. Therefore, they would appear to embrace Pharisaical Judaism which allowed them to “practice” Torah Judaism while accommodating foreign powers. They were wolves in sheep’s clothing. They truly were white-washed sepulchers.

## THE NABATEANS AND PAUL

The two sons of Alexander Yannai eventually succeeded Shlomis as leaders of Israel. It was those two sons that brought the Idumeans (Herod), the Romans (Pompey), and the Nabateans into the political situation in Israel.

Hyrchanus, the elder son of Alexander Yannai, was engaged in a civil war in 68 BC by Aristobulus, the younger son who wanted to be ruler. Aristobulus was aligned with the Sadducees and the Hellenists. Hyrchanus was aligned with the Pharisees and had an Idumean general named Antipater (ancestor of the Herods).

The Idumeans dwelt in the region of Edom, south of Israel, and had been forcibly converted to Judaism, contrary to Mosaic Law, by earlier Hasmonian rulers. However, as their ancestors were, the Idumeans were fierce warriors and cunning political administrators.

The Nabateans controlled a crescent of land from just south and east of Israel to just north and east of Israel (much of modern day Jordan). The capitol city of the Nabateans was the famous city of Petra. They also controlled Damascus. The ruler of the Nabateans at that time was **KING ARETAS III** (his descendant is mentioned in II Corinthians 11:32.)

### II Corinthians 11:32

In Damascus the governor under **ARETAS THE KING** kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:

Hyrchanus and Aristobulus fought a brief war which Aristobulus won. As a result, Hyrchanus relinquished all claims to the throne and the high priesthood (in the days of the Hasmoneans the high priest was also king, contrary to the Law of Moses.) But Antipater, the main advisor to Hyrchanus, would not let the issue die.

Antipater advised Hyrchanus to hire the Nabateans to assist him in overcoming his rebellious younger brother and regaining the throne and high priesthood. The price for the help of the Nabateans would be turning over to them the Transjordan (east of the Jordan river) regions that Israel, under a previous Hasmonean king, had wrested from the Nabateans.

Hyrchanus won that battle and forced Aristobulus to withdraw to Jerusalem and the fortress of Antonia on the temple mount. About this time the Roman general Pompey was in Armenia, enroute to conquering the middle east and Egypt, but his deputy, Scaurus, was in the Damascus.

Aristobulus and Hyrchanus both appealed to the Scaurus for Pompey's assistance. Multiple bribes by both sides were offered. Aristobulus won the bribery contest. Scaurus forced Hyrchanus and his Nabatean allies to withdraw from Jerusalem. Aristobulus was then able to drive Hyrchanus and the Nabateans out of Judea.

When General Pompey came to Damascus, Hyrchanus and Aristobulus again sent ambassadors pleading their cases. Antipater was the ambassador for Hyrchanus. The political acumen of Antipater prevailed. Hyrchanus was instated as High Priest and Ethnarch. Aristobulus resisted Pompey's decision. Eventually Aristobulus was bound and taken to Rome, while Antipater made Rome's representative ruler in the region. [That is what happens when you invite the lion into the sheep's pen to settle a dispute!]

But, that changed shortly when Julius Ceasar came to power. Anstobulus was freed and given an army to retake the kingdom. However, he was murdered by some of the enemies of Julius Ceasar. So Hyrcanus remained high priest and Ethnarch while Antipater remained Rome's representative leader.

Damascus, and the northern Nabatean kingdom, were under the control of the Parthians (from Persia) until captured by Pompey. However, the Parthians regained control during Rome's internal power struggle, after the death of Julius Ceasar, during the time of Augustus Ceasar. Rome did not reconquer and annex the Northern Nabatean kingdom, that included Damascus, until the reign of Nero (60 AD) (Encyclopedia Britannica: Nabateans). Rome did not conquer the Nabatean capitol of Petra, and the southern kingdom of the Nabateans, until 100 AD under the Roman Emperor Trajan (Encyclopedia Britannica: Trajan).

This information is further substantiated by the war between Herod and the Nabateans in 36 AD. Herod's wife, the daughter of the Nabatean king, was divorced in favor of Herodius, his brother's wife. John the Baptist railed against Herod for this iniquity. The Nabatean king's daughter was able to sneak away to her father's country. He was outraged and a war between Herod and King Aretas ensued. King Aretas soundly defeated Herod. The Jews attributed Herod's loss to his beheading of John the Baptist. [Is this the real reason King Aretas sought to apprehend Paul in Damascus as recorded in II Cor 11:32: he was a close relative of Herod?]

Herod appealed to Rome for support. Rome ordered Vitellius, then governor of Syria, to take his army and march against the Nabateans and destroy them. Ceasar died before the order was carried out. The new Ceasar did not confirm the order so it was dropped. It was also the same Vitellius who, in 37 AD, had ordered Pontius Pilate back to Rome to answer for his atrocities against the Jews and the Samaritans.

That is why the high priest could not have given Saul a letter of authority to go Damascus and arrest followers of the Nazarene.

Acts 9:1-2

<sup>1</sup> And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, <sup>2</sup> And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Acts 22:5

As a **THE HIGH PRIEST** doth bear me witness, and **ALL THE ESTATE OF THE ELDERS**: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem to be punished.

First of all, based upon what Gamaliel is reported previously to have said (Acts 5:34-40a), there is no way Gamaliel would have given support or encouragement to Saul to go to Damascus to arrest followers of the Nazarene messianic sect. Therefore, **NOT ALL** the elders gave letters to Saul, probably only the Sadducee elders did.

Secondly, Damascus was under Nabatean control, not Roman control. Damascus was a political 'city of refuge' for those seeking to escape Rome's political tyranny. That is why the legitimate high priest and chief priests escaped to Damascus when Herod the Great began appointing illegitimate priests to those offices about 35 BC. The Nabateans

were always on guard for both political refugees and the bounty hunters sent by Roman authorities.

#### II Corinthians 11:32

In Damascus the governor under **ARETAS THE KING** kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me:

Lastly, understanding the Jewish judicial system also sheds light on the New Testament narratives. Each city or village was required to have a three man court (Beis Din). In addition to the three member court, larger cities were required to have a 23 member sanhedrin. The nation had its supreme court known as the Great Sanhedrin of 71 members.

A verdict rendering a death penalty could not be made by the three member court - A death penalty could only be made by the 23 member sanhedrin or the 71 member Great Sanhedrin. In other words, the death penalty was not the exclusive domain of the 71 member Great Sanhedrin.

When the New Testament refers to the sanhedrin it could be referring either to the 23 member regional court or it could be referring to the 71 member Great Sanhedrin of the nation. That must be kept in mind when studying the four trials (Jesus, Peter, Stephen, Paul) mentioned in the gospels and the book of Acts. Also recall that Rabbi Gamaliel was the Nasi of the Great Sanhedrin at the time of all the trials mentioned in the New Testament.

Two of the trials (Peter and Paul) have accounts that are credible according to standards of Jewish jurisprudence. However, the other two trials (Jesus and Stephen) are not credible at all according to the standards of Jewish jurisprudence. The New Testament would have us believe that the dignified and deliberative body of Jewish Law, the Great Sanhedrin, devolved into a public lynching. Perhaps a body of 23 Establishment Sadducees could, but not the Great Sanhedrin with Rabbi Gamaliel at its helm.

Of note: Christianity copied the way pagan religious cults were structured. The 'priest' or 'minister' became the chief functionary, the religious authority, **and** the teacher of spiritual truth. That was not how Judaism was structured in the days of the New Testament and the reader of the New Testament needs to understand that. The high priest and the chief priests **were NOT** the religious or spiritual leaders of the Jewish people and they **were NOT** the teachers of religious law for the people.

Additionally, when disputes arise over translation of an Old Testament verse, Christianity seems to give preference to the Septuagint translation of the Jewish Scriptures, rather than the original Hebrew. It is ironic that the Sadducees, the hellenized 'religious' Jews, only accepted the five books of Moses, which comprised the original Septuagint, the hellenized version of the Law of Moses.

These are just some of the problems that call into question the Christian doctrine of the inerrancy of the New Testament. If the original manuscripts were truly inspired of God, how did those discrepancies get into the texts that we have today?

## THE TRANSMISSION OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

Kurt Aland is one of the principal editors of the Greek New Testament used by Christianity (Protestant and Catholic) today. Those texts are: the *Novum Testamentum Graece* (also known as The Nestle-Aland Text), 27th edition, and the Greek New Testament Text, 4th edition. When discussing issues pertaining to the early New Testament manuscripts, I will reference the book *THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT* (soft cover, 2nd ed.) by Kurt and Barbara Aland.

The early Christians did not have a New Testament. The only scripture they had was the Old Testament (page 64). The writings of the early church were not regarded as scripture, and therefore were not treated with the same respect that the Jewish scriptures were treated (pages 51,69).

The Greeks were more concerned about the transmission of the message of the writings (as they perceived it) than the accurate transmission of the text (page 291). That is very different from the Jewish perspective of the Hebrew scriptures. The Jews believed that every word, indeed every letter, in their scriptures was divinely inspired and worthy of accurate transmission (page 69). The Greeks were not as concerned with the individual words, let alone the letters, in the transmission of their documents.

Accuracy in the Jewish transmission of the Old Testament text was guaranteed by several methods. Every scroll was comprised of columns of text (columns are analogous to pages in our books). Every scroll was identical; each column was identical to its respective column in the master scroll. The first letter of the first word of a given column was the same, and the last letter of the last word of a given column was the same. The location of each letter was also identical (page 291). If an error in transmission would occur it could only effect one line, or at most, one column. When you truly believe that the scriptures are the divinely inspired, revealed word of God, you will take great pains to insure its accuracy. The Hebrew word that is translated 'scribe' actually means to count. That is what the scribes did: they counted every letter and every word to verify accurate transmission.

The Dead Sea scrolls bare out the accuracy of the transmission of the Hebrew scriptures. The scroll of Isaiah dating from before Jesus (between 200 BC and 50 AD), when compared with the masoretic text of about 900 AD (the one used today) revealed virtually no difference. That is accuracy in transmission.

The Greek perspective on transmitting the New Testament writings, that eventually became the Christian scriptures, provided fertile ground for "correcting" of the texts. During the transmission of the early manuscripts, copyists took liberty in making their own editorial comments (what textual critics call "free text" or "living text", page 14, 69). It was only around 150-200 AD that the texts of the New Testament began to be standardized and held to a higher level of accuracy in transmission. However, it wasn't until after 300 AD that there was any significant control over the manuscripts (page 64).

The Greek mindset of transmitting writings is probably behind many of the problem verses. A well intentioned copyist would read a portion of the gospel narrative, and thinking it related to an Old Testament narrative would insert: "and this was in fulfillment of..." The problem was that the copyist must have been unfamiliar with the Hebrew manuscript

and the context of the passages that the gospel narrative was supposedly fulfilling. How else could they make such simple mistakes? The issue of veracity is another matter altogether.

Quoting from Kurt Aland's book (with my elaboration):

"Every manuscript of the New Testament contains a "living text." (page 14). What is a "living text"? A living text meant that the copyist, or scribe, was allowed to alter the text to whatever he deemed appropriate. He could make corrections, deletions, or additions.

"Major revisions of Greek manuscripts must certainly have occurred toward the end of the third or the beginning of the fourth century...In neither of these instances was **THE PRIMARY MOTIVATION** of the revision philological [correct scribal errors]. **IT WAS PROMPTED RATHER BY ECCLESIASTICAL OR THEOLOGICAL INTERESTS.** The text of the exemplar [master copy] was revised **not so much with a concern for establishing OR RESTORING the original text as for determining the "best" text from a particular editorial perspective.**" (page 51) The revisions were prompted to make the documents agree with their theology. Theology should agree with scripture, not the other way around.

'Free expansions still permitted by the standards of the second century when the New Testament text was not yet regarded as "canonical,' much less as sacred in the same sense as Jewish scribes regarded the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.' (page 51) "Free text", i.e., a text dealing with the original text in a relatively free manner with no suggestion of a program of standardization." Copyists were free to add or subtract as they deemed appropriate.

"The text of the early period prior to the third/fourth century was, then, in effect, a text not yet channeled into types, because until the beginning of the fourth century the churches still lacked the institutional organization required to produce one." (page 64)

About 130-150 A.D. "The Old Testament was only beginning to retreat from its traditional central position as Holy Scripture (at first the Old Testament held the position in the Church that the New Testament now holds for us)." (page 64)

"Until the third fourth century, then, there were many different forms of the New Testament text" (page 64).

"Until the beginning of the fourth century the text of the New Testament developed freely. It was a "living text" in the Greek literary tradition, unlike the text of the Hebrew Old Testament, which was subject to strict controls because...the consonantal text [each and every letter] was holy." (page 69)

"They [the Greeks] also felt themselves free to make corrections in the text, improving it by their own standards of correctness, whether grammatically. stylistically, or more substantiatively." (page 69)

The New Testament text had variation "in contrast to the Hebrew Old Testament... where an almost letter-perfect transcription was the rule." (page 93)

"The Greeks did not share the view of the orientals [Hebrews] for whom every letter had a sanctity of its own. The Hebrew text of the Old testament... is alike [a xerox copy] in all manuscripts (except for unintentional scribal errors). For the Greeks it was the message contained that was sacred." (page 291) But who decided the meaning? Why not

let the text speak for itself instead of the copyist imposing his view, or theology, on the text? To the Hebrews, not only accurate transcription of the letters was important, but making sure that the letters were in the exact same location [a xerox copy] on the page was important.

The New Testament was doctored to suit the theological positions of those entrusted with the text. They even fabricated Saul's Pharisaical credentials. There was no integrity in the textual transmission of the New Testament. The only concern was to 'prove' their theology.

Proving their theology was undoubtedly the reason why Christians tampered with the text of Josephus. Admittedly, Josephus is not a New Testament writer, but it clearly demonstrates what lengths Christians would go to prove their theology.

William Sanford LaSor, Ph.D., Th.D., of Fuller Theological Seminary, in his foreword to William Whiston's translation of *JOSEPHUS* by Kregel Publications (1960), stated: "Josephus' reference to Jesus Christ is found [see below]. Most modern scholars would deny the authenticity of the passage, claiming either (a) that it was wholly a Christian interpolation or (b) that it was worked over by Christian hands. In my opinion, a reasonable position is taken by the great translator of Josephus, H. St. John Thackeray, who holds that the passages are the work of Josephus, and that a Christian censor or copyist has made slight omissions and alterations *which have distorted the original account, giving it "a wholly different complexion."*" [emphasis mine]

John P. Meier, one of the premier Jesus scholars of America today, in his book *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* Volume I (pages 59-61) demonstrates quite convincingly that Christians doctored the text of Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews* book 18, chapter 3, paragraph 3) with clear theological motives.

#### Antiquities (original)

At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of people who received truth with pleasure. And he gained a following both among many Jews and among many of Greek origin. And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians (named after him) has not died out.

#### Antiquities (tampered)

At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man, *if indeed one should call him a man*. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of people who received truth with pleasure. And he gained a following both among many Jews and among many of Greek origin. *He was the Messiah*. And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so. *For he appeared to them on the third day, living again, just as the divine prophets had spoken of these and countless other wondrous things about him*. And up until this very day the tribe of Christians (named after him) has not died out.

Wilkins and Moreland, in their book *Jesus Under Fire* (page 106), agree with Meier that Christian scholarship now acknowledges that the text of Josephus was deliberately tampered with for clear theological reasons. If they would tamper with a non-Christian document to prove their theology, how much more likely would they be to 'fine-tune'

their own documents to prove their theology. (Many Christian scholars assert that the entire passage was a fabrication, not just the doctored part, which is my opinion.)

Control over the New Testament manuscripts only took place after Constantine became emperor and declared Christianity the state religion. He also banned and persecuted Judaism.

There are some obvious additions to the New Testament narratives. Some were well intentioned and harmless; others were more deliberate fabrications with an antinomian axe to grind.

Paul was reportedly a student of Rabbi Gamaliel, the premier Pharisaical rabbi of his day. As a Pharisee, Paul would have known fundamental scriptural principles and concepts. He definitely would have understood the concept of the covenants; that is what undergirds all of scripture. Therefore, Paul, as a Pharisee, would never have made the statement attributed to him in Galatians.

Galatians 4:24

Which things are an allegory; for **THESE ARE THE TWO COVENANTS**;...

Paul, as an alleged Pharisee, would never have lumped all the covenants of the Old Testament under one umbrella and called them one covenant. There were many major covenants in the Old Testament, not just one: the Noahic Covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, the Moabite or 'New' Covenant, the Davidic Covenant, and many minor covenants. Nor would Paul have reversed the roles of Isaac and Ishmael (making the real Isaac equivalent to the real Ishmael and vis-versa) that had been previously established in scripture and confirmed by Paul himself in Romans 9. Galatians 4:21-31 was the product of an editorializing copyist with a theological axe to grind. Either Paul wasn't a Pharisee, the narrative was fabricated, or both. None of the options are pleasant to consider.

[It is my opinion that the last half of John 17:3 ("and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent"), the last half of I Corinthians 10:4 ("and that rock was Christ"), the last half of Galatians 3:16 ("which is Christ"), and the phrase in Galatians 3:17 ("confirmed in Christ") were all fabricated additions with clear theological doctrines to develop and axes to grind. There is absolutely no support in the Old or New Testaments for those statements. In fact, there are many references that contradict those statements.]

In the final analysis, the true value you place on something is how you protect, preserve, and transmit it. The Jews held their scriptures in extremely high regard: they protected every word and every letter. Indeed, they protected the very placement of those words and letters in relation to each other on the printed page.

The Nazarene messianic sect, known later as Christianity, was initially comprised only of Jews who undoubtedly held the same attitude toward the Jewish scriptures as other Jews. If they truly believed that the early Christian writings were on the same level as the Jewish scriptures, they would have zealously protected, preserved, **and ACCURATELY** transmitted them as they did the Jewish scriptures. But they didn't. That just means that they did **NOT** regard the early writings as scripture.

## WHAT ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT?

Questioning the reliability of the New Testament often raises the question of the reliability of the Old Testament scriptures. When confronted with the errancy of the New Testament, Christians often ask: how do you know the Old Testament scriptures are accurate when you claim the New Testament isn't?

First, and foremost, Christians need to realize that the New Testament assumes the accuracy of the Old Testament. The New Testament requires that the Old Testament be true. However, the opposite is not true. The Old Testament does not depend upon the accuracy of the New Testament. The Old Testament can be true and the New Testament false; but, the New Testament cannot be true and the Old Testament false.

The transmission of the Old Testament text itself also testifies to its integrity. The Jewish scribes were compulsive, obsessively so, in their copying of the text. Every word and every letter had to be in the exact same location on the scroll; the copies were virtual xerox copies. The early Gentile church had no such concern in the transmission of the New Testament texts.

Occasionally the assertion is made that the Jews 'changed' their scriptures to remove the "proofs" Christianity uses to prove that Jesus was the prophesied messiah. There are five responses involved to that charge:

1) No one can prove their religion true simply by proving every one else's religion false. Therefore, the Jews would have absolutely nothing to gain by changing their scripture just to "prove" Christianity wrong. Christians believe that their religion is true; no Christian would ever dream of changing the New Testament just to prove Islam, Hinduism, Mormonism or any other religion wrong. What would the Christian possibly have to gain by doing that? In the same way Jews believe that their religion is true; no Jew would ever dream of changing their scriptures just to prove Christianity wrong. They would have nothing to gain and plenty to lose.

2) The Jews truly believe that the scriptures they have always revered are the inspired word of God. They would never intentionally alter that text; that would contradict the very essence of their faith and belief in God and His revelation.

3) No Christian publishing house has EVER published a text of the Hebrew scriptures with the alleged "original" text that the Jews supposedly altered to the text we have today.

4) Many of the disputed texts that the church uses are from the Greek version of the Hebrew scriptures (the Septuagint). The Church freely admits that since the first century there was a virtual absence of Hebrew scholarship in Christianity. The only two legitimate Hebrew scholars of the early Church were Origen (subsequently viewed with suspicion as a heretic: he didn't believe in the trinity) and Jerome. Jerome lived from about 330-410 AD, many years after the Jews had been driven from the Holy Land by Rome and were primarily in Babylon (Persia). Jerome translated the Bible into Latin from the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Latin was to be the "Holy Tongue" of the Church for over 1,000 years (and in the Roman Catholic Church until Vatican II in 1963). Even Greek wasn't revered by the Church.

5) The original Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures was not done at the request of Jews but was done at the command of a pagan philosopher-king, Ptolemy II in Alexandria, Egypt about 210 BC. The translation was the product of 72 Jewish scholars (seventy in Greek is Septuagint). The important thing to know is that the Jewish scholars **only** translated the five books of Moses, not the entire Old Testament. And they only translated those under duress, at the command of a pagan king. The Jews viewed Hebrew as the Holy Tongue; all formal worship and prayer had to be in the Holy Tongue. Therefore, no orthodox Jew ever used anything other than the original Hebrew version of the scriptures. Only apostate or heretical Jews used non-Hebrew versions of the scriptures in their services or worship.

This paper has demonstrated that much of what can be verified by internal and external sources is not reliable. What should be our level of confidence in the rest of the New Testament that cannot be verified?

Besides the question of inerrancy, reliability, and the questions raised by understanding the political and religious milieu of the day, questions of theology and doctrine need to be evaluated. The most critical examples are the doctrines of sin and atonement, and the doctrine of the trinity.

## **SIN and ATONEMENT**

Christianity teaches that Jesus suffered and died for the sins of the world. Christianity teaches that, according to the Law of Moses, sin could only be atoned for by the shedding of innocent blood. Christianity also teaches that the death of Jesus was in accordance with the Law of Moses as a sacrifice for sins. The doctrine of atonement teaches that the blood of Jesus was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat of the Ark of the Covenant in the heavenly Holy of Holies.

### Hebrews 9:12,24-25

<sup>12</sup> Neither by the blood of goats and calves, **but by his own blood, HE ENTERED IN ONCE INTO THE HOLY PLACE**, having obtained eternal redemption *for us...* <sup>24</sup> For Christ is not entered into the **HOLY PLACES** made with hands [earthly tabernacle], *which are* the figures of the true [heavenly tabernacle]; but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us: <sup>25</sup> Nor yet that he should **OFFER HIMSELF** often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year [on Yom Kippur] **WITH THE BLOOD** of others.

### Leviticus 16:14-16a

<sup>14</sup> And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle *it* with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. <sup>15</sup> Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: <sup>16</sup> And he shall make an atonement for the holy *place*, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins:

The last supper that Jesus shared with his disciples concluded with the breaking of bread and the drinking of wine. Jesus stated that the bread represented his body that was broken for them. He further stated that the wine represented his blood that was shed for the sins of many. The disciples partook of the bread and wine as symbolic consumption

of the body and blood of Jesus (some believe literal, not symbolic; the doctrine of transubstantiation).

The Law of Moses describes in great detail all the sacrifices. Some were for sin, others were for possible guilt, and some were for thanksgiving and praise. Others were for cleansing and purification. Still others were for dedication and redemption.

Prior to the construction of the Tabernacle of God, people were allowed to offer sacrifices wherever they desired. However, according to Leviticus 17, once the Tabernacle of God was built, and the nation had a central place of worship, the people could no longer offer sacrifices wherever they wanted. All sacrifices had to be done at the Tabernacle of God (and eventually, the Temple of God).

Leviticus 17:1-7

<sup>1</sup> And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying <sup>2</sup> Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and speak unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, saying, <sup>3</sup> What man soever *there be* of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it **OUT OF THE CAMP**, <sup>4</sup> And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the Lord before the tabernacle of the Lord; blood shall be imputed unto that man he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people: <sup>5</sup> **TO THE END THAT** the children of Israel **MAY BRING THEIR SACRIFICES**, which they [ to] offer in the open field, even **THAT THEY MAY BRING THEM UNTO THE LORD, UNTO THE DOOR OF THE TABERNACLE OF THE CONGREGATION, UNTO THE PRIEST**, and offer them *for* peace offering unto the Lord... <sup>7</sup> ... This shall be a statute forever unto them throughout their generations.

It was not just that the animal could be slaughtered sacrificially anywhere and the blood brought to the tabernacle. Rather, the entire sacrificial procedure had to be performed at the tabernacle (and later, at the temple).

Most of the sacrifices for sin (sin-offering = Chatas) involved the blood being sprinkled at the base of the altar in the outer court, not in the tabernacle of the congregation. However, some of the sin-offerings did involve the blood of the animal being taken inside the tabernacle of the congregation and sprinkled before the Lord. But, as mentioned, all the other sacrifices were accomplished outside the tabernacle of the congregation, in the outer court. The blood of those animals was spilled and the blood applied appropriately at the altar in the outer court.

The meat of the sacrificial animals was often shared between the person bringing the sacrifice and the priest(s) performing the sacrifice. The sacrifice was not complete, and the benefit of the sacrifice accomplished, until a meat portion of the sacrificial animal was eaten.

However, there were exceptions to that general rule. The meat of certain sin offerings were the exceptions to that general rule, but only **IF THE BLOOD HAD BEEN SPRINKLED BEFORE THE LORD**. No one ate the meat of those sacrificial animals; not the high priest, not a regular priest, not a levite, not an Israelite, not a proselyte, not a Gentile, and not the person bringing the sacrifice; **NO ONE**.

Leviticus 6:30

And no sin offering (chatas), **WHEREOF ANY OF THE BLOOD IS BROUGHT INTO THE TABERNACLE** of the congregation to reconcile *withal* in the holy *place*, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire.

Why does the New Testament teach us to eat the body and drink the blood of Jesus (symbolically or literally), who they claim was a sacrifice for sins and **WHOSE BLOOD WAS BROUGHT INTO THE HOLY PLACE**? It was against the Law of Moses for anyone to eat the meat of a sin offering whose blood was brought into the holy place.

Matthew 26:26-28

<sup>26</sup> And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. <sup>27</sup> And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; <sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Mark 14:22-24

<sup>22</sup> And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. <sup>23</sup> And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them: and they all drank of it. <sup>24</sup> And he said to them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

Luke 22:19-20

<sup>19</sup> And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. <sup>20</sup> Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

I Corinthians 11:23-25

<sup>23</sup> For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: <sup>24</sup> And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. <sup>25</sup> After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

John 6:53-56

<sup>53</sup> Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. <sup>56</sup> He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

Even if someone were allowed to eat the flesh of a sacrificial animal, you were never allowed to consume the blood of any animal. Why does the New Testament instruct us to consume his blood?

Leviticus 3:17

*It shall be* a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.

Leviticus 7:26-27

<sup>26</sup> Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, *whether it be* of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. <sup>27</sup> Whatsoever soul *it be* that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.

Leviticus 17:10

And whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

Leviticus 19:26

Ye shall not eat *any thing* with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times.

Deuteronomy 12:16,23

<sup>16</sup> Only ye shall not eat the blood; ye shall pour it out upon the earth as water... <sup>23</sup> Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood *is* the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.

Additionally, Jesus was not sacrificed at the temple as required by the Law of Moses. According to Leviticus 17 (cited earlier), **ALL** sacrifices had to be performed at the tabernacle (or temple). But Jesus suffered outside the camp.

Hebrews 13:12

Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without [outside] the gate.

Therefore, the ‘sacrifice’ of Jesus was contrary to Mosaic Law.

There was one sacrifice that was not performed at the tabernacle or the temple. It was the red heifer of Numbers 19. However, it was not a sin-offering (chatas). And, more importantly, it was not used to make atonement for the individual or the nation. Rather, it was used to make ‘holy water’ for the purification after someone had become ritually defiled by exposure to a dead body. Additionally, the red heifer was totally cremated as a burnt offering, something that did not happen to Jesus.

The doctrine of sin and atonement as taught by Christianity bears no resemblance to that same doctrine as taught in the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses prescribed three ways, not just one, for an individual to atone for sins: repentance, charity, and sacrifice. Blood sacrifice was not the only means of atonement.

Christianity claims that the Law of Moses taught that sin could only be atoned for by blood sacrifice. Therefore, according to Christianity, Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice for sins. However, the **PREMISE WAS FALSE**. The Law of Moses never taught that sin could **ONLY** be atoned for by the shedding of blood. Therefore, since the premise was false, the conclusion is also false.

How does the Law of Moses teach that sins are atoned for?

**PRAYERS INSTEAD OF CALVES for ATONEMENT?**

Hosea 14:1-2

<sup>1</sup> O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. <sup>2</sup> **TAKE WITH YOU WORDS** and turn to the Lord [repent], say unto him, Take away all iniquity [atone for our sin], and receive us graciously: **so will we RENDER THE CALVES OF OUR LIPS**. [NIV renders: and we may offer the fruit of our lips].

Hosea 14:1-2 (correct Hebrew)

<sup>1</sup> O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. <sup>2</sup> **TAKE WITH YOU WORDS** and turn to the Lord [repent] say unto him, Forgive all iniquity [atone for our sin], and receive us graciously: **so we will OFFER THE WORDS OF OUR LIPS INSTEAD OF [OFFERINGS] CALVES**.

Numbers 16:46

And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and **PUT ON INCENSE** [prayers], and go quickly unto the congregation, and **make an ATONEMENT** for them: for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun.

II Chronicles 6:36-39 (see also I Kings 8:46-51)

<sup>36</sup> If they sin against thee, (for *there is* no man which sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver over before *their* enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near; <sup>37</sup> Yet, *if* they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captive, **AND TURN AND PRAY UNTO THEE** in the land of their captivity **SAYING, WE HAVE SINNED**, we have done amiss, and we have dealt wickedly; <sup>38</sup> **IF THEY RETURN TO THEE WITH ALL THEIR HEART AND WITH ALL THEIR SOUL** in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and *toward* the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name: <sup>39</sup> **THEN HEAR THOU FROM THE HEAVENS**, *even* from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, **AND FORGIVE TRY PEOPLE WHICH HAVE SINNED AGAINST THEE**.

11 Chronicles 7:14

If my people, which are called by my name, **SHALL HUMBLE THEMSELVES, AND PRAY, AND SEEK MY FACE, AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS** [repent] then will I hear from heaven, and will **FORGIVE THEIR SIN**, and will heal their land.

Psalms 51:16-17

<sup>16</sup> For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give *it*: thou delightest not in burnt offering.

<sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God *are* a broken and contrite spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

For other verses describing repentance as efficacious for atonement: Deuteronomy 4:26-31, Deuteronomy 30:1-6, I Samuel 15:22, II Samuel 12:13, Micah 6:6-8, Ezekiel 18:1-23, Ezekiel 33:10-11.

## ATONEMENT THROUGH CHARITY?

Numbers 31:50-52

<sup>50</sup> We have therefore brought an oblation for the Lord: what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, earrings, and tablets, **TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR OUR SOULS** before the Lord. <sup>51</sup> And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, even all wrought jewels. <sup>52</sup> And all of the gold **OF THE OFFERING THAT THEY OFFERED UP TO THE LORD...**

Exodus 30:11-16

<sup>11</sup> And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, <sup>12</sup> When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number [census] **THEN SHALL THEY GIVE EVERY MAN A RANSOM FOR HIS SOUL UNTO THE LORD...** <sup>15</sup> ...an offering unto the Lord, **TO MAKE AN ATONEMENT FOR YOUR SOULS**. <sup>16</sup> ...take the atonement money...**TO MAKE AN ATONEMENT FOR YOUR SOULS**.

Daniel 4:27

Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and **BREAK OFF** [atone for] **thy iniquities BY SHOWING MERCY TO THE POOR** [charity] if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquility.

Proverbs 10:2

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness [correct Hebrew: **charity**] **delivereth from death**. (Note: although charity and righteousness come from the same Hebrew root word, they are not the same word).

Proverbs 16:6

**BY MERCY** [lovingkindness] and truth **INIQUITY IS PURGED** [atone for]: and by fear of the Lord *men* depart from evil.

Other verses that describe charity as efficacious. for atonement: Proverbs 11:4, Proverbs 21:3, Hosea 6:6.

The three methods of atonement are not equally desirable: the most desirable is repentance; the second most desirable is charity; and the least desirable was animal sacrifice. Indeed, animal sin sacrifice was **ONLY** for sins committed by unintentionally violating a negative commandment.

Leviticus 4:1-2

<sup>1</sup> And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall **SIN THROUGH IGNORANCE** against any of **THE COMMANDMENTS** of the Lord *concerning things WHICH OUGHT NOT TO BE DONE* ('thou shalt **not**'), and shall do against any of them:

An individual's intentional sins could not be atoned for by a sin offering. An individual's intentional sin could only be atoned for by repentance and charity (in one, isolated instance a trespass offering was also required). Yom Kippur was a sacrifice for the sins of the nation; it did not substitute for the individual.

Jesus died the day before Passover (John) or on Passover (Matthew, Mark, Luke). Paul said that Jesus was our Passover lamb. Christianity refers to Jesus as the Paschal lamb. Indeed, the Last supper was a Passover Seder.

I Corinthians 5:7

Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:

But, the passover lamb was not a sin offering. It had nothing to do with sin and atonement. A better picture would have been to have Jesus die on Yom Kippur, which was a sacrifice for sin.

Understanding Christianity's desire for Jesus to be the Passover lamb also explains the discrepancy in the gospels as to which day Jesus died on. John's gospel has Jesus die the day before Passover, at the time the Passover lamb is actually slaughtered. The lamb had to be slaughtered before Passover in order to be eaten on Passover (which started at sundown). The other gospel writers had Jesus die on Passover itself apparently assuming that since Jesus was the 'passover lamb' that he must have died on Passover. The narratives seem to have been written to support their theology, not to accurately record the actual events.

[It is also easy to understand the confusion of Passover verses Yom Kippur. Christianity attempts to compare Jesus with Isaac as the seed of Abraham. Ancient Jewish sources are unclear as to whether Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac was on the day that would eventually become Passover or on the day that would eventually become Yom

Kippur. Most sources agree that Isaac was sacrificed on Yom Kippur and that is why Israel, as a nation, gains atonement on that day. But, Isaac was an Elevation (Olah) Offering, not a sin (Chatas) offering.]

Christian doctrine teaches that Jesus was a sin sacrifice, for all the sins (intentional and unintentional) of all time. It also teaches that only the death of Jesus atones for sin. That is based on the faulty premise that the Law of Moses taught that sin could only be atoned for by the shedding of innocent blood. That concept is contrary to the Law of Moses and the prophets that Jesus was supposedly fulfilling.

Besides being contrary to the Law of Moses, the Christian doctrine of sin and atonement has one other scriptural problem to overcome: it contradicts the prophecy of the messianic age.

#### Hosea 3:4-5

For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince [Sanhedrin] and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod [high priest], and *without* teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.

Hosea said that **IN THE LATTER DAYS**, the days leading up to the messianic age, Israel would be **WITHOUT** the sacrificial system. Israel would be without a king, without a high priest, and without the temple service.

When Jesus came, the high priest and the priesthood was still functioning, as was the temple service. Even after his death (and alleged resurrection and ascension) sacrifices were being offered at the temple in accordance with the Law of Moses.

#### Hebrews 8:3-4

<sup>3</sup> For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that this man [Jesus] have somewhat also to offer. <sup>4</sup> For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that **THERE ARE PRIESTS THAT OFFER GIFTS ACCORDING TO THE LAW:**

Christianity claims that Jesus is king, and high priest, as well as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. Hosea said that prior to the messianic age **NONE** of those things will be functioning.

Hosea prophesied that Israel would be without the temple and sacrificial system. Hosea also spelled out in clear, unequivocal terms that prayer could replace the sacrificial service. Hosea said that during their exile from the land and from the temple, Jews could offer prayers instead of offering bulls as a sacrifice.

#### Hosea 14:1-2

<sup>1</sup> O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. <sup>2</sup> **TAKE WITH YOU WORDS** and turn to the Lord [repent] say unto him, Forgive all iniquity [atone for our sin], and receive us graciously: **so we will OFFER THE WORDS OF OUR LIPS INSTEAD OF [OFFERING] CALVES.**

What Hosea did not say is as important as what he did say. Hosea did not say that the sacrifices were mere shadows of things to come, as Christianity supposes.

Hebrews 10:1

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the corners thereunto perfect.

Hosea did not say, “don’t worry about the temple or the sacrifices; the messiah is coming to die for your sins.”

Christianity can have their own doctrine of sin and atonement, but they can’t claim that it fulfills the Law of Moses or the prophecy of the messianic age.

## THE TRINITY

The doctrine of the trinity is a critical doctrine of Christianity. The doctrine of the trinity is not explicitly stated anywhere in the scriptures, New or Old. However, Christianity states that it is alluded to in many passages of scripture.

The doctrine of the trinity essentially states that there is one God, but that one God is comprised of three (trinity) distinct persons. Those persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are all equal in substance but separate within the Godhead. This means that the three personages are all unique, separate, distinct persons; they are not three aspects of one person. Needless to say, it is a difficult (if not impossible) concept to understand with the human mind and must be accepted by faith.

The doctrine basically says that Jesus was not just a good teacher or a good representative of God. Rather, Jesus was God himself. But does the Old or New Testament support that doctrine?

Jesus stated that “I and the Father are one.” Christianity claims that proves the deity of Jesus.

John 10:30

I and *my* Father **ARE ONE**.

However, the exact same Greek word translated ‘one’ is used in other places in John’s gospel.

John 17:11

And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that **THEY MAY BE ONE AS WE ARE**.

John 17:20-22

<sup>20</sup> Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; <sup>21</sup> That **THEY ALL MAY BE ONE AS THOU, FATHER, ART IN ME, AND I IN THEE**, that **THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE** in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. <sup>23</sup> And the glory which thou gavest me I have given unto them; that **THEY MAY BE ONE EVEN AS WE ARE ONE**:

Jesus prayed that his followers would be one as he and the Father are one. Clearly he is referring to being one in purpose, not one in substance. Otherwise they would all be part of the ‘trinity’, only it would be much larger than a trinity.

Therefore, the phrase 'I and my Father are one' cannot be used to prove the deity of Jesus or the doctrine of the trinity.

Jesus said that he should be treated equally as the Father. Christianity thereby implies their equality.

John 14:1

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

That would certainly seem to imply equality between Jesus and God. But read what God said about Moses.

Exodus 14:31

And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and **BELIEVED THE LORD, AND HIS SERVANT MOSES.**

Exodus 19:9a

And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, **AND BELIEVE IN TREE FOR EVER.** [correct Hebrew: B'kha: in you]

Moses made no pretense to be God and yet the people were to believe in him **FOR EVER**, not just until the messiah came or until Jesus came. The Old Testament never commanded, exhorted, or otherwise instructed anyone to believe in the Messiah when he comes. Yet the scripture did say that they were to believe in Moses forever.

Christianity teaches that since we are to accord Jesus the same respect as the Father, that therefore they must be equal.

John 15:23

He that hateth me hateth my Father also.

John 5:22-23

<sup>22</sup> For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the son: <sup>23</sup> That all *men* should honor the Son even as they honor the Father He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.

Jesus seems to be equating the messenger with the one who sent the message; that the ambassador and the king are equal. What did God say when the people rejected Samuel as their leader?

I Samuel 8:7

And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: **FOR THEY HAVE NOT REJECTED THEE, BUT THEY HAVE REJECTED ME** that I should not reign over them.

The messenger, or prophet, was always viewed as God's representative or ambassador. Therefore, rejecting God's servant was always tantamount to rejecting God. However, that did not mean the messenger was God.

What does the Old Testament say about the oneness, the aloneness, the uniqueness, the unity of God? **STOP AND THINK** what would God have to say in the Old Testament to prove that he was the only one: that there was no other and that there was no trinity?

Conversely, what would God have said if he wanted to make clear that there was another; that the trinity was true?

Exodus 20:2-3

<sup>2</sup> I *am* the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. <sup>3</sup> Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Deuteronomy 4:35

Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he *is* God; *there is* none else beside him.

Deuteronomy 6:4

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God *is* one Lord.

Deuteronomy 32:39a

See now that I, *even* I, *am* he, and *there is* no god with me:

I Kings 8:60

That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord *is* God, *and that there is* none else.

II Kings 19:19

Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, *even* thou only.

Isaiah 42:8

I am the Lord: that *is* my name: and **MY GLORY WILL I NOT GIVE TO ANOTHER**, neither my praise to graven images.

Isaiah 4

For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: for how should *my name* be polluted? and **I WILL NOT GIVE MY GLORY UNTO ANOTHER**.

### **PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE IN JOHN:**

John 15:5,22a

<sup>5</sup> And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was... <sup>22</sup> **AND THE GLORY WHICH THOU GAVEST ME I HAVE GIVEN TO THEM;**

Jesus could not possibly be God because he gave his glory to others, something God said He would never do. Jesus also claimed that God had given His glory to him.

Isaiah 43:10-11

<sup>10</sup> Ye *are* my witnesses saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. <sup>11</sup> I, *even* I, *am* the Lord; and beside me *there is* no savior.

Isaiah 44:6

Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer, the Lord of Hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.

Isaiah 45:5-6

<sup>5</sup> I *am* the Lord, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: <sup>6</sup> That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside me. I *am* the Lord, and *there is* none else.

Isaiah 45:21-22

<sup>21</sup> Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *Who* hath told it from that time? *Have* not I the Lord? And there is no God else beside me; a just God and a savior; *there is* none beside me. <sup>22</sup> Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and *there is* none else.

Isaiah 46:9

Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me.

Hosea 13:4

Yet I *am* the Lord thy God from the Land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for *there is* no savior beside me.

Joel 2:27

And ye shall know that I *am* in the midst of Israel, and *that I am* the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

Those were only a few of the verses, there are many more.

The Old Testament clearly states that there is only one God, and his name is One. He alone is the savior, none else. He will not share or give His glory to another. How much clearer could God have said it?

God was not reluctant to declare his deity in the Old Testament in clear, unequivocal terms. What does the New Testament say about Jesus and the trinity? Does Jesus ever declare his deity, his equality with God, in clear and unequivocal terms?

## WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT SAY?

Matthew 12:31-32

<sup>31</sup> Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. <sup>32</sup> And whosoever speaketh a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.

Luke 12:10

And whosoever shall speak a word against the son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

How can sin against one part of the trinity (the son) be forgivable but sin against another part of the trinity (the Holy Ghost) be unforgivable? Is it okay to blaspheme one part of the trinity (the son) but not the other (the Holy Ghost)?

Mark 13:32

But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the son, but the Father.

Matthew 24:36

But of that day and hour knoweth no, *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father **ONLY**.

What about the Holy Spirit? If he is part of the trinity, how could he not know? He was not a man or an angel. It is because the Spirit of God is the active force of God; not a separate being.

The rich young ruler is also an interesting encounter.

Mark 10:17-20

<sup>17</sup> And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, **GOOD MASTER**, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? <sup>18</sup> And Jesus said unto him, why callest thou me good? **THERE IS NONE GOOD BUT ONE, THAT IS, GOD.** <sup>19</sup> Thou knowest the commandments... <sup>20</sup> And he answered and said unto him, **MASTER**, all these have I observed from my youth.

The rich young ruler called Jesus **GOOD**. Jesus corrected him and said that **ONLY GOD IS GOOD**. The rich young ruler learned his lesson: the next time he addressed Jesus he **DID NOT SAY GOOD**. Jesus states quite clearly that he was not God. (Note: according to Christian logic, Jesus should have rebuked the man for lying about keeping the law. Afterall, according to Christianity, no one can keep it. But Jesus didn't. Jesus did not challenge the man's integrity as to whether or not he kept the law. Rather, Jesus added a new commandment not in the law of Moses: give all your goods to the poor.)

John 14:28

Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for **MY FATHER IS GREATER THAN I**

How can one God be greater than another God if they are all coequal in the trinity?

John 17:3

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee **THE ONLY TRUE GOD**, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

Jesus clearly states that the Father is the **ONLY TRUE GOD**. The text also seems to imply that one's eternal destiny is dependent not only upon knowing the one true God, but also knowing the messiah. That is clearly a false teaching. In the Jewish scriptures, the messiah has nothing to do with anyone's individual relationship to God (soteriology). [Note: the last phrase, "and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" is clearly an addition that was the work of an overzealous copyist; Jesus would not have referred to himself by his name and title in the third person. He didn't do it anywhere else in that prayer or the New Testament.]

John 20:17

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend **UNTO MY FATHER, AND YOUR FATHER; and to MY GOD, AND YOUR GOD.**

The God of Jesus was the same as the God of the disciples: Jesus was not their God. The Father of Jesus was the same as the Father of his brethren.

I Corinthians 8:4b-6

<sup>4</sup>...we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one. <sup>5</sup> For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many,) <sup>6</sup> But to us *there is but* **ONE GOD, THE FATHER**, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

Paul clearly distinguishes God, the Father from the lord Jesus Christ. He does not equate them. Paul also stresses the distinction between God, the Father, and all others, in his letter to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 4:4-6

<sup>4</sup> There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; <sup>5</sup> One lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> **ONE GOD AND FATHER** of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Notice what Paul also says about Jesus in Colossians:

Colossians 1:15

Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

God was not born. Being first-born doesn't make you a God. Also, being an image is not the same as being the real thing.

Hebrews also states that Jesus was not eternally existent:

Hebrews 1:5

For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, **THIS DAY** have I begotten thee?

Jesus could not have been eternally existent, and equal with God, if there was a day when he came into existence.

I Timothy 2:5

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, **the man** Christ Jesus;

Sometimes what a writer doesn't say is as important as what he does say. Paul did not say 'the God-man' or 'the God'; he said the **man** Christ Jesus.

Colossians 2:9

For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Paul did not say that 'he **IS** the Godhead in bodily form'. Rather, Paul said that **IN HIM DWELLETH** all the fullness of the Godhead. A **BIG** difference. The contents are not the same as the container.

Hebrews 2:18

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

Hebrews 4:15

For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

James 1:13

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

James said that God cannot be tempted, yet Hebrews clearly states that Jesus was tempted in all points as we are.

Hebrews 5:1,4-5,8

<sup>1</sup> For every high priest taken **from among men** is ordained for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:... <sup>4</sup> And no **man** taketh this honor unto himself but he that is called of God, as *was* Aaron. <sup>5</sup> So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a him priest; but he that said unto him. Thou art my son, today have I begotten thee.... <sup>8</sup> Though he were a son, yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered;

Hebrews clearly states that Jesus had to be a man to perform priestly duties on behalf of man. He could not be an angel or even a God. Also, why did God have to learn obedience?

Hebrews 8:3-4

<sup>3</sup> For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore *it is* of necessity that THIS MAN have somewhat also to offer. <sup>4</sup> For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law.

Hebrews again clearly states that Jesus was a man. If Jesus were God, why could he not offer sacrifices if he were on earth? Is there a difference between heaven and earth? Can God only function as a priest in heaven but not on earth?

Peter declared that Jesus was A MAN approved of God:

Acts 2:22

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, **A MAN** approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

Acts 3:13a

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers hath glorified **His son** [correct Greek: **servant**] Jesus;

The Jews may have disagreed on a lot of things, but there was one thing they all agreed upon: who God was. God was not a man and a man was not God. God is not created and nothing in creation can represent him. That is why God commanded them not to make ANY image of him; it would always be woefully inadequate and would lead the people into idolatry.

Numbers 23:19

**GOD IS NOT A MAN**, that He should lie; **NEITHER THE SON OF MAN**, that He should repent: hath He said and shall He not do *it*? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?

I Samuel 15:29

And also the Strength of Israel [the Lord God] will not lie nor repent: **FOR HE IS NOT A MAN**, that He should repent.

The New Testament actually records Jesus confirming this Jewish perspective of God.

John 4:24

**GOD IS A SPIRIT**: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Hebrews clearly states that Jesus was a man. It also says that he sat down at the right hand of God. Isaiah said God would never share His glory with another. Even if one were to sit down at the right hand of God, that person would not share God's glory.

Hebrews 10:12-13

<sup>12</sup> But **THIS MAN**, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God [beside him]: <sup>13</sup> From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

Isaiah 45:21-22

<sup>21</sup> Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *Who* hath told it from that time? *Have* not I the Lord? And *there is NO GOD ELSE BESIDE ME*; a just God and a savior; *there is NONE BESIDE ME*. <sup>22</sup> Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.

Paul and Peter introduce virtually all their letters with a similar greeting:

Romans 1:7b

Grace to you and peace from **GOD OUR FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**.

(see also 1 Corinthians 1:3; II Corinthians 1:2-3; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2-3; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2-3; I Thessalonians 1:1; II Thessalonians 1:2; Titus 1:3; Philemon 1:3; and I Peter 1:3)

Paul, and Peter, distinguish between God the Father, the only true God, and the lord Jesus Christ whom he (supposedly) sent. Peter and Paul did not equate the lord Jesus with the Father.

God was not the least bit reluctant to declare his deity in the Old Testament in clear, unequivocal terms. Why does Jesus never state his deity in clear, unequivocal terms? God is not in the business of disguising his will and purposes; the Law of Moses testifies to that fact.

Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret *things* belong unto the Lord our God: but those things *which are* revealed *belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

Deuteronomy 30:11-14

<sup>11</sup> For **this commandment** which I command thee this day, it *IS NOT HIDDEN FROM THEE*, neither is it far off. <sup>12</sup> It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, **AND DO IT?** <sup>13</sup> Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, **AND DO IT?** <sup>14</sup> But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, **THAT THOU MAYEST DO IT**.

Isaiah 48:16

Come ye near unto me, **hear ye this: I HAVE NOT SPOKEN IN SECRET** from the beginning; from the time that it was, there *am* I: and now the Lord God., and His spirit hath sent me [Isaiah].

God said that His will was not hidden or too difficult to do. That, of course, is contrary to what Peter reportedly said and what Christianity teaches.

Acts 15:10

Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke. [the Law of Moses] upon the neck of the [Gentile] disciples, **which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear**.

Peter's statement is a blatant contradiction of what God's opinion was of man's ability to keep the Law of Moses.

Paul paraphrased Deuteronomy 30:11-14. But he only paraphrased those parts he liked; he left out the last half of Deuteronomy 30:14 when he quoted it in Romans 10:8. He left off the key part: **THAT THOU MAYEST DO IT.**

Romans 10:6-8

<sup>6</sup> But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*;) <sup>7</sup> Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ **AGAIN** [?!] from the dead.) <sup>8</sup> But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart [**THAT THOU MAYEST DO IT**]: that is the word of faith, which we preach;

Paul not only misquoted Deuteronomy, he left off the Most important part of the verse!! Deuteronomy was not even talking about the Messiah (Christ); it was talking about the Torah of God and the keeping of the commandments.

To further analyze the doctrine of the trinity, an understanding of the names by which God is referred to in the scriptures is important. God is referred to by several names in the Old Testament: Adonai, Elohim, El-Shaddai, and Y-H-V-H.

The meaning of the words are important. El literally means power (or authority). Elohim is a plural form of El and means powers. The term Elohim in the Old Testament is used to refer to the one true God. However, it is also used to refer to false gods, human judges, human courts of justice, and angels. The term Elohim is not a unique name for the one true God. But since God is the one true source of all power, he can rightfully be referred to as Elohim. Other things may have power, or seem to have power, and therefore are also referred to as El or Elohim. The following are some examples of how Elohim is used in the Old Testament.

Exodus 7:1

And the Lord said unto Moses, See I have made thee a god [Elohim] to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

Exodus 20:3

Thou shalt have no other gods [Elohim] before me.

Exodus 21:6

Then his master shall bring him unto the judges [Elohim] he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

Exodus 22:8-9

If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges [Elohim] to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbor goods. For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges [Elohim] and whom the judges [Elohim] shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbor.

Psalms 85

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels [Elohim] and hast crowned him with glory and honor.

Elohim, although a plural word, is also used to refer to singular false gods.

Judges 11:24

Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy God [elohim] giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess.

I Samuel 5:7

And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, the ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god [elohim].

Adonai is translated Lord. It is derived from the word Adon which refers to a slave owner or master. Since God is the owner and master of all that is, he can rightfully be referred to by a derivative of Adon: as Adonai. However, other entities may also, in limited ways, be owners or masters and therefore are also referred to by derivatives of Adon.

The classic example is Psalm 110:1. The New Testament quotes this passage and assumes that the second lord' refers to the messiah. It then uses it to prove that Jesus, £ the messiah, is David's 'lord' and therefore must be God. But the Jewish people have always understood this psalm as referring to Abraham: David's 'lord'. It refers to Abraham's battle with the kings and his subsequent encounter with Meichizedek.

Psalm 110:1

The Lord [Y-H-V-H] said unto my lord [Adonai] Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

The word Adoni means: my lord. It refers to an earthly master or owner [in this case: Abraham]; it does not refer to the one true God. To refer to the one true God, the word would have been Adonai. There is a difference in Hebrew, and the difference is critical.

Y-H-V-H is not translatable and is the unique name of God in the Old Testament. Y-H-V-H is a contraction of the Hebrew letters for: he was, he is, he will be; but his true name is much more than just that. Y-H-V-H is ONLY used to describe the one true God of Israel: the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the eternal, uncaused cause of all things.

The KJV of the Bible is very consistent in translating the various words. The KJV translates Elohim as God; it translates Y-H-V-H as Lord; and it translates Adonai as Lord. El is the singular form of Elohim and is also translated God. El-Shaddai means God Almighty.

However, because the KJV translates Y-H-V-H as Lord, it is difficult in the KJV translation to distinguish it from the other general term for God that is translated Lord: Adonai. In Hebrew it is obvious which word is being used; not so in the KJV.

The New Testament has a major problem when referring to the God revealed in the Old Testament. Hebrew uses three different words to describe God; Greek only uses two. Greek has only one word for God: Theos, and only one word for Lord: Kyrios. But the Old Testament Hebrew had two words for God: Y-H-V-H and Elohim, and one word for Lord: Adonai.

When the New Testament refers to God, how can the reader know if it is referencing God as the Y-H-V-H, or God as the Elohim, or God as the Adonai? The only way to know for sure is to analyze those New Testament verses that quote the Old Testament and see how the individual names for God were translated into Greek.

Matthew 1:23 (quoting Isaiah 7:14)

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel [Elohim] which being translated is God with us.

Matthew 3:3 (quoting Isaiah 40:3)

For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD [Y-H-V-H] make his paths straight.

Matthew 4:4 (quoting Deuteronomy 8:3)

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of **GOD** [Elohim].

Matthew 4:7 (quoting Deuteronomy 6:16)

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] thy **GOD** [Elohim].

Matthew 4:10 (quoting Deuteronomy 6:13-14)

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] thy **GOD** [Elohim], and Him only shalt thou serve.

Matthew 21:9 (quoting Psalm 118:26)

And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] Hosanna in the highest.

Matthew 21:42 (quoting Psalm 118:22-23)

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the **LORD'S** [Y-H-V-H] doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Matthew 22:32 (quoting Exodus 3:6)

I am the **GOD** [Elohim] of Abraham, and the **GOD** [Elohim] of Isaac, and the **GOD** [Elohim] of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

Matthew 22:37 (quoting Deuteronomy 6:5)

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] thy **GOD** [Elohim] with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Matthew 22:44 (quoting Psalm 110:1)

The **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] said unto my **LORD** [Adonai] sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Matthew 27:46 (quoting Psalm 22:1)

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **ELi, ELi** [Elohim] lama sabacthani? that is to say, my **GOD**, my **GOD**, why hast thou forsaken me?

Mark 1:3 (quoting Isaiah 40:3)

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] make his paths straight.

Mark 11:9 (quoting Psalm 118:26)

And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H].

Mark 12:10-11 (quoting Psalm 118:23)

<sup>10</sup> And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: <sup>11</sup> this is the **LORD'S** [Y-H-V-H] doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?

Mark 12:29-30 (quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

<sup>29</sup> And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] our **GOD** [Elohim] is one **LORD** [Y-H-V-H], <sup>30</sup> and thou shalt love the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] thy **GOD** [Elohim] with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

Mark 12:36 (quoting Psalm 110:1)

For David himself said by the Holy Ghost. The **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] said to my **LORD** [Adonai], sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Luke 3:4 (quoting Isaiah 40:3)

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] make his paths straight.

Luke 4:8 (quoting Deuteronomy 6:13)

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] thy **GOD** [Elohim] and him only shalt thou serve.

Luke 4:12 (quoting Deuteronomy 6:16)

And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] thy **GOD** [Elohim].

Luke 4:18-19 (quoting Isaiah 60:1)

The spirit of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] is upon me, because he bath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he bath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H].

Luke 10:27 (quoting Deuteronomy 6:4)

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] thy **GOD** [Elohim] with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

Luke 19:38 (quoting Psalm 118:26)

Saying, Blessed be the king, that cometh in the name of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

Luke 20:42 (quoting Psalm 110:1)

And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] said unto my **LORD** [Adonai] sit thou on my right hand,

John 1:23 (quoting Isaiah 40:3)

He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] as said the prophet Isaiah.

John 10:34 (quoting Psalm 82:6)

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are **GODS?** [Elohim]

John 12:13 (quoting Psalm 118:26)

Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H]

Acts 2:20-21 (quoting Joel 3: 15-16; Malachi 4:5; Joel 2:32)

the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] shall be saved,

Acts 2:25 (quoting Psalm 16:8)

For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I shall not be moved:

Acts 2:34 (quoting Psalm 110:1)

For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] said unto my **LORD** [Adonai], sit thou on my right hand,

Acts 3:22 (quoting Deuteronomy 18:15)

For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] your GOD [Elohim] raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

Acts 4:26 (quoting Psalm 2:2)

The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H], and against his Christ.

Acts 7:49 (quoting Isaiah 66:1)

Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] or what is the place of my rest?

Romans 4:8 (quoting Psalm 32:2)

Blessed is the man to whom the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] will not impute sin.

Romans 10:13 (quoting Joel 2:3 2)

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] shall be saved.

Romans 15:11 (quoting Psalm 117:1)

And again, Praise the **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

I Corinthians 2:9 (quoting Isaiah 64:4)

But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which **GOD** [Elohim] hath prepared for them that love him.

I Corinthians 3:20 (quoting Psalm 94:11)

And again, The **LORD** [Y-H-V-H] knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.

II Corinthians 6:16 (quoting Exodus 29:45)

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them: and I will be their **GOD** [Elohim] and they shall be my people.

Analysis of the New Testament quotations from Old Testament is quite revealing. The Greek word theos is only used to translate the Hebrew word Elohim; it is not used for Adonai or Y-H-V-H. Likewise, The Greek word Kyrios is used to translate both Y-H-V-H and Adonai, but never Elohim. This is exactly the same way that the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, translated those same Hebrew words into Greek.

Based upon how consistently the New Testament writers, and the Septuagint, translated Elohim (theos), Y-H-V-H (Kyrios), and Adonai (Kyrios) it is not unreasonable to assume that elsewhere in the New Testament whenever the word Theos is used that it is referring to God as Elohim, not Y-H-V-H. Likewise, elsewhere in the New Testament whenever the term Kyrios is used that it is referring to either Adonai (Lord or lord) or Y-H-V-H (Lord), but not Elohim.

The difficult part is determining when the New Testament is using Kyrios to describe Y-H V-H or Adonai. The potential exists to confuse the eternal, incomprehensible Lord and Master of the universe with a created lord and master.

Knowing that the Greek word Kyrios (Lord) was only used to translate the Hebrew word Y H-V-H and adon, Peter makes a very interesting statement:

Acts 2:36

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that **GOD HATH MADE** that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both **LORD** and Christ.

Peter said that Jesus **WAS MADE** both **LORD** and Christ. However, Y-H-V-H is the uncreated, eternal one. How could Jesus be made into an uncreated eternal one? He couldn't, Therefore, it must be referring to Jesus as an adon (lord), not as Y-H-V-H.

Y-H-V-H is only in the singular and is only used to describe the one true God. El and Elohim are terms used to describe the one true God, pagan gods, judges, and angels. Therefore, the term Elohim is subordinate (inferior) to the term Y-H-V-H as a name for the true God. Nevertheless, Christianity seems to place a higher emphasis on the word God (Theos), derived from the word Elohim, in the New Testament than the word Lord (Kyrios) derived from Y-H-V-H. The word theology itself indicates that preference.

Peter said that it was **GOD** [Elohim not Y-H-V-H] that **HATH MADE** Jesus both lord and christ.

The names of God indicate various attributes of God. Elohim, which means power (and/or authority), refers to God as the creator. It is also used to describe God as judge, which is why the same word is used to describe human courts and human judges.

As mentioned previously, the word El and Elohim are both used to refer to God. Since the root of the word is power, in no way does it connote multiple persons in one being. Rather, they are descriptive terms. That is why those same words are used to describe pagan gods.

Likewise, the word Adon is used both for earthly masters and for our heavenly, Eternal Master. It also is used to describe pagan gods and carnal men.

Paul states the same thing in his letter to the Corinthians:

I Corinthians 8:4b-6

<sup>4</sup>...we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. <sup>5</sup> For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many,) <sup>6</sup> **BUT TO US** *there is but* **ONE GOD**, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him **AND ONE LORD** Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Whenever the word Lord appears in the New Testament in reference to Jesus, Christianity seems to automatically presume that it is referring to deity, which is why they capitalize the word. But that assumption may be more theological than textual. As shown previously, the Greek word Kyrios is used to translate **both** Y-H-V-H and adon.

Therefore, the word Kyrios (Lord) in the New Testament cannot be used to conclusively prove the deity of Jesus or the doctrine of the trinity.

As mentioned previously, many people in the Old Testament incorporated one of the names of God into their names. Some examples include: **Daniel**, **Ezekiel**, **Joel**, **Samuel**, **Elijah**, **Elisha**, **Eli**, **Eliezer**, **Ishmael**, **Jeremiah**, **Zechariah**, **Obadiah**, **Zephaniah**, **Isaiah**, **Jeconiah**, and **Hezekiah**.

Having the name of God in your name did not mean you were a god or a deity. Rather, it gave the person a godly attribute to live up to in their life. For example, Hezekiah means 'God is my strength'. That is what the righteous King Hezekiah accomplished in his reign: he led the nation of Israel to trust in Y-H-V-H as their mighty strength, as the mighty God.

Early copies of the Septuagint, from before the time of Jesus, did not translate Y-H-V-H to Kyrios. Rather, because of the sacredness of the name, the translators kept the name in the original Hebrew; they did not translate it into Greek. It is reasonable to assume that the earliest copies of the New Testament likewise would have preserved the unique name of God, and would not have desecrated it by translating it into a foreign language.

In fact, an early Hebrew version of the Gospel of Matthew (the Evan Bohan text) preserves the unique name of God in the text. It is very likely that the original New Testament texts originally preserved the holy name of God and thereby allowed the reader to avoid being confused by the word Kyrios as it would not have been used to translate Y-H-V-H. See George Howard: Hebrew Gospel of Matthew, p231; Kurt Aland: p52; T. Shabbat 13(14):5.)

When did the early church stop using the Hebrew divine name and begin translating it to Greek and why? It probably occurred sometime around shortly thereafter, given the political climate in the Roman Empire and the Land of Israel. The Roman Emperor Hadrian, in response to the Jewish revolt (led by Bar Kochba), attempted to destroy the Jews and Judaism by banning Hebrew as a language and forbade the teaching of the Law of Moses (among other prohibitions) in the Roman Empire. Very likely, to avoid persecution, the church removed the Hebrew from their manuscripts. That is probably when Y-H-V-H began to be translated to the Greek word Kyrios. That is speculation, but very plausible. [Recall that, according to Kurt Aland, it wasn't until about 130-150 AD.

that the Old Testament began to retreat from its central position in the early Church... what a coincidence!]

Why did the New Testament writers, and the KJV translators, decide to use Kyrios/Lord instead of using Theos/God to translate Y-H-V-H? The Jews of antiquity (and today) do not pronounce the holy, unique name of God: Y-H-V-H. Instead, when referring to Y-H-V-H in casual situations they refer to him as HaShem (The Name). When the Y-H-V-H is to be spoken in prayer or in the reading of the Scripture, they say Adonai/Lord. It was probably out of deference to the Jewish tradition that the Septuagint, and the New Testament writers, chose to translate Y-H-V-H as Kyrios/Lord.

The phrase 'son of God' is used frequently in the New Testament. Christianity teaches that it proves the deity of Jesus, thereby also proving the trinity. That is partially based upon the New Testament statements that seem to equate the phrase 'Son of God' with deity.

Matthew 26:63-66

<sup>63</sup> But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God? <sup>64</sup> Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. <sup>65</sup> Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy. <sup>66</sup> What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

Mark 14:61-64

<sup>61</sup> But he [Jesus] held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? <sup>62</sup> And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. <sup>63</sup> Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

Luke 22:70-71

<sup>70</sup> Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, **YE [not I] SAY** that I am. <sup>71</sup> And they said, What need we any further witnesses? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth [that he blasphemed].

John 10:33,36

<sup>33</sup> The Jews answered him [Jesus] saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; **AND** because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God... <sup>36</sup> Say ye of them, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, **I A.M THE SON OF GOD?**

John 19:7

The Jews answered him [Pilate], We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

However, the phrase 'Son of God' is not unique to Jesus. Many other people in the scriptures were referred to as son(s) of god. Does that mean that all the other people in the scriptures called The son(s) of God are also deity?

Genesis 6:2

That the sons of God saw that the daughters of men that *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.

Exodus 4:22-23

<sup>22</sup> And thou [Moses] shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel *is my son, even my first-born*: <sup>23</sup> And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, *even thy first born*.

II Samuel 7:14

I [God] will be his [Solomon's] father, and he [Solomon] shall be **my son**. If [when] he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

I Chronicles 17:13

I [God] will be his [Solomon's] father, and he [Solomon] shall be **my son**: and I will not take my mercy away from him as I took *it* from *him* [Saul] that was before thee:

I Chronicles 28:6

And he [God] said unto me [David] Solomon thy son, he shall build my house and my courts: for I have chosen him *to be my son*, and I will be his father.

Hosea 11:1

When Israel *was* a child, then I loved him, and called **my son** out of Egypt.

Job 1:6

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

Job 2:1

Again there was a day when the **sons of God** came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord.

Psalms 82:6

I [God] have said, *ye are gods*; and all of you are children of the most high.

Luke 3:23,28

<sup>23</sup> And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Heli... <sup>28</sup> Which was *the son* of Enos, which was *the son* of Seth, which was *the son* of Adam, which was *the son* of God.

Those are some of the scriptures. Are we to believe that all those people being referred to as son(s) and/or children of God are all deity? Are they all on the same level as Y-H-V-H?

## SON of GOD or SON of MAN?

According to the gospel of Matthew, Jesus never referred to himself as the Son of God.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>What was said</u>	<u>Who said it?</u>
Matthew 4:3	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>SATAN</b>
Matthew 4:6	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>SATAN</b>
Matthew 8:20	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 8:29	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>DEVILS</b>
Matthew 9:6	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 10:23	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 11:19	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 12:8	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 12:32	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 12:40	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 13:37	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 13:41	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 14:33	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>DISCIPLES</b>
Matthew 16: 13	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 16: 16	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>PETER</b>
Matthew 16:27	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 16:28	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 17:9	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 17: 12	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 17:22	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 18:11	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 19:28	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 20:18	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 20:28	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 24:27	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 24:30	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 24:3 0	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 24:37	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 24:39	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 24:44	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 25:13	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 25:31	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 26:2	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 26:24	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 26:24	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 26:45	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 26:63	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>HIGH PRIEST</b>
Matthew 26:64	Son of Man	Jesus
Matthew 27:40	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>PASSER BY</b>
Matthew 27:43	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>CHIEF PRIESTS</b>
Matthew 27:54	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>CENTURION</b>

According to the gospel of Mark, Jesus never referred to himself as the Son of God.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>What was said</u>	<u>Who said it?</u>
Mark 1:1	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>MARK</b>
Mark 2:10	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 2:28	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 3:11	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>UNCLEAN SPIRITS</b>
Mark 5:7	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>DEMONIAC OF GEDARA</b>
Mark 8:31	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 8:38	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 9:9	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 9:12	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 9:31	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 10:33	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 10:45	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 13:26	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 13:34	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 14:21	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 14:21	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 14:4 1	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 14:61	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>HIGH PRIEST</b>
Mark 14:62	Son of Man	Jesus
Mark 15:39	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>CENTURION</b>

According to the gospel of Luke, Jesus never referred to himself as the Son of God.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>What was said</u>	<u>Who said it?</u>
Luke 1:32	<b>SON of the HIGHEST</b>	<b>ANGEL</b>
Luke 1:35	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>ANGEL</b>
Luke 4:3	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>SATAN</b>
Luke 4:9	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>SATAN</b>
Luke 4:4	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>DEVILS</b>
Luke 5:24	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 6:5	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 6:22	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 7:34	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 8:28	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>DEMONIAC of GADARA</b>
Luke 9:22	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 9:26	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 9:44	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 9:56	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 9:58	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 11:30	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 12:8	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 12:10	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 12:40	Son of Man	Jesus

Luke 17:22	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 17:24	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 17:26	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 17:30	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 18:8	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 18:31	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 19:10	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 21:27	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 21:36	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 22:22	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 22:48	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 22:69	Son of Man	Jesus
Luke 22:70	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>HIGH PRIEST</b>
Luke 24:7	Son of Man	Jesus

According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus never called himself the Son of God; Jesus always referred to himself as the Son of Man. Amongst those that did call Jesus the son of God were demons, devils, and Satan. Not exactly the greatest character references.

Numbers 23:19

**GOD IS NOT A MAN**, that He should lie; **NEITHER THE SON OF MAN** that He should repent: hath He said and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?

Jesus, at the very end of his ministry, asked his disciples who the people said he was. That is, based upon what Jesus had said and done during his ministry, who did the people think he was? The disciples gave a variety of answers, none of which included the messiah (christ) or son of God.

Mark 8:27-29

<sup>27</sup> Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? <sup>28</sup> And they answered, John the Baptist: but some *say*, Elijah; and others one of the prophets. <sup>29</sup> And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, thou art the Christ [the Messiah].

Luke 9:18-20

<sup>18</sup> And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? <sup>19</sup> They answering said, John the Baptist; but some *say* Elijah; and others *say*, that one of the prophets is risen again. <sup>20</sup> He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ [the Messiah] of God.

Matthew 16:13-17

<sup>13</sup> Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the son of man am? <sup>14</sup> And they said, some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. <sup>15</sup> He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? <sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of the Living God. <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: **FOR FLESH AND BLOOD HAS NOT REVEALED IT UNTO THEE**, but my father which is in heaven.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record different responses that Peter gave to the question posed by Jesus. However, Matthew's record of Peter's response is the one that Christianity loves. But, of even greater significance is the response that Jesus gave to Peter *in response to Peter's answer*.

Jesus told Peter that there was no way he could have known that he (Jesus) was the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of the Living God. Despite having been Jesus' disciple for over three years, having heard all the sermons and seen all the miracles, there was no way Peter could have known what he stated; it was only by divine revelation. What does that mean? Jesus had **NEVER** made any clear statement that he was the christ or the son of God. Otherwise Peter, through flesh and blood, would have known that!! That is also why the people had a variety of opinions as to who he was, and none of those responses included Jesus being the messiah or the son of God.

Contrary to Matthew, Mark, and Luke, John's gospel records Jesus calling himself the son of God.

<u>Reference</u>	<u>What was said</u>	<u>Who said it?</u>
John 1:34	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>JOHN</b>
John 1:49	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>NATHANIEL</b>
John 1:51	Son of Man	Jesus
John 3:13	Son of Man	Jesus
John 3:14	Son of Man	Jesus
John 3:18	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>JOHN</b>
John 5:25	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>JESUS*</b>
John 5:27	Son of Man	Jesus
John 6:27	Son of Man	Jesus
John 6:53	Son of Man	Jesus
John 6:62	Son of Man	Jesus
John 6:69	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>PETER</b>
John 8:28	Son of Man	Jesus
John 9:35	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>JESUS*</b>
John 10:36	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>JESUS*</b>
John 11:4	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>JESUS*</b>
John 11:27	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>PETER</b>
John 12:23	Son of Man	Jesus
John 12:34	Son of Man	CROWD (quoting Jesus)
John 12:34	Son of Man	CROWD
John 13:31	Son of Man	Jesus
John 19:7	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>HIGH PRIEST</b>
John 20:31	<b>SON of GOD</b>	<b>JOHN</b>

John has Jesus referring to himself as both the Son of Man (12 times) and the Son of God (\*4 times). This seems to be at great variance with the other gospel writers. Remember, however, that John also had major disagreements with the other gospels as to the day of the crucifixion and on the account of the resurrection.

**HOWEVER**, there is a key passage that is quite revealing and sheds enormous light on the apparent discrepancy between the gospels; and only John records it.

John 10:33-36

<sup>33</sup> The Jews answered him [Jesus] saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; **and** because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered unto them, Is not it written in **your** law, I said, **YE ARE GODS**, <sup>35</sup> If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken, <sup>36</sup> Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, **I AM THE SON OF GOD?**

Jesus supposedly was accused of blaspheming because they thought he was saying that he said he was equal with God, specifically, the Son of God. Jesus' reply is quite enlightening. He quoted Psalm 82:6 where God calls a group of people "**GODS**".

Psalm 82:1,6

<sup>1</sup> God [El, The Judge] standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods [elohim, the judges]. <sup>6</sup> I [God] have said, **YE ARE GODS; and ALL OF YOU are CHILDREN OF THE MOST HIGH.**

Jesus denied that he was guilty of blasphemy. His defense was that **ALL** the children of Israel were called **gods** [Elohim] by God [El]. Therefore, as a descendant of them he was a 'son of god' [of since they were all "children of the Most High" that meant they were sons of God, which included him]. The word used for God is El, and the word for gods is elohim; in this instance it is referring to the Eternal Judge in contrast to the human judges. However, Jesus was not equating himself with the one eternal God: Y-H-V-H.

John records that believers also become **sons of God**.

John 1:12

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the **SONS OF GOD**, *even* to them that believe on his name.

I John 3: 1-2

<sup>1</sup> Behold, what manner of love the Father bath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the **sons of God**: therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, **NOW WE ARE THE SONS OF GOD**, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Not only does John say that believers **ARE** sons of God, but that when Jesus appears that they will be **LIKE HIM**. If Jesus were deity then that means all believers would become deity also.

Therefore, the phrase 'son of God' is not unique to Jesus. Additionally, whenever Jesus was given the opportunity to declare unequivocally that he was the son of God, he always responded that he was the son of man.

## **ASSERTION or QUESTION**

Matthew 26:63

But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the **SON of GOD?**

## **JESUS' RESPONSE**

Matthew 26:64

Jesus saith unto him, Thou [not I] hast said: nevertheless **I say** unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the **SON of MAN** sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Mark 14:61

But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the **SON of the BLESSED?**

Mark 14:62

And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the **SON of MAN** sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

Luke 22:67,70

<sup>67</sup> Art thou the Christ? Tell us. And he [Jesus] said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe...<sup>70</sup> Then said they all, Art thou then the **SON of GOD?** And he [Jesus] said unto them, **YE [not I] SAY THAT I AM.**

Luke 22:69

Hereafter shall the **SON of MAN** sit on the right hand of the power of God.

Psalm 146:3

Put not your trust in princes, *nor* in **THE SON OF MAN**, in whom *there* is no help.

It was impossible that the high priest, no matter how wicked (and the high priest and chief priests of Jesus' day were illegitimate pretenders who had bought the office), would have equated the Jewish concept of the messiah (a man) with modern Christianity's concept of messiah as the 'son of God' (deity).

The high priest asked Jesus if he was the Christ, the son of God. The implication is that the two terms were synonymous; that the messiah was going to be the son of God and that the son of God was deity. However, the Jewish concept of the messiah was of a righteous man, not deity, that would deliver Israel from its Gentile oppressors and reestablish David's kingdom on earth. Not merely for political gain, but to enable the Jews to freely worship God. The New Testament even confirms this:

Luke 1:68-75

<sup>68</sup> Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, <sup>69</sup> and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David; <sup>70</sup> as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: <sup>71</sup> **THAT WE SHOULD BE SAVED FROM OUR ENEMIES, AND FROM THE HAND OF ALL THAT HATE US;** <sup>72</sup> to perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; <sup>73</sup> the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, <sup>74</sup> he would grant to us, **THAT WE, BEING DELIVERED OUT OF THE HAND OF OUR ENEMIES MIGHT SERVE HIM WITHOUT FEAR,** <sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

The term 'son of God' in the Jewish mind did not connote deity. The Jewish idea of a son of God was a righteous person (such as Solomon, I Chronicles 22:10), but definitely not deity. Yet, the gospel narratives report that the Jewish religious leaders wanted put Jesus to death for blasphemy because he said he was the son of God, presumably implying deity. Clearly there is a discrepancy in the use of the phrase: son of God.

The prevailing pagan mythology (Greek and Roman) had gods that supposedly procreated and produced offspring. Such an offspring was a 'son of god' and was also

considered a god. However, that was a distinctly pagan concept. The Jewish concept of a “son of God” was of a righteous man, not the physical offspring of deity.

The phrase ‘son of god’ acquired a whole new meaning. How did that come about? The only reasonable explanation is that the Gentile Greek mindset dominated the work of the copyists and imposed meanings and definitions foreign to the original speakers in the narratives. The copyists then doctored the text or added ‘clarifications’ (extra words or verses) as needed to ‘prove’ their predetermined conclusions and theology.

“The process by which the God of Israel became a Trinity speaks of Gentile failure to penetrate the depths of Jewish monotheism and a tendency to mix a strain of paganism with scripture.” (Buzzard and Hunting, *ibid*, p78).

However, the New Testament, when comparing the centurion’s response to the crucifixion of Jesus, confirms again the Jewish view of the phrase ‘son of god’.

Matthew 27:54

Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly, this was the SON OF GOD.

Luke 23:47

Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a RIGHTEOUS MAN

The New Testament, in the sermon on the mount, also records Jesus as confirming the Jewish view of ‘son of God’:

Matthew 5:9

Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Therefore, the phrase ‘son of God’ cannot be used to prove the deity of Jesus or the doctrine of the trinity. In fact, the way the phrase took on a pagan (Greek) definition clearly indicates that some tampering with the text took place.

There are times in the gospels where Jesus is not called the Son of Man or the Son of God but only called the son.

<b>REFERENCE</b>	<b>WHAT WAS SAID</b>	<b>WHO SAID IT?</b>
Matthew 3:17	My Beloved Son	Voice from heaven
Matthew 11:27	The Son	Jesus
Matthew 11:27	The Son	Jesus
Matthew 11:27	The Son	Jesus
Matthew 17:5	My Beloved Son	Voice out of the cloud
Mark 1:11	My Beloved Son	Voice from heaven
Mark 9:7	My Beloved Son	Voice out of the cloud
Mark 13:32	The Son	Jesus
Luke 3:22	My Beloved Son	Voice from heaven
Luke 9:35	My Beloved Son	Voice out of the cloud
Luke 10:22	The Son	Jesus
Luke 10:22	The Son	Jesus
Luke 10:22	The Son	Jesus

REFERENCE	WHAT WAS SAID	WHO SAID IT?
John 1:18	only begotten son	John (narrative)
John 3:16	only begotten son	Jesus (probably John)
John 3:17	his son	God
John 3:35	the Son	John (narrative)
John 3:36	the Son	John (narrative)
John 3:36	the Son	John (narrative)
John 5:19	the Son	Jesus
John 5:19	the Son	Jesus
John 5:20	the Son	Jesus
John 5:21	the Son	Jesus
John 5:22	the Son	Jesus
John 5:23	the Son	Jesus
John 5:23	the Son	Jesus
John 5:26	the Son	Jesus
John 6:40	the Son	Jesus
John 8:35	the Son	Jesus
John 8:36	the Son	Jesus
John 14:13	the Son	Jesus
John 17:1	thy Son	Jesus
John 17:1	thy Son	Jesus

The phrase ‘only begotten’ is not unique to Jesus. It was also used in reference to Isaac. [John 3:13-21 probably were not spoken by Jesus; they were spoken by the narrator of the text. That is apparent by the change in the pronouns being used].

Hebrews 11:17

By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his **ONLY BEGOTTEN son**.

Therefore, the term ‘only begotten’ cannot be used to prove the deity of Jesus or the doctrine of the trinity. Actually, Paul went so far as to say that Jesus didn’t become the only begotten son until after his resurrection.

Acts 13:33

God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that **HE HATH RAISED UP JESUS** again as it is also written in the **second psalm**, **THOU ART MY SON, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN TREE**.

[Note: Paul could not have said this. The second psalm we have today was originally part of Psalm 1. Psalm 1 was split into two Psalms by the Jewish Sages, 15-20 years **after** the destruction of the temple, when they added an additional blessing to the Shemonah Esrei/Amidah. Paul died before that.]

Additionally, the term ‘beloved’ is also not used exclusively for Jesus either. Consider Daniel: Daniel was **GREATLY BELOVED**.

Daniel 9:23

At the beginning of thy [Daniel’s] supplications the commandment came forth, and I [Michael] am come to show *thee*; for thou *art* **GREATLY BELOVED**: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

Daniel 10:11

And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man **GREATLY BELOVED**, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

Daniel 10:19

And said, O man **GREATLY BELOVED**, fear not: peace *be* unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

Nehemiah 13:26

Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was **BELOVED OF HIS GOD**, and God made .him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.

Deuteronomy 33:12

*And* of Benjamin he said, **THE BELOVED OF THE LORD** shall dwell in safety by him; *and* the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.

Psalms 60:5

That **THY BELOVED** [Israel] may be delivered; save *with* thy right hand, and hear me.

Psalms 108:5-6

<sup>5</sup> Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens, and thy glory above all the earth; <sup>6</sup> that **THY BELOVED** may be delivered: save with thy right hand, and answer me.

Psalms 127:2

*It is* vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: *for* so he giveth **HIS BELOVED** sleep.

Therefore, the term ‘beloved’ cannot be used to prove the deity of Jesus or the doctrine of the trinity.

I have established that the words ‘lord’, ‘son of God’, ‘only begotten’, and ‘beloved’, cannot be used to prove the deity of Jesus or the doctrine of the trinity. I have also shown that famous phrases such as ‘I and my Father are One’, and ‘If you hate me you hate the Father’, etc., cannot be used to prove the deity of Jesus or the doctrine of the trinity.

Christianity claims that only God can forgive sins. The New Testament records episodes where Jesus reportedly was responsible for forgiving the sins of various people. Christianity concludes, therefore, that Jesus must be God, because he forgave sins.

Mark 2:5-11

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. <sup>6</sup> But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, <sup>7</sup> Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? <sup>8</sup> And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? <sup>9</sup> Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? <sup>10</sup> But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith unto the palsy,) <sup>11</sup> say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

Luke 5:21,24

<sup>21</sup> And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? <sup>24</sup> But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of palsy,)

Matthew 9: 3,6,8

<sup>3</sup> And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth... <sup>6</sup> But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,)... <sup>8</sup> But when the multitude saw *it*, they marveled and glorified God, which hath given such power **unto MEN**.

The obvious implication is that Jesus must be equal with God. However, many places in the New Testament command us to forgive one another (Matthew 6:12-15; 18:21-22; 35; Mark 11:25- 26; Luke 6:37; 11:4; 17:3-4). Clearly we are not equal with God, but are we gods as John described in John 10:34 (quoting Psalm 82:6). Listen to what Jesus said to his disciples:

Matthew 6:12,14-15

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors... <sup>14</sup> For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father will also forgive you: <sup>15</sup> But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses

John 20:22-23

<sup>22</sup> And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: <sup>23</sup> Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

The Greek word translated ‘remit’ is the exact same word translated ‘forgive’ in the previous verses.

Even more critical was the reaction of the crowd: did they interpret his actions as a claim to deity? No, absolutely not. Matthew records that “when the multitude saw it, they marveled and glorified God, which had given such power **unto MEN**.” The people did not consider Jesus God just because he could forgive sin.

## I AM

John 8:58 is a passage frequently cited to prove that Jesus was eternally preexistent and therefore equal with God.

John 8:51-58

<sup>51</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. <sup>52</sup> Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste death. <sup>53</sup> Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? And the prophets are dead: whom thou makest thyself? <sup>54</sup> Jesus answered,... <sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw *it*, and was glad. <sup>57</sup> Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? <sup>58</sup> Jesus said unto them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Jesus said that those who kept his sayings [Torah teachings?] would not taste death. His listeners responded that Abraham and the prophets, all of whom kept the Torah meticulously, were all dead. So they asked somewhat rhetorically: are you greater than

the prophets, “**whom thou makest thyself?**” The people, at this point, believed that Jesus was claiming to be a prophet.

One other critical verse must be studied in order to properly understand what Jesus was saying to the people.

John 20:3 1

But these are written, **that ye might believe that JESUS IS THE CHRIST [THE MESSIAH]**, the Son of God; and believing ye might have life through his name.

Everything that John recorded was for the express purpose of teaching someone that Jesus was the messiah so that they might believe in him. John had a built-in bias as to the events and messages he recorded. That’s OK. It just needs to be understood.

Jesus could not have been talking about simple physical death, he must have been talking of the ultimate spiritual death that comes to those that reject God and His teachings. Jesus must also. have been referring to the final resurrection that will come about after the messiah ushers in the age to come.

Jesus said that Abraham saw his day, the day of the messiah, and was glad. According to Jesus, Abraham was glad because he was able to see the future messianic age (“my day”) when God’s ultimate plan was coming to completion.

The Greek phrase translated “I am” (ego eimi) in John 8:58 is used 35 times in the gospel of John. Every time that phrase is translated the direct object is evident or the word “he” (the implied direct object) is added (nine times) to clarify the meaning. The only exception to that rule is in John 8:58.

John 4:26

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

John 6:20

But he saith unto them, It is I [literally: I am he] be not afraid.

John 8:24

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if you believe not that I am he ye shall die in your sins.

John 8:28

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father bath taught me, I speak these things.

John 9:9

Some said, This is he: others *said*, He is like him: *but* he said, I am he.

John 13:19

Now I tell you before it come, that, when it come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

John 18:5-8

<sup>5</sup> They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

<sup>6</sup> As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he they went backward, and fell to the ground. <sup>7</sup> Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. <sup>8</sup> Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

When Jesus said “I am,” he was referring to himself as the promised messiah. Jesus was declaring that he was the foreordained messiah that Abraham was able to see in the future. To restate the verse in context:

John 8:56,58

<sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced to see **the day of the messiah**: and he saw *it*, and was glad.  
<sup>58</sup> said unto them, Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, **I was foreordained to be the messiah [I AM HE, the MESSIAH]**.

There is absolutely no reason why John 8:58 should not also be translated: I am he. The ‘he’ referring to the messiah, the declared purpose of John’s writings. As mentioned previously, John 8:58 is the only place in John’s gospel ‘ego eimi’ is not translated with a direct object or as I am he Christian translators have not traditionally added the clarifying pronoun ‘he’ because they saw John 8:58 as a parallel to Exodus 3:14.

Exodus 3:14

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Christian translators wanted to show that Jesus claimed to have the same name as Y-H-V-H: I AM. There is one major problem with that. The singular Hebrew word translated I AM in Exodus 3:14, three times, is always in the **future tense**. The correct translation of the Hebrew in Exodus 3:14 is:

Exodus 3:14

And God said unto Moses, I SHALL BE THAT I SHALL BE and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I SHALL BE hath sent me unto you.

The Septuagint translated the singular Hebrew word of Exodus 3:14 into the same Greek phrase (**present tense**) that John 8:58 used. That just means that the Septuagint was wrong in its choice of words. John 8:58 should be translated with a ‘he’ at the end.

One other disturbing thing is noted in this passage. Jesus does not identify himself with the Jews as having Abraham for his father or with the Law of Moses.

John 8:56

**YOUR FATHER** Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

John 10:34

Jesus answered unto them, Is not it written in **YOUR LAW**, I said, ye are gods,

Why didn’t Jesus say: “Our Father Abraham?” Why didn’t Jesus say: “Our Law?” Either Jesus did not consider himself the ‘seed’ of Abraham and did not consider himself under the Law of Moses or these texts were doctored. Another option is that those texts may very well have been interpolations by well intentioned copyists.

## **MY LORD and MY GOD**

The declaration of Thomas has been frequently cited as proving that Jesus was God.

John 20:28

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

The basic question is whether the words ‘lord’ and ‘god’ should be capitalized or not. It was shown previously that The words ‘lord’ and ‘god’ do not always refer to the Y-H-V-H. They can also be used, respectively, in reference to human masters and judges. The question is whether those words refer to Jesus as an earthly master and judge or as the Eternal Lord and Creator/Judge.

The messiah of Jewish expectation would be a king (master) and a judge (god). If Thomas had wanted to declare, in a personalized way, that he believed that Jesus was his messiah, those are the words he could have used to describe the role of the messiah in his personal life. Thomas was merely declaring that he believed that Jesus was the promised messiah of Jewish expectation. To restate what Thomas was actually implying:

John 20:28

And Thomas answered and said unto him, **MY MIESSIAH.**

That conclusion, of course, agrees with the declaration by Peter:

Mark 8:29b

And Peter answereth and saith unto him, thou art the Christ [the Messiah].

Luke 9:20b

Peter answering said, The Christ [the Messiah] of God.

Matthew 16:16

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of the Living God.

Thomas was merely restating, in a personal way, what Peter had declared previously.

Three verses later, John declares that the purpose of recording the Doubting Thomas episode was so that people would believe that Jesus was the messiah. The declaration of Thomas simply restated that.

John 20:31a

But these are written, **that ye might believe that JESUS IS THIE CHRIST [THE MESSIAH]** the Son of God;

## EQUAL WITH GOD?

Christianity has claimed that Jesus was equal with God. They cite Paul’s letter to the Phillipians to prove it.

Phillipians 2:5-11

<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ [Messiah] Jesus: <sup>6</sup> being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: <sup>7</sup> made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: <sup>8</sup> And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. <sup>9</sup> Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: <sup>10</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth, <sup>11</sup> And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [Messiah] *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The context of Paul's remarks show him urging the members of his congregation to be humble. It has been asked whether it is in any way probable that Paul would enforce this simple lesson by asking his readers to adopt the frame of mind of one who, having been eternally God, made the decision to become man? Is that sort of comparison in any way relevant to our human condition?

Paul describes the exalted status of Jesus as the messiah, the personal ambassador of God. As a reflection of God, he was in the "form of God" (the text does **not** say that he was God), but did not consider such "equality with God" (as his personal ambassador) a privilege to be exploited for his own glory. Jesus, as the messiah, was vested with functional equality with God. Jesus did not take advantage of his royal position as God's legal representative but instead adopted the character of a slave.

The transition is from the rank of God, as God's ambassador, to the rank of servant. The contrast is **not**, as is often thought, between being God and becoming man. The traditional Trinitarian reading of Phillipians 2 depends almost entirely on understanding Jesus' condition "in the form of God" as a reference to a preexistent life as God in heaven, instead of his legal identity with God, as his messiah, as a human person on earth (Buzzard and Hunting, *ibid*, p49-50).

The final verse should read:

Philippians 2:11

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* lord [king messiah], to the glory of God the Father.

### **IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD...**

John 1:1-3 is a passage that Christianity loves to use to try and prove the deity of Jesus. But does it?

John 1:1-3

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was **with** God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> same was in the beginning with God.

<sup>3</sup> All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

The second verse seems to be unnecessary redundancy. But, a literal translation, with the correct articles, and **pros** (which can mean before or in front of) appropriately translated, gives a somewhat different translation:

John 1:1-3 (alternative translation)

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was **before THE** God, and the Word was **A** god. <sup>2</sup> The same was in the beginning with **THE** God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

As the KJV currently translates it, the second verse is redundant, superfluous. But, appropriately translated, the second verse has meaning in its own right and leads into the third verse.

What makes these verses so difficult to comprehend is the failure of the translators to distinguish between Y-H-V-H and Elohim. The Greek word Theos is only used to translate Elohim, and not Y-H-V-H. Remember, Elohim can refer to Y-H-V-H or it can refer to an angel, a judge, or other divine (not deity) being.

God created the universe with His word, with His Torah. Elohim is the expression of Y-H V-H as creator and judge of His universe. You can't be a creator unless you have a creation any more than you can have a creation without a creator. Elohim as an expression of Y-H-V-H did not come into existence until creation.

Y-H-V-H is the only name of God that expresses His totality, which is why it is not translatable and is incomprehensible. All other names of God are subordinate names to Y-H-V-H. Elohim is only a limited expression of Y-H-V-H.

The Torah is an expression of God's character and as such is a god, but not the Y-H-V-H. John 1:1 says that the Word was **a** god, not **the** god. It says that the Word was **before** and **with the** God [Elohim]. And it was through the Word, through the Torah, that Elohim created the universe.

But, the Word was not Elohim nor was it Y-H-V-H.

The New Testament attempts to depict Jesus as the living embodiment of the Torah (the 'Word').

John 1:14

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,...

Whether that is true or not is another question (see Buzzard and Hunting, *ibid*). But, the New Testament never says that Jesus was Y-H-V-H or that he was Elohim as an expression of Y-H-V-H.

## THE ARIAN HERESY

The Arian 'heresy' of the early Church stated that there was no trinity. That Jesus was not God. The early Church fathers labeled such believers as heretics and excommunicated them. One of the Church fathers that sought to disprove the Arian heresy was Athanasius (about 350 A.D.)

*The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (1990, Prentice Hall, Englewood, NJ), a Roman Catholic commentary on the Bible, page 1164 [ makes a very interesting observation concerning the trinity. It states that

"Athanasius was quite aware that no text of Scripture fully answered the Arian heresy: no single text in its literal sense irrefutably showed that Jesus was "true God of true God." But he insisted that in the 4th century controversy the only answer that scripture could give to the question that Anus was raising was the answer of Nicaea ("Letter Concerning the Decrees of the Council of Nicaea," 5.19-21)."

Cardinal Rosier, in 1553, stated in *Confessio Fidel Christiani* (cited by Buzzard and Hunting, *ibid*, p137):

"We believe the doctrine of a Triune God because we have received it by tradition, though **it is not mentioned at all in the scripture**".

Another Roman Catholic scholar, James Masenius, in *Apud Sandium* (cited by Buzzard and Hunting, *ibid*, p137) stated:

“That the Son is of the same essence as the Father or consubstantial with Him **is not manifest in any part of Sacred Scripture**, either in express words or by certain and immutable deduction.”

The Catholic Church freely admits that the doctrine of the trinity **IS NOT IN THE BIBLE**. Rather, it was solely based on Church tradition. Athanasius used the argument that Church tradition and the teaching of the Church fathers had equal authority with scripture. This is the Roman Catholic Church's position today: that Church authority is equal to the authority of scripture. It is from the council of Niceae and the Roman Catholic Church that modern Christianity is indebted to for the doctrine of the trinity.

At this point many sincere people, searching for the truth, ask the obvious question: How did we get the New Testament, with all its problems, we have today? How did we get the doctrines we have today that have been believed for so long by untold millions?

One explanation is the reformation. The Roman Catholic Church has always asserted that the Church had equal authority with the written scripture in matters of doctrine. Many of the doctrines of Christianity, and embraced by the protestant reformation, were developed by the Roman Catholic Church, separate and apart from the scriptures. The Protestant reformation's slogan was “sola scriptura only scripture. They rejected the Church's claim to authority but did not reject the doctrines that it had developed.

### **THE BLENDING OF TWO INTO ONE**

The transmission and the tampering with the text can account for some of the problems with the errancy of the New Testament. Other problems (doctrinal problems) can be understood when the context and development of the New Testament narratives themselves are studied. The heavy emphasis on spiritual allegory in reinterpretation (misinterpretation) of the Old Testament played a significant role. However, it is also critical to understand the prevailing mythological crucible in which the New Testament, and Christian theology, was developed.

Christianity has been plagued with the persistent problem of irreconcilable doctrines being derived from the New Testament. How can this be? Whole denominations of Christianity are based upon these irreconcilable differences. How can the New Testament teach irreconcilable, contradictory doctrines such as the doctrines of grace vs. works? The letter of James clearly teaches works but Paul clearly teaches grace: which is it? Can you lose your salvation or not? Martin Luther said that the Letter of James was of the devil and should not have been included in the New Testament canon (that was his solution to the problem.)

My first paper, *Jews, Gentiles, and the Law of Moses*, demonstrated quite clearly that the early Jerusalem church did not view Jesus the same way as modern Christianity does. The first ‘believers’ were all orthodox, observant Jews who differed from their fellow orthodox Jews in only one aspect: they believed Jesus to be the messiah *according to Jewish expectation*. The Nazarene messianic sect, continued their observance of Mosaic Law long after Jesus was physically gone from the scene.

The Nazarene sect (later known as Christianity) was a messianic movement **within** the context of orthodox, rabbinic Judaism. Jesus was viewed as an orthodox, observant rabbi who was destined to deliver Israel from Gentile oppression. The early followers of Jesus did **not** regard him as deity, as part of a 'trinity, or as the ultimate sacrifice for sins. Rather, they regarded him as the ultimate example of a Torah observant lifestyle and one who taught his followers to keep the Law of Moses.

Judaism taught that the messiah was going to be a righteous man that would be used by God to deliver Israel from Gentile oppression and usher in the world to come. The Jewish messiah had no influence, and was not necessary, for the individual Jew's relationship to God. However, the messiah that evolved in Christianity became central to the individual's relationship to God. That concept was totally foreign to Judaism and the original Nazarene messianic sect.

The Nazarene messianic movement expected their messiah to return in the very near future, within their lifetimes.

Matthew 24:34

Verily I say unto you, **THIS** generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Mark 13:30

Verily I say unto you, that **THIS** generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

Luke 21:32

Verily I say unto you, **THIS** generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

Matthew 16:28

Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

With the immanent return of their messiah, the movement had no need for new 'scripture'. They had the Torah, the prophets and the writings (the Old Testament). It was only after the war with Rome, and their messiah had not delivered them, that it was necessary to begin compiling manuscripts about the life and ministry of their messiah whose return was now delayed longer than expected.

The original leadership of the Nazarene messianic movement was all Jewish. James, the brother of Jesus, was the leader (**not** Peter) as demonstrated in Acts 15 (see Robert Eisenman's: *James the Brother of Jesus* (p183-215) and Hugh Schonfield's: *The Pentecost Revolution* (p149, 233). As long as Jewish believers exerted leadership, the idolatrous heritage and excess pagan baggage of the Gentile believers was kept in check.

It was not until the Jewish war with Rome (66-70 AD) that all that changed. James died about 64 AD. His death, followed by the war, caused the Jewish leadership of the Nazarene messianic movement to be dispersed. The void in leadership was filled by Gentiles, principally from Rome (the capital of the empire) who were not schooled in the Torah and Jewish (Essene?) traditions upon which the messianic movement was originally founded.

The loss of the war with Rome was sobering to those Jews who had believed the messiah would come and save them. Indeed, the influx of Jews to various messianic movements, including the Nazarene movement, tapered off. The next rebellion by Israel against Rome (132-135 AD) was even more disastrous. Jews, disillusioned again by the failure of the messiah to return and save them, began to abandon the messianic movements of that day, including the Nazarene movement, and return to Rabbinic Judaism. The Nazarene messianic movement was by now virtually an exclusively Gentile movement (remember Kurt Alands dating: circa 130-150 AD).

The gospels, and the book of Acts, were all written after the war with Rome. The gospels were preceded by an oral tradition of the life and ministry of Jesus. That oral tradition was started and maintained by his closest associates, the apostles and disciples. That tradition undoubtedly portrayed Jesus as an orthodox, observant Jew that taught adherence to Torah and the Law of Moses. If Jesus had not been observant of Mosaic Law, or if he taught others not to keep the Law of Moses, he would not have been accepted by any Jew as the Jewish messiah. The fingerprints of that original tradition are still apparent in the four gospels and the book of Acts (see *Jews, Gentiles, and the Law of Moses*).

The void in Jewish leadership, caused by the war with Rome, was filled by Gentiles who were unfamiliar with Torah and the rabbinic traditions upon which the messianic movement was originally founded. Words and phrases (messiah, son of man, son of God, sacrifice, atonement, etc.) that meant one thing to an orthodox Jew meant something entirely different to a Gentile.

The Jewish leadership, with its Hebrew mindset, was replaced by Gentile leadership with a Greek philosophical mindset. The narratives and events that were the basis for the Nazarene messianic sect were all developed in an orthodox Jewish environment. Those teachings and events were reinterpreted through Greek philosophical spectacles. The result was the development of idolatrous doctrines that became the basis of a new religion that became known as Christianity.

“The findings of scholars of the pre-Nicene development of the doctrine of Christ frequently suggest that a corrupting influence was at work on the Christian faith as it moved away from the protective shelter of its original Hebrew environment into the menacing atmosphere of Greek philosophy.” (Buzzard, *ibid*, p58)

The Gentiles may not have been familiar with Torah Judaism, but they were familiar with the prevailing pagan ‘mystery religions of the middle east. The ‘mystery’ religions of the middle east included concepts such as polytheism, incarnation, virgin birth, and sacrifice of a god-man for substitutionary atonement with subsequent resurrection.

“In the first century of the Common Era, there appeared at the eastern end of the mediterranean a remarkable religious leader who taught the worship of one true God and declared that religion meant not sacrifice of beasts but the practice of charity and piety and the shunning of hatred and enmity. He was said to have worked miracles of goodness, casting Out demons, healing the sick, raising the dead. His exemplary life led some of his followers to claim he was a son of God., though he called himself the son of man. Accused of sedition against Rome, he was arrested. After his death, his disciples claimed he had risen from the dead, appeared to them alive, and then ascended to heaven. **Who was this teacher and wonder-worker?** His name was Appollonius of Tyana; he died about 98 A.D., and his story may be read in Flavius Philostratus’s *Life of Appollonius*.” (Randel Helms: *Gospel Fictions* p9)

Gradually, under Gentile leadership, ideas and concepts foreign to Judaism (but common to the mystery religions) were incorporated into the belief system of the developing religion.

“Far more important to them [the pagan converts to Christianity] was what the title ‘Son of God’ meant, and for them it implied **actual** divine paternity. Jews, and Jewish Christians, never had recounted myths of divine paternity of their kings; their myths were ‘adoptionist’ [adopted spiritually]. Actual divine paternity was not an issue here. But Gentile Christians in the first century who came into, the new religion directly from paganism and were already infected with myths about licentious deities, had a much different understanding of what divine paternity meant. Plutarch speaks for the entire ancient pagan world when he writes, in *Convivial Disputations*, “The fact of the intercourse of a male god with mortal women is conceded by all.”

‘Of course the new myth [virgin birth] was not accepted everywhere. Jewish Christians, especially, regarded it as a pagan intrusion into their religion. In his *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*, Justin Martyr concedes that some of his co-religionists reject the divine fathering and virgin birth of Jesus because they sound too much like pagan myth (Justin mentions the myth of Danae, impregnated by Zeus). Obviously Justin’s view won out among Christians-another way of saying that Jewish Christianity virtually ceased to exist soon after the first century.’ (Helms, *ibid*, p47-48)

“If you look in that famous book of pagan rituals, *The Golden Bough*, by Frazer, chapter (in the abridged edition), there is a discussion about the god called Attis, which was worshipped in Western Asia (which, if I might remind you, is not too far from the Middle East, where Paul lived and preached). Attis, Frazer points out, was born from a virgin. Attis was afterwards killed.. .thus in an **annual** holiday commemorating the death of Attis, *in Syria*... Then read carefully, an effigy of Attis was hung, and afterwards was buried in a sepulchre. Then the tomb would be opened, the god Aids would rise from the dead, and he would whisper glad tidings of salvation.” (Samuel Levine: *You take Jesus, I’ll take God*, p39-40. See Michael Drazin: *Their Hollow Inheritance*, p25-41 for parallels between Jesus, Krishna, and Buddha).

The gospels, the book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament represent a blending of those two irreconcilable strains of thought. An orthodox, rabbinic view of God and the messiah interwoven with prevailing pagan ‘mystery religious concepts to produce what ultimately evolved into what is now called the New Testament. That is why irreconcilable doctrines can be derived from the same document. The document itself was the product of blending two irreconcilable views. Once a Greek-Roman (pagan) mindset replaced the Hebrew (Rabbinic) mindset in interpreting scripture, and establishing doctrines and policies, the church suffered a loss from which it has never recovered

“Across the pages of the Old and New Testament the clear waters of revealed truth flow like a majestic river. It is God who only has immortality, offering it to men and communicating to men His divine imperishable life. **BUT** paralleling this stream flows the muddy river of pagan philosophy, which is that of human soul, of divine essence, eternal, preexisting the body and surviving it. After the death of the apostles the two streams merged to make unity of the troubled waters. Little by little the speculation of human philosophy mixed with divine teaching. Now the task of evangelical theology is to disengage the two incompatible elements, to dissociate them, to eliminate the pagan element which has installed itself as a usurper in the center of traditional theology; to restore in value the biblical element, which only is true, and which alone confirms to the nature of God and of man.” (Alfred Vaucher, *Le Probleme de l’Immortalite*, cited by Buzzard and Hunting, *ibid*, p65).

[Summary comments were given on this vast subject. Interested readers should review the previously cited authors and books as well as: 1) Hyam Maccoby: a) *The Mythmaker*; b) *Judas Iscariot and The Myth of Jewish Evil*; c) *The Essene Odyssey*. 2) Hugh Schonfield: a) *Those Incredible Christians*.

Original “Christianity” was nothing more than a Jewish messianic sect that differed from traditional Judaism only in its mistaken concept of who the messiah was. The Gentile element of the Nazarene messianic movement was originally perceived as a Noahide movement or as candidates for conversion to Judaism (see *Jews, Gentiles, and the Law of Moses.*)

## CONCLUSION

Christianity is fundamentally flawed in the most basic doctrine of sin and atonement. It is also flawed on the doctrine of the trinity; neither the Old or New Testament teaches the doctrine of the trinity. It was developed from the blending of Judaism and mythology; it is nothing more than idolatry.

Inerrancy of the New Testament is a doctrine that cannot be substantiated by the manuscripts we have today. In fact, the manuscripts we have testify against the doctrine of inerrancy.

For a Christian to question the integrity of the Old Testament just because the New Testament is shown not to be inerrant is to make a fundamental mistake. He is unknowingly questioning the very basis of Christianity. Christianity depends upon two witnesses: the Old Testament and the New Testament. As prosecuting attorney, I demonstrated that the New Testament witness does not agree with the Old Testament witness. In response, the reaction of the Christian defense attorney is to question the veracity of his other witness (how do you know my other witness isn't lying too?).

“The New Testament itself can no longer be given absolute status, either as a vehicle of undisputed truth - in light of this history, the proverbial phrase “gospel truth” takes on a new and ironical meaning - or as equally authoritative in all parts. It can no longer provide the authoritative interpretation of the Jewish Scriptures.” (Nichols, *ibid*, p419)

Jeremiah describes the regathering of Israel in the final days leading up to the return of the messiah. Jeremiah states that the regathered Jews will no longer give preeminence to their exodus from Egypt but will instead they give preeminence to their regathering from among the nations.

### Jeremiah 16:14-18

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, behold, **THE DAYS COME**, saith the Lord, **that it shall no more be said**, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; <sup>15</sup> **But**, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and **I WILL BRING THEM AGAIN INTO THEIR LAND** that I gave unto their fathers. <sup>16</sup> Behold, I will send for many fishers, saith the Lord, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain, and from every hill, and out of the holes [ of the rocks. <sup>17</sup> For mine eyes are upon all their ways: they are not hid from my face, neither is their iniquity hid from mine eyes. <sup>18</sup> And **FIRST I WILL RECOMPENSE THEIR INIQUITY** and their sin double (see Isaiah 40:2); because they have defiled my land, they have filled mine inheritance with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable things.

Then Jeremiah makes an amazing statement concerning the Gentiles in the Messianic Age:

**JEREMIAH 16:19-20**

**O LORD, MY STRENGTH, AND MY FORTRESS, AND MY REFUGE IN THE DAY OF AFFLICTION, THE GENTILES SHALL COME TO THEE FROM THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, AND SHALL SAY, SURELY OUR FATHERS INHERITED LIES, VANITY, AND THINGS WHEREIN THERE IS NO PROFIT SHALL A MAN MAKE GODS UNTO HIMSELF AND THEY ARE NO GODS?**

We have been taught what our fathers were taught. Unfortunately, they inherited lies and taught us, albeit sincerely, and with the best of intentions, to be idolaters.

Isn't it interesting that the New Testament actually records Jesus saying the exact same thing **to a Gentile woman**? Jesus said that the Jews worshipped the one true God while the Gentiles worshipped idols.

John 4:22

Ye [Gentiles] worship ye know not what [false gods]: we [Jews] know what we worship:  
**FOR SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS.**

### **THE IDOLATER**

Isaiah described an idolater that could not even recognize the futility of his idolatry even though it could be recognized plainly and objectively;

Isaiah 44:9-20

<sup>9</sup> They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they *are* their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. <sup>14</sup> He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak... <sup>15</sup> Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof; and warm himself; yea, he kindleth *it*, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshipeth *it*; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. <sup>16</sup> He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied: yea, he warmeth *himself*; and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire: <sup>17</sup> And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshipeth *it*, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou *art* my god. <sup>18</sup> They have not known nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand. <sup>19</sup> And **NONE CONSIDERETH IN HIS HEART**, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, **I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? SHALL I FALL DOWN TO THE STOCK OF A TREE?** <sup>20</sup> feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, **IS THERE NOT A LIE IN MY RIGHT HAND** [ idol]?

The idolater was so blinded that he could not recognize that the idol he worshipped was made from the same tree that he burned to keep warm, to roast meat, and cook bread. He was so totally deceived that he persisted in his false belief despite the objective reality that his idol was false. The objective evidence that his idol was false meant nothing to him; he was completely convinced that it was truly a god that could deliver him.

The idolater, undoubtedly, had some reason to believe that his idol was a god. Perhaps the idolater had experienced a warm glow along with a sense of peace and joy when he prayed to his idol god. Perhaps he had experienced answers to prayer requests,

and he attributed it to his god. Perhaps miraculous things occurred that he attributed to his god. Perhaps he experienced significant blessings that he attributed to his god. Perhaps others close to him had experienced all those things previously mentioned and they attributed them to their false god; and he wanted the god they had too. Perhaps he had been told that if he didn't believe and trust in this god that he would burn eternally in hell. Whatever the reason, the idolater was thoroughly convinced in his mind that his idol was a true god.

The idolater had an emotional relationship with his idol that prevented him from allowing any critical analysis of his faith. He was either unwilling, or unable, to consider in his heart or ask the question: "*Is there* not a lie in my right hand?" The idolater persisted in his false belief, despite the objective evidence that his idol of wood (old rugged cross) could not possibly be a god

This paper has presented factual, objective evidence from the scriptures that the fundamental Christian doctrines of sin and atonement, the trinity, the messianic character of Jesus, and the inerrancy of the New Testament scriptures are all false. Are you going to continue to call out to a false god that cannot deliver you or are you going to repent and acknowledge that we inherited lies and were idolaters?

May HaShem have mercy on our souls.