

THE GOD OF JESUS

Did Jesus have a God? Or was he in fact God? If he had a God means he could not be God. Jesus referred to God as being not only “his Father,” but also “his God.” John 20:17: “...go to my brethren and say unto them ‘I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.’” On the cross he cried out “My God, my God why have You forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34). Rev.1:6 (in the Greek) “and made us a kingdom, priests to the God and Father of him.” And Rev. 3:12: “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, ...and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God.” Both the Apostle Paul and Peter in the salutation of their letters state: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (II Cor. 1:3; Eph. 1:3; I Pet. 1:3), and Paul in Romans 15:6 states: “so with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We quote all this to show Jesus recognized God as both his Father and his God. To Jesus God was “the only true God” (John 17:3) not the *Triune God*, invented by 350 quarreling Bishops and Emperor Constantine, a worshiper of the sun god, in the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD which became the basic doctrine of the church, adhered to by the majority of churches today, both Catholic and Protestant.

Sometimes we forget that Jesus was a Jew. He was a Jewish man who was raised in a Jewish culture, raised by devout Jewish parents, and lived according to Jewish customs. As a child Jesus “grew and became strong being filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him ...he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:40, 52). The God of Jesus was the God of the Jews in the Old testament. This is vividly illustrated in Mark 12:28-31 when Jesus answers the question of the scribe when he asked “Which is the first (greatest) commandment of all? Jesus answered “the first is ‘Hear O Israel! The LORD (Hebrew *Elohim*, Jehovah) our LORD is one LORD, and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’” This is a direct quotation of Deuteronomy 6:4 which was the great Shema of Israel. *The Jewish Encyclopedia* defines “the Shema” as: “The word or the verse or chapter recited as the confession of the Jewish faith. Originally the Shema consisted only of one verse; Deuteronomy 6:4.” In commenting on these verses Robert L. Whitelaw in his book *The Precious Name!* wrote: “Jesus did not say to the scribe ‘Jehovah your God...,’ but ‘Jehovah our God,’ exactly as Moses wrote it, thereby including himself by the words ‘O Israel’ and therefore equally subject to the command ‘You shall love Jehovah your God.’ By saying ‘our God’ rather than ‘your God,’ Jesus therefore identified Jehovah God of the Old Testament as not merely a co-member (or even a senior member) of some divine ‘Trinity,’ nor even his personal Father, but greater yet, he thus declared Jehovah to be his very God, as He is of every true Israelite. And this profound truth is brought out over a score of times in Scripture.” The Jews were the custodians of the oracles (Rom. 3:2), and they never refer to a Triune God. It is unfortunate that many accepted authors and teachers are so mesmerized with the Trinitarian doctrine. For example, Dave Hunt, author of many Scriptural studies, stated in his September 2000 *Berean Call*: “The One whom the Bible calls ‘the God of Israel’ is so designated 203 times.” He continues:

“Unquestionably the Hebrew prophets all agree that God exists as a Tri-unity, three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but one God that in the Messiah He becomes man.” He cites no Scripture for this preposterous assertion, perhaps because there is none. It is remarkable that an “accepted scholar” in the religious world would make such a statement, but even more remarkable that many Christian people believe him. We wonder if Dave Hunt actually read what the Hebrew prophets said about Jesus. He must have missed the following Scriptures that, contrary to his statement, the following passages establishes that Jesus could not have existed as a part of a Tri-unity God. They rather establish that Jehovah (LORD) is the God of Jesus. Isaiah 11:1-3a: “Then a shoot will spring forth from the stem of Jesse...and the Spirit of the LORD will rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD, and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.” That this is a prophesy of the son of God is evident from the quotes in the New Testament: Romans 15:12; Revelation 5:5; 22:16. On this passage let’s ask: Is it possible for Almighty God to delight in the fear of Himself? Isaiah 42:1: “Behold My servant, whom I behold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights, I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring justice to the nations.” Fulfilled by Jesus in Mathew 12:18. If Jesus is one person of the tri-unity God, can the soul of God delight in God and can God put his spirit in God? Isaiah 61:1: “The spirit of the LORD God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted...” Psalm 45:7: “Therefore God, your God Has anointed with the oil of gladness beyond your companions” (Heb. 1:9). Could God *anoint* himself or *send* himself? How about Micah 5:4: “And he will arise and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.” (Old Testament proof Jesus is not a part of a tri-unity Deity and also Jesus has a God).

The Apostle Paul stated that he served “the God of our Fathers” (Acts 21:14) showing he served the God of the Old Testament. And it is the God of the Old Testament that was and is the God of Jesus. Why is it that the God revealed in the Old Testament has been supplanted by Greek and pagan philosophy which brought forth the idea of a Triune God taking place of the God who is declared by Jesus to be “The Lord our God is One” (Mark 12:29)? The name of God in the Old Testament is YHVH, in Hebrew (pronounced Yahweh in English) and is translated LORD (in capital letters in most modern versions). Charles Ryrie in *The Ryrie Study Bible* states that “the name occurs some 6,823 times in the Hebrew Bible. Richard Rubenstein in *When Jesus Became God* states: “Christians who accepted the triune God, distributed over three Persons, no longer shared Jehovah with their Jewish forebears or the Supreme Being with their pagan neighbors, nor could Jews claim to believe in the same God as that worshiped by Christians.” So, the triune God, proclaimed so vociferously in our hymn as “the Blessed Trinity” is not the God of the Old Testament who was the God of Jesus.

The New Testament Scriptures compellingly and forcefully declare the distinction between the Father and the Son. Jesus is called the son of God more than fifty times in the New Testament and not once is he called God the son. To be a “son of God” one must be a being other than God. When the Apostle Paul warned

the Corinthians about things sacrificed to idols he said “there is no such thing as an idol in the world and *there is no God but one*...yet for us there is but *one God, the Father*, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and *one Lord Jesus Christ*, through whom are all things, and we exist through him” (I Cor. 8: 4-6). He further states: “There is one God, and one mediator also between God and man, the man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5), and there is “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all who is over all and through all in all” (Eph. 4:5, 6). Hebrews 2:11 states: “both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father, for which he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” Christians are never called brothers of God but declared to be the brothers of Christ.

The Gospel of John is the flagship of those who endeavor to prove the validity of the Trinity doctrine. However, it is the Gospel of John, more than any other Gospel, that specifies the distinction between the Father and the son. T. E. Pollard in *The Johnine Christology*, quoted by George Eldon Ladd in *The Theology of the New Testament* states: “More explicitly and more emphatically than the other New Testament writers does John declare the divinity of Christ as the Son of God and at the same time the distinction between the Son and the Father.” Two times in John Jesus declares the Father to be the “only true God” thus eliminating himself as being God: John 17:3: “This is eternal life that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” John 5:44: “How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and only* God?” (the KJV wrongly translates this “...the honor that comes from God only?”). The Apostle Paul’s statement in I Timothy 1:17 coincides with John when he writes: “Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be glory and honor forever and ever. Amen.” John shows that Jesus could do *nothing* of himself: John 5:19: “Jesus answered ‘Truly, truly I say to you, the son can do nothing of himself, unless it is something he sees the Father doing, for whatever the Father does, these things the son also does in like manner.’” Verse 30: “I can do nothing on my own initiative. As I hear, I judge, and my Judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of Him who sent me.” John 8:28: “...I do nothing on my own initiative but speak the things the Father taught me.” Jesus distinguishes himself from the Father: “If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in His love” (John 15:10). The gospel of John shows plainly the subordination of Jesus to the Father: “...the Father is greater than I” (John 10:29). “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so he gave the son also to have life in himself, and He gave him authority to execute judgment” (John 5:26). The words and works of Jesus were not his own. He was the representative of the Father: John 14:10, 24: “The words I say to you I do not speak on my own initiative, but the Father abiding in me does His works...the word you hear are not mine, but the Father who sent me.” All that the gospel of John says about Jesus is shown to be true by the words of Peter in Acts 10:38: “you know Jesus of Nazareth, *how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power*, and how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, *for God was with him*.” Jesus did none of his mighty works because he was God, but because he was “anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, and God was with him.” To those who use the gospel of John to try to prove the validity of the doctrine of the trinity (specifically the first chapter concerning the word becoming flesh) should examine the rest of the Gospel and compare it with the epistles.

The subordination of Jesus to the Father is stated by Paul in these

words: “...then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when he has abolished all, rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. For He (God) has put all things in subjection under his (Christ’s) feet. But when He says, ‘All things are put in subjection,’ it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to him. When all things are subjected to him, then the son himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all” (I Cor. 15: 24-28). Jesus has a God and Father, Jehovah. This is the God to whom Jesus hands over the kingdom and places himself under God. If Jesus is the second person of God, according to trinitarian theology, how is it that Jesus, the second person of God, subjects himself to God? How can God be subject to God? Or did Jesus subject himself to himself? Simply stated Jesus Christ is subordinate to his God and Father, Jehovah.

Noted British scholar, William Barclay, in his *Daily Bible Studies, The Letters to the Corinthians* comments on these verses: “Paul clearly and deliberately subordinates the son to the Father. What he is thinking of is this. We can only use human terms and analogies. God gave to Jesus a task to do, to defeat sin and death and to liberate man. The day will come when the task will be fully and finally accomplished, and then the son will ascend to the Father like a victor coming home and the triumph of God will be complete...It is a case where one who, having accomplished the work that was given him to do, ascends with the glory of complete obedience as his crown. As God sent forth his son to redeem the world, so in the end he will receive back a world redeemed.”

A theory espoused by many Trinitarians is that the son emptied himself of Deity while on earth and *resumed it at his ascension*. This is known as the theory of *kenosis* or self-emptying based on Philippians 2:5-8. The theory that he resumed his Deity at the ascension is compounded by the faulty translation of John 13:3 where Jesus is speaking to his Apostles of his soon to come ascension. The KJV says: “He came from God and went to God,” the NASV reads: “He came forth from God and was going *back* to God,” the NIV: “He came from God and was *returning* to God,” the Living Bible: “He had come from God and would *return* to God.” The RSV has it right “He had come from God and was *going* to God.” The Greek text reads: “from God he came forth and to God he *goes*.” We say all this to show that the *man*, Jesus, was still a man when he ascended to the Father. I Timothy 2:5: “There is one mediator between God and men, *the man* Jesus Christ.” The ascended Christ, far from returning to a part of a trinity God, still spoke of *his God*: “Revelation 1:6, and 3:2,12 reads: “He (the ascended Christ) has made us to be a kingdom, priests to *his God*, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” To Sardis: “Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of *my God*.”...“He who overcomes I will make him a pillar in the temple of *my God*...I will write on him the name of *my God*, and the name of the city of *my God*, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from *my God*, and my new name”

On these verses from Revelation, Robert L George writes in his book *The Trinity’s Weak Links Revealed*: “Five times in the heavens Jesus calls Jehovah his God! How many more times would it take before Trinitarians start believing what Jesus Christ says and stop believing the man-made, uninspired, fallible traditional doctrine of the trinity? Their arguments may sound reasonable, but they are based on man’s feeble and worldly-wise conclusions, not upon the teachings Christ brought to us.”