

The Bible
For Our Times

“WEEPING MAY ENDURE FOR A NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING.” PSALM 30:5

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Did the Apostles believe in...

The Trinity?

We respect all who accept Jesus as their savior. The following is offered in the spirit of dialog.

Our Trinitarian friends define the Trinity as one God in three persons—Father, Son, and holy Spirit—who are co-equal and all three are without beginning and end.

If the Apostles believed in the Trinity, why was it 285 years after the death of the Apostles, AD 381, before the holy Spirit was finally officially declared a person. The noted Trinitarian historian Adolph Harnack observed that up to 325 AD the majority of Christians insisted the holy Spirit was **not a person**.

If the Apostles believed in the Trinity, why is it that neither their associates, who survived them nor their descendents (the so called early Church Fathers) believed the trinity? Why did it take 285 years after the Apostles died before the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD finally recognized the Trinity.

If the Apostles believed in the Trinity, three Gods in one, why was it that not until 229 years after their death, the Nicene Council (325 AD), under the extreme pressure of Emperor Constantine, ruled that **only the Father and Son were two parts of one deity?** The two main antagonists were Arius who believed Jesus had a beginning and Athanasias argued Jesus had no beginning. Most Arians dared not challenge Emperor Constantine by refusing to sign the creed. The trinity was not discussed since most still believed the holy Spirit was

The dean of historians, Edward Gibbon's, in his History of Christianity, wrote: “If Paganism was conquered by Christianity, it is equally true that Christianity was corrupted by Paganism. The pure Deism [one God] of the first Christians... was changed, by the Church of Rome, into the incomprehensible dogma of the trinity.”

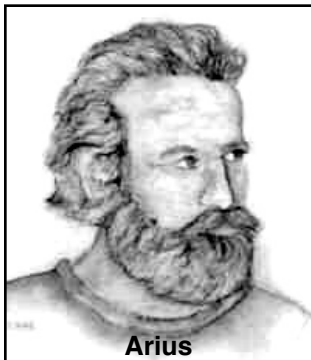
not a person. But Arius did refuse and was exiled.

Several years later Constantine reversed himself and endorsed the Arian position that Jesus had a beginning and was not equal with the Father. In 336 AD Arius was returned from exile when he suddenly died an abysmal death. Some historians question if Athanasius arranged it. Whatever,

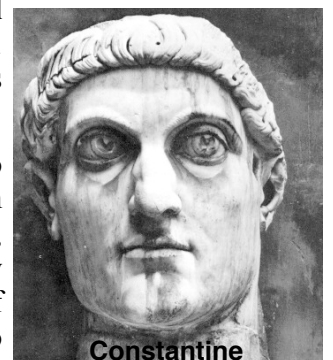
Constantine now an Arian ordered Athanasius exiled. Then Constantine was baptized by an Arian bishop and died in 337 AD. He was succeeded by Constantius in the East.

Only 34 years after the Nicene Council, AD 325, Constantius called the joint Council of Rumi-Seluicie in 359 AD. Why? The Nicene Council with an estimated attendance of only 225-318 bishops was hardly representative (Richard E. Rubenstein). Constantius, an ardent Arian, seemed determined to engage a truly ecumenical Council. He succeeded. Attended by more than 500 bishops from both the East and West—a complete representation of the Holy Roman Empire—it **reversed the Nicene Council and adopted the Arian creed that taught Jesus had a beginning and was not equal with God.** (Richard E. Rubenstein) Then Constantius died in 361 AD.

But politics continued to define theology. When Theodosius, a Trinitarian, became emperor he quickly called the Council of Constantinople in AD 381 to



Arius



Constantine

force the trinity. Trinitarian historians would have us believe the Trinity was finally dogmatized. However, these councils settled very little. Other councils met. The fortunes of both sides seesawed according to the politics of the Empire. Whenever the Arians were dominant, they persecuted the Trinitarians. And when the Trinitarians were dominant, they persecuted the Arians. Blood literally flowed in the streets.

The eventual result was not the outcome of rational debate and pious scholarship, but power politics and the shedding of blood. By the 8th century, Arianism was externally suppressed. Why? The Trinitarians proved to be more efficient in killing the Arians than the Arians in killing them. Thus was Christian orthodoxy established. Had the Arians been more militarily successful, their position would have become the standard of orthodoxy and Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, etc. would probably be opposed to the Trinity today.

The Victory of Blood

“Probably more Christians were slaughtered by Christians in two years [A.D. 342-343, during the Arian controversy] than by all the persecutions of Christians under the Romans during the previous three hundred years.” - Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, Vol. 4, *The Age of Faith*

“...more Christians died for their faith at the hands of fellow Christians than had died before in all the persecutions.” - Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries*.

Greatest Textual Fraud in History

After A. D. 597, to help make the trinity dogma stick, new wording proving the trinity begin to appear in 1 John 5: 7. The new wording was “*in heaven, the Father, the Word [Jesus, John]: 1], and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*” By AD 800 this new trinity wording spread into most manuscripts.

The textual scholar Bart Ehrman described this forgery as follows “**...this represents the most obvious instance of theologically motivated corruption in the entire manuscript tradition of the New Testament.**” The English King James Bible translated in A. D. 1611 retains this Trinitarian forgery. But none of our modern translations have it.

Some claim this wording in 1 John 5: 7 appeared in manuscripts before the fourth century. But Athanasius didn't die until A. D. 373 and he never used 1 John 5: 7 to prove the trinity.

Founding Catholic Doctrines

A.D. 370 through AD 800 experienced the entrenchment of the Catholic Church into the dictatorial church-state system that ruled Europe with an iron fist until the Reformation. During this period, the distinctive Catholic teachings were dogmatized—veneration of dead saints, AD 374; daily celebration of the Mass, AD 394; worship of Mary as the mother of God, AD 431; the doctrine of Purgatory, AD 593. It was during this same period that the Trinity was being forced on the people. In fact, emperors ruled that anyone who rejected the Trinity was not a Catholic, the religion of the Roman Empire.

The Trinity was just as much a dogma of the Catholic Church as Purgatory, worshipping saints, the Mass, or worshipping Mary as the mother of God. Back then, the strongest opponents of the Catholic Church were non-Trinitarians. Catholics have the liberty to believe the doctrine of the Trinity. But **why should Protestants accept the Catholic dogma of the Trinity** any more than the Mass or the worshipping of Mary?

From the Lord's deliverance of Israel out of Egypt unto the death of Jesus, a period of 1648 years, God dealt exclusively with the Jewish nation. Amos 3:2, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth...” During this whole period there is not even a hint that Jewish people believed in the Trinity. There is abundant proof that they did not. If the Trinity is such an important doctrine, certainly God would have revealed it to Israel, the “apple of his eye” (Deut. 32:10).

In fact, Jews to this day use Deuteronomy 6:4, given by God to Moses at Mt. Sinai, to prove that the Trinity is false. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.”

Psalm 90:2 –The Trinity is Polytheism

Psalm 90:2 proves that the Trinity is in reality **polytheism**.

“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, **even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.**”

Our Trinitarians friends say they believe in three persons in one God. Actually they believe in three Gods in one person, which plainly and simply is polytheism—a belief in three Gods.

Why do we all believe the Heavenly Father is God? Psalm 90: 2, speaking of the Father, says, “From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.” What makes the Heavenly Father God? **He had no beginning and has no end.**

If, as Trinitarians claim, Jesus had no beginning and has no end, then like the Father, Jesus is a God in the highest sense of the word.

If, as Trinitarians claim, the holy Spirit is a person who had no beginning and has no end, then the holy Spirit like the Father is a God in the highest sense of the word.

Psalms 90: 2, which applies exclusively to the Heavenly Father, defines Him as the absolute God. Why? Because He is from “everlasting to everlasting.” Therefore, if Jesus and the holy Spirit are both from “everlasting to everlasting,” then the Father, Son and holy Spirit are three separate and distinct Gods. **This is polytheism.**

The Man Jesus Not Co-Equal to God

There are so many scriptures like “the Father is greater than I” (John 14: 28) that most evangelicals dodge by claiming that Jesus in the flesh was subordinate to the Father because of the limitations of his flesh; but insist the risen Lord is equal with the Father. However, the Scriptures also show that the **risen Christ is subordinate** to the Father.

1Corinthians 11:3. “I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and **the head of Christ [the risen Christ] is God.**”

1Corinthians 15:28 “...And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son [the risen Son] also himself be subject unto him [the Father] that put all things under him [the son], **that God [the Father] may be all in all.**”

Some use John 1:1 to prove God and Jesus are co-equal. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word

was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:1. But Trinitarian translators concur that “**a god was the Word**” [instead of “**the Word was God**”] is a valid translation of the Greek. In the BIBLE TRANSLATOR, (a periodical written by Trinitarian translators for translators who are Trinitarians) January 1977 issue, an article by C.H. Dodd observed that “**The Word was a god**”. “As a word-for-word translation it cannot be faulted.”

The Scriptural testimony is that even the risen Christ is subordinate to the Father. The concept of “co-equality” is without Scriptural foundation.

Personal Pronouns Wrongly Applied

John 14:26 is often cited to prove that the holy Spirit is a person. But, this verse has been wrongly translated as follows: NAS. “But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.”

The word translated “whom” is in the neuter form and should have been translated “which”; and the pronoun translated “he” (*ekeinos*) in the passage is masculine to agree with the word rendered “comforter,” which is masculine even if the comforter is inanimate.

For example, in French, a knife would be spoken of as “he,” a fork as “she.” It would be just as logical to insist that a fork is a person because the word fork is feminine in French, as to claim that the comforter is a person because the word is masculine in the Greek.) *The Emphatic Diaglott* gives a better rendering: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, **which** the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and remind you of all things which I said unto you.”

A similarly incorrect use of personal pronouns occurs in John 14:17. The *Diaglott*, however, renders it thus: “...the Spirit of Truth, **which** the world cannot receive, because it beholds **it** not, nor knows **it**; but you know **it**; because **it** abides with you, and will be in you.”

In Greek, as in many other languages, the pronoun agrees with the gender of its noun, regardless of sex or personality. One might just as well cite in I Corinthians 13:4,5, “Charity ... seeketh not her (*heautēs*) own,” to prove that charity is a person, as to claim that the use of *heautou* proves the personality of the holy Spirit.

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This issue...

Did the Apostles believe in the Trinity?

After the Church of England broke away from the Catholic Church, there was a continual struggle over the Trinity. Why? It was a Catholic doctrine.

In the United States Benjamin Wilson's *Emphatic Diaglott* in 1865 was the first English translation to declare 1 John 5:7 spurious. Actually, from 1775 there was a growing reaction against the Trinity. By the early 1800s there were four denominations that rejected the Trinity. All were Evangelical in that they accepted Jesus as their personal Savior.

The *Emphatic Diaglott* is unfortunately solely identified with Jehovah's Witnesses. Actually, they published the *Diaglott* and several other translations until they came out with their own Bible, *The New World Translation*. Then they stopped publishing the *Diaglott*. The *Emphatic Diaglott* is still available from its original publishers, the Church of God. Imagine a church needing its own translation to prove it's teachings.

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