

# PART THREE of THREE

## The History of The Doctrine of the Trinity

### The True Scriptural Picture

"And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be His SERVANT...I will also give thee to be a light to the Gentiles...I will PRESERVE thee" - Isaiah 49:5-8

#### PASSAGES QUOTED TO PROVE THE TRINITY

The verses considered were presented by a trinitarian as the best he knew to "prove" the doctrine of the Trinity.

Now to consider, in the light of Scripture, the verses submitted as proving that Christ was a pre-existent part of a co-equal, co-eternal Trinity of three Gods.

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#### JOHN 5:22

"For the Father judgeth no man but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

This is put forward to prove that "Christ claimed he was divine." If this is meant to mean he claimed he was a co-equal, co-eternal member of the Trinity, then it disproves the very point it is put forward to support -- "The Father hath committed all judgment to the Son."

The Father is the Supreme Almighty God with power to commit judgment to whom He will. Consider the context, and see how it shatters the "co-equal" idea -- "The Father hath given the Son authority" (v. 27).

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, so I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (v. 30).

A more unfortunate example could hardly be chosen to prove the Trinity. See Acts 17:31 -- "God will judge the world by that MAN whom He hath ordained...He (God) hath raised him (Jesus) from the dead." See also Romans 2:16 -- "God shall judge men by Jesus Christ."

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#### JOHN 10:30

"I and my Father are one"

To show that this is no proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, or of the pre-existence of Christ before he was born, it is only necessary to refer to John 17:11. Jesus, praying to God, says -- "Holy Father, keep through Thine Own Name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, AS WE ARE..."

"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 (v. 21).

"That they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (v. 22).

The meaning of the oneness, or unity, that Jesus had in mind, is very clear from this passage. It is the "unity of the Spirit" that must exist among true brethren (Eph. 4:3) -

"We are ALL ONE in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

Surely no one who is familiar with this wording in John 17 would sincerely consider John 10:30 any proof of the Trinity or Jesus' pre-existence before he was born a helpless babe.

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## JOHN 6:40

"And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

It is difficult to see how this is thought to prove any of the points in question. Unquestionably God has given Jesus power to raise the dead, and he will raise all the responsible dead when he returns to earth at the "last day."

This is not in question. All who truly believe the Bible believe it (those that are not deluded with the "immortal soul," "heaven at death" idea).

Speaking of Jesus' power (which seems to be the thought here), bear in mind Acts 2:22 -- "Jesus, a man approved of God by miracles which God did by him."

And Matt. 23:18 -- "All Power is given unto me."

By whom? if he himself were co-equal part of the Supreme Power of the universe.

Note how these very passages quoted to prove the Trinity actually disprove it.

"The will of HIM THAT SENT ME."

Jesus never claimed co-equality with God, but always the very reverse. He said God had sent him, and he came to do God's will, not his own.

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## JOHN 10:17-18

"I lay down my life that I might take it again."

No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have power (exousia) to lay it down, and I have power (excusia) to take it again."

The word here translated "power" is exousia. It occurs just over 100 times. In a majority of these occurrences the RV translates it "authority," and 10 times "right."

It is not the common word for "power," which is dunamis - strength, ability. Both AV and RV translate exousia as "right," for instance, in Rev. 22:14 -- "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right (exousia) to the tree of life." This obviously does not mean that obeying God's commands give a man the physical power to raise himself from the dead to immortality, but that he thereby is granted a right to it.

Even more to the point, in illustration is John 1:12- "As many as receive him gave he power (exousia, RV: right) to become sons of God."

The AV margin gives "right or privilege." Believers have been given the right or privilege of becoming sons of God.

These passages will illustrate what Jesus meant when he said he had exousia - the right - to take up his life again after having laid it down in death.

As to Who actually raised Jesus from the dead, the Scriptures leave not the slightest doubt. Many times we are told GOD raised him from the dead. Consider very particularly the record in Acts 2 for a clear understanding of the relation between Christ and God (v. 22):

"Jesus of Nazareth, a MAN approved of God by Miracles which God did by him."

"David speaketh concerning him, Thou (God) wilt not leave my (Jesus') soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the way of life" (vs. 25-28).

"God swore to him (David) that He would raise up Christ" (v. 30).

"He (David) seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption" (v. 31).

"This Jesus hath God raised up" (v. 32).

"God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ" (v. 36).

All this is utterly incompatible with the Trinity. Note the last statement -- God hath made Jesus Lord. God approved him; God did miracles by him; God made known to him the way of life; God did not suffer him to see corruption; God raised him; God made him Lord. Consider the following:

"The Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead" (Acts 3:15).

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus...him hath God exalted" (Acts 5:30-31).

The "God of our fathers" to whom Peter refers as raising Jesus was the one and only true God of Whom Moses, the prophets and Jesus spoke.

"Him God raised up the third day" (Acts 10:40).

"It is he which was ordained of God to be Judge" (Acts 10:42).

"His (God's) mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead, and set him at His own right hand....and hath put all things under his feet" (Eph. 1:19-21).

"The God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." (Heb. 13 :20).

How did God bring Jesus from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant? Here we are told Jesus was brought from the dead through his own blood. This deep and important truth is crushed into unrecognizability by the Trinity.

See also Acts 13:30, 33, 34, 37; Acts 17:31; Rom. 6: 4; 2 Cor. 4:14; Gal. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:21 - all stating that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Before we leave this John 10:17-10, note well the finish of it -- "I have power to take it again. This is commandment have I received of my Father." It will be remarkably noted that the very context of these verses quoted to support the Trinity are directly CONTRARY to the all-powerful, co-equal, none-greater-or-less theory.

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## PHIL. 2:5-7

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation. and took upon him the form of a

servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

What part of this is thought to give support to the idea that Jesus was a co-equal, co-eternal, pre-existent part of the One Eternal God?

What this declares, briefly, is that Christ - though he recognized himself to be by birth the Son of God, still he did not presume upon this supremely exalted relationship, but humbly submitted to the fact that he, like all other men, owed service and obedience to God, and must "work out his salvation with fear and trembling" (see v. 12).

The meaning of this passage is illustrated perfectly by Heb. 5:8 -- "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

Notice in the immediate context of this passage in Phil. 2, at v. 9-- "Wherefore (New Amer. Rev.: Therefore) God also hath highly exalted him."

One co-equal part of the Supreme One God highly exalting another co-equal part, because the latter had humbly submitted to death at the command of the former? The Bible does not ask us to accept such confusion.

Let us consider this passage in detail:

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery (RV: thought it not a thing to be grasped) to be equal with God."

This is so well illustrated by "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience" (Heb. 5:8) that it needs no further explanation. Notice the contrast: "form of God - form of a servant." Compare with the contrast "Son-servant" in Heb. 3:5-6. Also in Gal. 4:2 -- "The heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors (learned obedience) until the time appointed of the father."

Clearly, therefore, "being in the form of God" refers to the fact that his birth by the overshadowing Spirit-Power constituted him the "Son of God" (Luke 1: 35).

Though so directly related to God, he did not presume upon his position or "grasp at" equality with God. Does not this very passage prove he was NOT co-equal with God, and that he did not "grasp at" co-equality?

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**"But made himself of no reputation."**

How lowly, humble, unpretentious course of life - no worldly honors, no possessions or wealth - living with and ministering to the poor and despised of the land. The self-respecting of Israel look down on him for his lowliness and association with social outcasts (Isa. 53:3)-- "He was despised and we esteemed him not."

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**"And took upon him the form of a servant."**

See Matt. 20:25-28-- "The princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister."

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience" (Heb. 5:8)

"Behold My (God's) servant...I have put My Spirit upon him...I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people" (Isa. 42:1)

This is the SCRIPTURAL picture - no flat, trinitarian, co- equality, "none greater, none afore."

The following is very clear as to Jesus' birth and SERVANTSHIP to God -- "The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name..

"In the shadow of His hand hath He hid me.

"And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be His servant...

"Thus saith the Lord to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhoreth (There can be no doubt as to who is meant)...

"I have heard thee, and I have helped thee, and I (God) will preserve Thee, and give thee for a covenant" (Isa. 49:1-8).

God formed Jesus from the womb to be His servant. Surely that's plain. Where then is co-eternal, co-equality - eternal, equal parts of a Supreme God?

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### "And was made in the likeness of men."

The RV makes the tense clearer, and removes the impression created by a superficial reading of the AV that the "was made" follows, or is consequent upon, the "making of no reputation" The RV gives "being made." That is, being made in the likeness of men, he made himself of no reputation and took upon him the station or position of a servant.

The Emphatic Diaglott version is even clearer as to tense - "Having been made in the likeness of men."

The verb is "genomenos", rendered in the Bagster Interlinear New Testament, "having become."

Some versions join it to the following phrase, putting a period at "servant", and then continuing, "Being made in the likeness and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself." (Moffatt follows this construction).

All this is mentioned to point out that the Greek original does not support the impression drawn from the AV that the items of v.7 are consecutive in time, giving the idea of existence and consciousness BEFORE being "made in the likeness of men."

As Jesus grew from a babe to self-consciousness, he learned two facts concerning himself:

- (1) that he was the divinely-begotten Son of God and
- (2) that he was a man of the seed of Adam.

He did not presume upon the first, but humbly and obediently submitted to all the duties and obligations of the second, utterly abasing himself, even to the very lowest station of life. This is even clearer in the next verse --

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### "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself."

Finding himself (as he attained self-consciousness) a man, he obediently humbled himself before God -- the duty of all men. The whole passage is an exhortation to (v. 5) - -

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## "Let this mind be in YOU which was also in Christ Jesus."

The whole sense and point of this command depends upon the truth that Jesus was "made in all things like his brethren" (Heb. 2:17), and was through obedience exalted by God (v. 9 of this Phil. 2).

View Christ as "very God" -- co-equal, co-eternal, "possessor of" heaven and earth", unlimited in power and knowledge, unable to be tempted - and all this becomes meaningless and unreal.

It is "making the Word of God of none effect by tradition" - not openly denying it, but interpreting it in such a way that it loses all meaning.

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## I JOHN 2:22, 4:15

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is anti-christ, that denieth the Father and the Son" (2:22).

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (4:15).

These are quoted to prove "we are warned not to belittle Christ." This is VERY TRUE, and trinitarians do not realize how they are belittling Christ and nullifying his work by adopting the Platonic ideas which make his struggle and obedience and overcoming and resisting temptation an unreal pantomime by an almighty, all-knowing and untemptable God.

Jesus Christ rendered perfect obedience, never sinned, overcame every weakness and temptation. Therefore God hath exalted him that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (Phil. 2:9-10, just considered).

How could it be said "therefore" (for his obedience) God hath exalted him and given him a name, if he had ALWAYS BEEN co-equal, co-powerful, co-exalted "very god," right from the beginning?

It is ridiculous to say he was at the same time all powerful God and weak man. The Scriptures do not say this. It is the attempt to combine "Greek metaphysics" with the Scripture that has forced trinitarians to adopt this view.

As we have seen from the testimony of trinitarian historians, the religious leaders of the time the "Trinity" was developed were trying to combine religion with philosophy to make it acceptable to the heathen world.

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## 2 JOHN 7

"Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-christ".

This third passage quoted to prove "we are warned not to belittle Christ" is very significant, and worthy of much study. (In passing, note the wording "deceivers are entered into the world." Does this give any support in presuming their pre-existence, as such wording is said to do in the case of Christ? Where did these deceivers "enter the world" from? Where were they before? All will agree in this case that "entered the world" simply means "shown up" or "become manifest").

But the main point is that there were many deceivers even in John's day who denied that Christ had really and truly "come in the flesh", denied that he was truly a man, denied that he truly "increased in wisdom", truly had been born a helpless babe, truly had borne the same sin cursed nature that his brethren have to struggle with and must overcome.

It we make Christ an all-powerful, all-knowing, untemptable co- equal part of the Supreme God, we DENY THAT HE HAS COME "IN THE FLESH," and we are manifested as anti-Christ.

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## EPHESIANS 3:9

"God Who created all things by Jesus Christ"

In this particular case, the RV omits "by Jesus Christ," so this form of words can be considered under other passages.

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## JOHN 1:10

"He (Christ - quoting your insertion) was in the world and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."

In the first place, the parenthetical insertion of (Christ) is not a true or sound interpretation. It is assuming the point that it is desired to prove, or at least assuming a point from which to reason. The antecedent of "he" is not Christ, but "the Word" - the Logos, the Purpose, the Fiat. Peter says -- "By the word (logos - same as above) of God the heavens were of old" (2 Pet. 3:5).

No one appears to have any difficulty with this passage because the translators here have used a small "w" and have not followed it by a string of interpretive "he's." Peter is quoting from Psa. 33:6 -- "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath (Heb.: ruach - spirit) of His mouth."

Here "word" clearly means decree, determination, purpose; and is paralleled with "ruach" - breath, spirit, power.

Job records (26:13)-- "By His Spirit (ruach) He hath garnished the heavens." And in beginning of the record of creation itself -- "The Spirit (ruach) of God moved upon the face of the waters...And God said, Let there be, etc..."

Here again is the associated conception of power and purpose, Spirit and Word.

Creation was effected, then, by the Word and Spirit - the decree or purpose and the power or effluence - the Spirit-Wisdom. The 8th chapter of Proverbs is helpful in understanding chapter 1 of John -- Prov. 8:22 - "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old..."

"When He prepared the heavens, I was there: when He set a compass upon the face of the depth (v. 27).

"Then I was by Him, as a master-workman (RV): and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (v. 30).

Who is this speaking? Who was with God at creation? Verse 1: "Doth not Wisdom cry? SHE standeth in the top of high places ...Unto you, O men, I call."

A reading of this chapter will greatly clarify the meaning of John 1. This eternal Spirit-Wisdom of God is the Word (logos) of John 1. It was with God and it was God, for God is the eternal embodiment of power and wisdom, and power and wisdom are His essential characteristics.

See also Prov. 3:19 -- "The lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens."

Another point that is a source of considerable obscurity is the fact that Greek personal pronouns (he she it) do not necessarily denote personality. Like modern French and other languages, all

nouns have gender, and although Greek has neuter gender, still many impersonal nouns are either masculine or feminine, and take corresponding masculine or feminine pronouns.

"Logos" (word) is masculine. It therefore always takes "he" in Greek. Normally this should be translated "it" in English, because "word" is neuter, but if in the translator's theology it denotes a person, then he naturally renders it "he."

Another point to be noticed is the "by," as in v. 3" - All things were made by him....(v. 10) The world was made by him."

The Greek word here is "dia", which the RV in both of these verses renders "through", showing that the thing or person referred to is not the primary operator, but the reason or instrumentality.

This preposition "dia" has a wide range of use and meaning. It is used with two declensions (that is, cases) of the noun or pronoun. With the Accusative it means "because of," "for the sake of." With the Genitive the idea of instrumentality is predominant, but still the meaning can be so wide that "dia" with the Genitive is rendered in the AV "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake" in Rom. 15:30. (The pronoun following "dia" in John 1, vs. 3 and 10 is in the Genitive).

In Rom. 5:21 appears-- "Even so might grace reign through (dia, with Genitive) righteousness."

Not that righteousness is the direct agent by which grace reigns, but the obvious meaning is that grace reigns because of righteousness.

"Dia" with the Genitive also occurs in 1 Thess. 4:2 -- "Ye know what commandments we gave you by (dia) the Lord Jesus."

This shows the broad and indefinite use of "dia," for it certainly does not mean that Jesus was the instrument through whom Paul conveyed his commands to the believers. The meaning here is clearly "on behalf of" or "by the authority of." Similarly in v. 14 -- "Them also which sleep in (dia) Jesus."

We cannot interpret this to mean that Jesus is the agent by which they do their sleeping.

Rom. 14:14 - "There is nothing unclean of (dia, with Genitive) itself."

That is, by reason of, on account of, itself.

These instances of "dia" with the Genitive are given to show that it is of such broad and varied meaning that its use in John 1:3 and 10 and the other passages quoted is no proof that Jesus was actually present and operative at creation.

The fact that Jesus is the center and keystone of God's whole purpose fully satisfies the requirements of these verses. They do not prove his pre-existence.

All things were made by the Spirit-Word, or Spirit-Wisdom, of God. This first chapter of John tells us that this Spirit-Word was made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ (v. 14). Jesus Christ was the embodiment and manifestation of the Word of God. The whole Word or Purpose converges upon him and is expressed in and manifested in him. He is the center, cornerstone and basis of the whole creation. Through him God has made, and is making, all things.

But it is a misapplication of this truth, and a confusing of the plain scriptural record, to infer from this that he existed before he was born.

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18).

The man Christ Jesus was born in Bethlehem as plainly and clearly recorded in Scripture. The Spirit-Word manifested in and through him was eternally with, and of, God. God, not the three-in-one God, but the one true God of the Bible, by the Spirit, manifested Himself in, and spoke and worked through, His Son, the man Christ Jesus.

Jesus is the "beginning of the creation of God" - Rev. 3:14. (Note particularly that he is part of the "creation of God" - clearly therefore not part of the eternal, uncreated ONE GOD).

Does this mean that he was the first thing actually created, or does it mean that he is the foundation stone of the final, perfected result? The former alternative is out of harmony with the plain record of his birth - the latter is the very heart of the revelation and purpose. Consider Col. 1:15 -- "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature."

Does this mean that he was the very first creature ever born? The answer is in v. 18 -- "He is the Head of the Body, the Ecclesia: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead." Paul tells the Romans (8:29) -- "Whom He did foreknow, He (God) also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he (Jesus) might be the firstborn among many brethren."

He says Jesus is -

"The firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20). This is clearly the creation of which he is the beginning. If Jesus is a co-eternal, co-equal, immortal, undying, part of the One Supreme God, how can he be the "firstborn from the DEAD," "the first- fruits of them that SLEPT"?

What havoc this Platonic idea of the Trinity plays with the revealed truth of the Bible!

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## HEBREWS 1:1-2

"God hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds."

Here again, in passing, note these very passages (quoted to "prove" the Trinity) cannot be harmonized with the Greek metaphysical co-eternal, co-equal, none afore, none greater idea. We are here again plainly told that God - the Scriptural ONE TRUE GOD - has appointed Jesus heir of all things.

Can you not see the absurdity of saying that one co-equal part of the eternal possessor of heaven and earth appoints another co-equal part of the same eternal possessor, to be heir of all things?

Can you not see that the Trinity is one conception, and the God of the Bible is something entirely different, and endless absurdity and conflict is created by trying to combine the two ideas - one the heathen idea of men, and the other the divine revelation of God?

And this (Hebrews) is the epistle in which we are told (5:7) Jesus prayed to Him that was able to save him from death, and (5:8) he learned obedience and (5:9), he was made perfect.

It is significant that the two "by's" in this passage quoted (Heb. 1:1-2) are different words in the original. The first ("by His Son") is "en," the second ("by whom He made the worlds") is "dia," to which the remarks made previously apply. Jesus Christ was certainly the foreordained cause, reason or motive for the creation.

It is to be noted that "worlds" here is "aions" - ages, as in Eph. 2:7, "the ages (aions) to come."

Emphatic Diaglott renders this -- "On account of whom also He constituted the ages."

Young's Literal Translation has-- "Through whom also He did make the ages."

Rotherham has-- "Through whom also He hath made the ages."

Here is another significant side-issue: The word here translated "made" is rendered "appointed" in Heb. 3:2

"Jesus, who was faithful to Him that appointed (poieo) him." This word occurs many times and really means "made." This is the only place it is translated "appointed." It would be difficult enough for the translators (with their co-equal trinitarian theology) to have to say that God appointed Jesus, but it would have been much more difficult to translate this word in the normal way and say that God made Jesus Christ.

Using the same word "appointed" in 1:2 that the translators used in Heb. 3:2 (the original is the same), we have-- "By (or through) whom He appointed the ages."

This point should be borne in mind - our standard translations of the Bible are by trinitarians. Therefore in the very nature of things (with no reference to their sincerity) they are bound to always choose words that favor that view and give that color wherever possible.

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## COL. 1:16-17

"For by (en - RV: in) him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by (dia - RV: through) him, and for (eis - RV: unto - note the fluidity of translation of these prepositions) him: and he is before all things, and by (en - RV: in) him all things consist."

The same remarks concerning "dia," and the central foreordained place of Jesus Christ in the whole scheme of salvation, apply here.

However, it is clear in this case - from the context - that the "all things" in question are "thrones, dominions, principalities and powers." This explanation here teaches us to bear this in mind in connection with the other similar passages.

The literal creation of the heaven and earth and their contents was just the first preliminary step in the real "creation" that God is working to and building on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, after his resurrection (Matt. 28:18) -- "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

And 1 Peter 3:22 -- "Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

Compare Eph. 1:20-21 (note the very similar wording to the passage quoted from Col.) -- "He (God) raised him (Jesus) from the dead and set him...far above all principality and power and might and dominion...and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church."

Compare this with Dan. 4:17 -- "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."

Combining these passages, we can easily see how all visible and invisible thrones, dominions, principalities and powers in heaven and earth are created by and for him.

In the AV, there are 3 "by's" in this quotation. The middle one is "dia," already fully examined. The other 2 are "en" in the original. The RV renders both "in." This word "en" is translated "because of" in Matt. 26:31 -- "All ye shall be offended because of (en) me - this night." All things were created because of Christ.

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## COL. 1:17

"And he is before all things."

The supposed force of this in connection with the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence apparently rests on the idea that the word "before" (pro) has exclusive reference to time. This is not correct. Like the English word "before," it has other meanings, including rank and precedence.

Grimm-Thayer Greek Lexicon (a recognized standard) gives one of the meanings as "superiority" and "preeminence," quoting James 5:12: "But above (pro) all things, my brethren, swear not."

And 1 Peter 4:8 - "Above (pro) all things, have fervent charity."

The passage in question (Col. 1:17) will be seen to correspond better with the context if it is rendered, "And he is above all things." It is superiority, preeminence, and supreme authority and position that the whole passage is emphasizing.

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## JOHN 17:5

"And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with mine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

The Scriptures reveal Jesus to us as a man who was divinely begotten of the seed of David by the Holy Spirit overshadowing Mary and causing her to conceive. This child grew in wisdom, grew to manhood, rendered perfect obedience and submission to God in the face of trial and temptation, and on account of that obedience was raised from the dead and exalted by God to glory and honor at His right hand.

To introduce an immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, untemptable, co-equal God into the picture, which the Scriptures never do, is to go immediately to the fantasies of Greek mythology.

How then are we to understand this verse as a harmonious part of the whole scriptural picture? It will be quite clear if we consider similar expressions in other parts of the Scripture. The best interpreter of the Bible is the Bible itself.

"According to His own purpose and grace, which was given US in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Tim. 1:9).

GIVEN US BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN. Does this prove that we were in existence before the world began?

"According as He (God) hath chosen US in him (Jesus) before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

Did the "us" who were "chosen before the foundation" Of' the world actually exist at that time, or is this speaking of God's purpose and foreknowledge?

"Whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).

Was Jesus "slain from the foundation of the world"? YES: in the same sense in which he had glory before the foundation of the world. The RV puts the above translation in the margin as uses --

"Written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain."

Either rendering illustrates the point. To have one's name written in the book of life from the foundation of the world is obviously similar to having glory from the foundation of the world.

This does not prove pre-existence, but predestination, and is applied to all God's sons, but of course in all cases primarily and pre-eminently to Christ.

God said to Jeremiah (1:5) -- "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee. Is this speaking of foreknowledge and predestination, or does it mean that Jeremiah pre-existed before he was born? Could God know a man - that did not exist? YES, in His purpose.

"Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden.

"I have even called thee by name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known Me" (Isa. 45: 1,4).

This was written well over 100 years before Cyrus was born. Could God hold the hand of a man whose birth was a century in the future? Yes, in His purpose.

"The children being not yet born, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger.

"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13).

God said to Rebekah -- "Two nations are in Thy womb" (Gen. 25:23).

Did these two nations then exist, or is God speaking from the point of view of His foreknowledge and purpose?

Paul says (Heb. 7:9) -- "Levi paid tithes in Abraham, for he (Levi) was yet in the loins of his father (New Amer. Rev: ancestor) when Melchizedek met him (Abraham)."

Actually Levi was Abraham's great grandson, and he was not born until more than 150 years after the time Paul said he was "in Abraham's loins" and "paid tithes."

Are we to infer from this form of language that Levi pre-existed? Jesus existed in God just as Levi existed in Abraham, except that Jesus existed in a much more vivid and positive sense because he was the very center of the purpose, and everything was framed with him in mind, whereas Levi was, so to speak, just an ordinary and unforeshadowed development from Abraham.

Paul speaks (Titus 1:2) of -- "Eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

Does this indicate the pre-existence of those to whom eternal life was promised? Trinitarians dare not suggest that it was Jesus Christ to whom it was promised because (apart from the context indicating otherwise), this would be admitting that he did not have eternal life then, and was therefore not co-equal and co-eternal. No, the Scriptures here again clearly speak on the basis of eternal purpose and pre-destination.

The foregoing passages surely illustrate, then, the way in which Jesus had glory with God before the world was - the glory which he now prayed to be ACTUALLY GIVEN -- "I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do - NOW glorify me."

This would be quite meaningless if he were an immortal God, and had eternally possessed, and therefore still possessed, this glory. Was he praying to another co-equal part of himself, asking to be glorified with glory which he himself had eternally possessed in exact equality and right and power with the One to Whom he prayed? O, Trinity, what a mockery of beautiful eternal Truth you are!

The following passages will complete the picture, and show that in this matter of pre-cosmic glory with God, all the faithful sons of God shared with Christ, as the Body with the Head - he, of course, always primarily and pre-eminently. ALL were glorified in the "eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ" (Eph. 3: 11):

"Whom He (God) did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he (Jesus) might be the firstborn among many brethren.

"Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. 8:29-30).

A standard trinitarian commentary (JFB, Eerdmans Pub. Co.) says on this passage:

"All this is viewed as past, because, starting from the past decree of predestination to be conformed to the image of God's Son, of which the other steps are but the successive unfoldings, all is beheld as one entire, eternally-completed salvation."

There, in a trinitarian's own words, is a beautiful explanation of the pre-cosmic glory of Christ mentioned in John 17:5. In this passage in Romans, trinitarians are compelled to understand the glory in the pre-destined future, though spoken of in completed and past terms. Otherwise they must believe in the pre-existence of everyone.

He says it is "viewed as past because the decree of predestination is past, and all other steps are successive unfoldings." In other words (1 Cor. 2:7) -

"The hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory."

\* \* \*

Let us not destroy the glorious Scriptural picture of salvation by making our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, an eternal, pre-existent, omnipotent, untemptable, co-equal God.

He was a "man made strong" (Psa. 80:17); a man specially and divinely begotten by the eternal Spirit-Power of God; a man in whom God dwelt, and through whom God spoke and worked and manifested Himself; a man who recognized that of himself he could do nothing - that all power, wisdom and goodness was of God, a man who rendered perfect submission and obedience to God - "Not my will, but Thine, be done."

\* \* \*

The doctrine of the Trinity is not scriptural. The idea of 3 co-equal, co-eternal Gods is never to be found anywhere in the Bible. Like the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, it is provedly derived from the philosophy of the pagan Greeks, particularly Plato - the foolish "wisdom of the world" which the Apostles and early believers repudiated and combated, but which the apostate and worldly church later succumbed to.

The very emphatic distinction that Paul makes (in the first 2 chapters of 2nd Cor.) between the "wisdom of the world" and the wisdom of God ("unto the Greeks foolishness") positively proves that any theology derived from Platonic Greek philosophy (which the Trinity admittedly is) must be false and anti-scriptural.

Go to: [Part 1](#) or [Part 2](#) of The History of The Doctrine of The Trinity