

**Harlot of Babylon According to Irvin Baxter;
Trinity and Oneness
by Karl Kemp; January, 2016**

All quotations were taken from the New American Standard Bible, 1995 edition, unless otherwise noted. Sometimes I make comments in the middle of quotations using brackets [] or [[]] to make them more obvious. I am using straight quotation marks ("), hyphens (-) instead of dashes, and a few other things like this because some of the internet sites where I post these articles require it. Also they don't allow footnotes. Cf., e.g., means "compare, for example."

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INTRODUCTION. I'll borrow part of this Introduction from the first paper, "Critique of Irvin Baxter's 'Revelation Commentary.' " When I decided I should write the first paper on Irvin Baxter's teaching on the end times, I didn't have any idea that I would have a need to write this second paper, which is, I suppose, more important than the first paper. I have been reading Baxter's "EndTime" magazine for more than twenty years. (I haven't heard hardly any of his radio or TV broadcasts, but I did hear a few of the Praise the Lord broadcasts on the Trinity Broadcasting Network on the end times where he was one of the guests.) It is clear that his ministry is influencing large numbers of Christians around the world. As you can tell from my first paper, although I appreciate some of the things that Baxter teaches, I often disagree with his end-time teaching.

I didn't have any idea that I would need to add a second paper to point out some super-strong things that Baxter says against those who baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in his "Revelation Commentary" and to discuss this oneness theology and the Trinity. I always knew that Baxter was associated with the United Pentecostal Church, International, which is oneness. I never have agreed with their oneness doctrine, which I consider to be a serious problem, but I believe that some of them are true Christians. (Based on what Baxter says, there is no way he could accept me, or a whole lot of believers like me, as a true Christian. I believe this is a serious problem!) Also, it takes a lot more than believing in the Trinity to make a person a true Christian. God is the Judge! HE determines who the true Christians are! We should be very careful about passing judgment for God regarding who the true Christians are!

I'm not attacking Baxter or anybody else, but I am trying to make it a top priority to be faithful to God and present the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. I would like to be a blessing to Baxter and every Christian, and every non-Christian.

I have written four papers dealing with oneness theology that are available on my internet site (Google to Karl Kemp Teaching): "Who Do We Worship? (Jesus-only Worship Songs)"; "Who Do We Pray To?"; "The Name *Yahweh* and God the Father and God the Son: The Name *Yahweh* and a Listing of Some of the Large Number of Passages in the Hebrew Old Testament Where We Can See the Son of God along with God the Father"; and "More on the Trinity: Some Key Passages from the New Testament Where We See the Full Deity and Preexistence of God the Son with God the Father and Some Key Bible Passages Used to Teach a Oneness View of God." Essentially all of the last paper I just listed in included in this present paper.

It is significant that in all the years I have read Baxter's magazine (or heard him anywhere else) I don't believe he ever told his readers that they were not true Christians and were headed for God's eternal wrath and judgment if they were baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and didn't repent of that serious error (or if they didn't speak with tongues, etc.). (I assume that a large number of his readers/listeners believe in the Trinity.) He did, however, occasionally invite his readers to order his literature on how to be saved. I pretty much knew what that literature would say, and recently, in the process of writing this paper, I ordered that literature to confirm what it says. It presents the typical oneness (UPCI) viewpoint. I'll comment briefly on that literature at the end of this second paper.

I was very disappointed and somewhat shocked when I read Baxter's "Revelation Commentary," while preparing to write the paper on that commentary on the book of Revelation; the book of Revelation is of key importance for end-time prophecy. He strongly and clearly stated, for example, that Christians who baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are part of the whore (using the wording of the King James Version) of Babylon (I'll document this as we continue) and "In conclusion, God's anger toward Catholicism and other branches of false Christianity [which he says includes all the non-Roman Catholics who baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit] is best described with Revelation 19:3: 'And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke [the smoke of the "great whore" (Rev. 19:2 KJV)] rises up forever and ever' " (page 145). Baxter uses a lot of strong language. Using such strong language is dangerous if God doesn't agree with what you are saying. Baxter is totally and unequivocally writing off most of the Christians who live on the earth (and who have ever lived on the earth), including most evangelicals. Anyway, you cannot accuse

Baxter of not saying what he believes in his "Revelation Commentary." I will be quoting some equally strong language from Baxter as we continue. I should point out that Baxter's eight page brochure that he makes available titled "Why So Many Churches And Which Is Right" also teaches that those who baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, etc. are part of the whore of Babylon.

What is my motivation for writing this second paper. In the first place I want to please God and teach the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. As I mentioned, I am not attacking Irvin Baxter or his denomination. In fact I pray that this paper will prove to be a blessing to him and many oneness Christians. The more we understand, believe, and live the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches, the more God will be glorified and His people blessed. I also want to warn Christians who believe in the Trinity that Baxter's teaching in his "Revelation Commentary" is packed with oneness teaching. For one thing, his oneness viewpoint strongly influences the interpretation of many passages in the book of Revelation (and many passages throughout the New Testament and to some extent in the Old Testament).

I don't remember ever reading such strong language used against those who have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (who believe in the Trinity). Baxter almost makes it sound like they are God's number one enemy. According to his interpretation of the book of Revelation, God spends far more time discussing his wrath against those "Christians" who are (according to him) part of the whore/harlot of Babylon than he spends discussing His wrath against the devil or Antichrist or anybody else. I trust Baxter is sure he is being faithful to God with this emphasis: He is warning those who are part of Babylon the great whore/harlot to flee from her and join him and the oneness Christians.

It is one thing to believe we should hold a oneness view of God and baptize in Jesus' name. It is quite another thing to dogmatically insist that God's wrath is very strongly against all who baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and that they are part of the whore/harlot of Babylon of the book of Revelation. (For one thing, oneness Christians typically spend a lot of time speaking of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as the Bible does, but they insist that there is ultimately only one Person there and that in heaven that one Person will be Jesus, and that it is totally necessary that we be baptized in the name of that one Person, Jesus.) We certainly cannot have much respect for, or have much of a relationship with, those that we are sure are totally rejected by God and recipients of His intense wrath.

I'll Quote a Little from what Baxter Says under the Heading "The Mother of Harlots" on page 137: "If she [the Roman Catholic Church] is the mother of harlots, that means she

has daughters who walk in her footsteps. Who are the daughters? ... When they [the Protestants, starting at the time of the Reformation] did not return to the original form of baptism [he means baptism in Jesus' name] nor to a belief in the first commandment, 'Hear O Israel: the Lord thy God is one Lord,' which Baxter is sure teaches a oneness view of God, they doomed themselves to become daughter harlots just like their mother."

Baxter just quoted Deut. 6:4. His point, which is wrong, is that Deut. 6:4 proves a oneness view of God and that those who believe in the Trinity have doomed themselves to become daughter harlots (whores). Deuteronomy 6:4 wasn't dealing at all with, and was not all intended to deny, the doctrine of the Trinity. God didn't choose to adequately or fully reveal that doctrine in the Old Testament. We'll discuss Deut. 6:4 as we continue and later in this paper (see the CONTENTS OF THIS PAPER).

EXODUS 20:3 and DEUTERONOMY 5:7 spell out the first commandment of the Ten Commandments: "**You shall have no other gods before Me.**" It is significant that DEUTERONOMY 6:4 says essentially the same thing using different words: It says that Yahweh, the God of Israel (who is the Creator of, and God over, every being and thing that exists and the Bible is His book) is the only true God. (They didn't want to hear that in the ancient world any more than they want to hear that Jesus is the only way to the Father and to salvation in our day, but, according to God's Word, it is the truth.) The Mosaic Law in Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7; and Deut. 6:4 (and many other verses; I'll list some more later in this paper) was addressing the very serious problem of polytheism (that there are many Gods) that permeated the ancient world. (If polytheism was true, the God of the Bible was a liar. The Bible teaches that there are many other supernatural evil beings, starting with the devil, but there is only room for One who really is God, the One who created everything, for one thing.) These verses insist that the God of Israel is the only true God, but they have absolutely nothing to say against the triune view of the God of the Bible which is progressively revealed in the Old Testament and fully revealed in the New Testament.

I'll quote MATTHEW 22:35-38, which is quite relevant here: "**One of them, a lawyer, asked Him [Jesus] a question, testing Him, (36) 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' (37) And He said to him, ' "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." (38) This is the great and foremost [or "first"] commandment.' "** Jesus was quoting from Deut. 6:5, the verse right after 6:4. What Jesus called "the great and foremost [or "first"] commandment here, as He quoted from Deut. 6:5, communicates the same truth contained in Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7; and DEUTERONOMY 6:4, but here instead of commanding His people not to worship other

gods, He commands them to love God with everything in them. There was absolutely no room to love or serve any other god. But again, THERE IS NOTHING HERE AGAINST THE SUBSEQUENT AND CLEAR REVELATION OF THE ONE TRIUNE GOD (God the Father who is the One typically called God in the Bible with the Son and the Holy Spirit)!

Deuteronomy 6:4, as it is interpreted by oneness Christians, is extremely important for their oneness doctrine. Deuteronomy 6:4 is the number-one passage they typically use to try to prove their oneness doctrine. Monotheism (One God, the Triune God, the God of creation, the God of the Bible) is right, but that is very different than oneness, which teaches that there is only one Person and His name is Jesus. They interpret Deut. 6:4 to teach a oneness [one person] view of God instead of seeing that that verse is against polytheism (polytheism that permeated the ancient world), not at all against the triune God which is fully and clearly revealed as time goes on, especially in the New Testament.

Deuteronomy 6:4 and a few other verses is all that is needed to convince most oneness Christians that they are right, and then they close their minds. From that time on every other passage must be made to fit their oneness viewpoint, one way or another. ((Many, or most, Christians have wrongly closed their minds on many topics based on their understanding of a few verses. However, we must humble ourselves before God and seek Him for the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches on every topic, which includes making sure that we really understand the verses we are emphasizing. I don't believe there are any verses that teach a oneness view of God when they are rightly understood in their contexts.)) I am not suggesting that oneness Christians limit themselves to a few verses they think prove their viewpoint. Some of them, especially the scholars, discuss a large number of verses, and they make some valid points against some of the things said by some who believe in the Trinity, but I don't believe they have any passages that (when they are rightly understood) teach a oneness view of God. It is amazing how far oneness Christians (but this problem isn't limited to oneness Christians) can bend what many verses say to make them fit the doctrines they KNOW are true. (They often say that the KNOW they are true because God revealed it to them. Many think God revealed something to them when He didn't.) And like I mentioned, they typically got locked into that viewpoint based on very few verses. I admit that some erroneous (out of balance, overstated) teaching of some Trinitarians made/makes it easier to accept the oneness viewpoint, but that is no legitimate excuse. We desperately need the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches.

God's end-time judgment of Babylon the great harlot is so important that He devotes some three chapters of the book of Revelation to that judgment (cf. Rev. 14:8, 14-16; 16:18, 19; 17:1-19:6). (For some details see my paper on Rev. 14:6-19:21 that is on my

internet site.) I believe Babylon the great harlot is a symbol for the world, whose God is the devil (2 Cor. 4:4). It embraces, for one super-important thing, all the things the devil uses to try to seduce mankind from worshipping God. (He has been all too successful, because of the sinfulness of mankind.) It includes all false religion, very much including false, apostate Christianity, and the occult. Those parts of the Roman Catholic Church and other Christian churches that are apostate and unfaithful to God and His truth and righteousness ARE PART OF Babylon the great harlot. Believing in the Trinity or baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit does NOT make a Christian part of the whore of Babylon. Yes, I am sure of that! What a serious charge to make! Many oneness Christians do not agree with Baxter on that point, or the point that Trinitarians cannot be saved unless they repent and become oneness Christians.

Babylon (the devil's city and worldwide kingdom) also includes all the other things (idols) the devil uses to seduce mankind from God, including money, fame, sexual sins, occupations, arts, sports, and living in excessive luxury - for one thing, the devil, who fell through pride, knows how to appeal to the pride of man, which is at the root of sin (along with unbelief). I am not suggesting, of course, that all of the things I just listed are sinful in themselves, but anything we live for in place of God becomes an idol. It seems that many people are willing to sell their soul for very little. The fact that this end-time judgment of Babylon is such a big part of God's end-time judgment of the world, along with verses like Rev. 17:5, 6, 18; 18:3, 11-24; 19:2, should suffice to demonstrate that Babylon includes a lot more than what Baxter thinks it includes. I'll quote Rev. 18:24: "And in her [in Babylon] was found the blood of prophets and of saints and OF ALL WHO HAVE BEEN SLAIN ON THE EARTH [my emphasis]."

I'll include some excerpts from under Baxter's heading "The Judgment of the Great Whore" (pages 136, 137): "God always referred to Israel's worship of nonexistent or false gods as spiritual whoredom. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, and disobeyed the commandments of the Lord. When did that happen to the Roman Catholic Church? IT HAPPENED WHEN THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY WAS ADOPTED [my emphasis]. [Baxter seems to be obsessed with what he perceives to be the errors of the Trinity and being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.] They decided there were three separate persons in the godhead, each of which was God. [[THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE TRINITY DO NOT BELIEVE IN "THREE SEPARATE PERSONS." There is a unity of essence between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; they all partake of the essence of what it means to be God/deity, for one thing. I don't believe we have been given enough information (revelation) to fully understand the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and the relationship between the three Persons, but I don't see any difficulty in accepting this biblical doctrine. By the way, I am not saying that we have to use the word "person/Person," but

I don't know of any better word to use. God is not limited to our vocabulary or our dimension. It seems clear to me that many Christians (very much including some who believe in the Trinity) confuse the issue when they tell us more than what God has clearly revealed. (This often happens through the philosophical speculation of men, and demons are happy to make their input whenever the doors are open to them.) **WE NEED TO LIMIT OURSELVES TO WHAT THE BIBLE CLEARLY REVEALS!**] As a result, at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, the Roman Catholic Church changed the mode of baptism that had always been used by the church from baptizing people 'in the name of Jesus Christ' to 'Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.'

[[Some Comments Regarding Baxter's Last Sentence that Contains Several Serious Errors (This double bracket continues for thirteen paragraphs. I quote from David K. Bernard in these comments.): There are several serious errors in Baxter's last sentence, which we will discuss as we continue. The only thing right in the sentence is that the Council of Nicea took place in 325. For one thing, the early Christian writings before the Council of Nicea demonstrate that there was a whole lot of baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit taking place by Christians who believed in the Trinity. Baxter, and other oneness Christians, can easily verify this from one of the books written by the superintendent of the UPCI, a writer they can surely trust. The book is "Oneness and Trinity - AD 100-300 - The Doctrine of God in Ancient Christian Writings," by David K. Bernard. The book was published by Word Aflame Press (of the UPCI) in 1991. Bernard is well educated, including having a doctorate in law. He is totally biased to the oneness/modalistic viewpoint, but he had the integrity to make it clear in this book, for one thing, that there was a whole lot of baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit taking place in the years before Nicea.

Bernard's chapter 7 is titled "Early Trinitarians [Note that these dates are long before the Council of Nicea, AD 325]: Tertullian [about 160-230, who opposed Praxeas, who was the earliest modalist/oneness writer that I am aware of; he lived at the end of the second century and the beginning of the third century; modalists believed that the one person of God manifested himself in three different modes, like an actor wearing three different masks]; Origen [about 185-255], and Others." He included Clement of Alexandria (about 150-215); Hippolytus (about 170-236) who "vehemently opposed the modalist teacher Noetus, and he attacked the Roman bishops Zephyrinus and Callistus, accusing them of embracing modalism and bitterly impugning their character."; "Novatian [who died in 257] of Rome who was a vigorous opponent of Sabellius [another modalist; he went to Rome in the early third century]"; Cyprian (died 258); and he mentioned other Trinitarian writers from those years. How about those who taught oneness/modalism? That is the topic of his chapter 10, which we'll consider next. (The key names of the early teachers of modalism have already been mentioned in this paragraph.)

Bernard's chapter 10 is titled "Teachers of Modalism: Praxeas, Noetus, and Sabellius." Bernard points out that "Since none of the writings of the major teachers of modalism have survived, we must attempt to determine their views by reading the works of their opponents, a method that presents several difficulties." Starting in my next paragraph, I'll give a few excerpts from Bernard that tell a little about these oneness/modalistic teachers. Note the lateness of the dates for these teachers. As far as I can see that erroneous doctrine (oneness/modalism) didn't come on the scene until toward the end of the second century. It certainly didn't come from the apostles. (Bernard and the oneness Christians in general don't agree with my last two sentences, but based on what I have seen, all of the evidence, including the Bible and the early Christian writings, confirms what I just said. This information strongly demonstrates that the oneness viewpoint is wrong.)

"According to Tertullian's report, Praxeas came from Asia Minor to Rome ABOUT 190 [my emphasis] and taught his doctrine there. The doctrine spread everywhere, including Carthage, and stirred up a great controversy. Under pressure, Praxeas supposedly signed a retraction, but the doctrine sprang up again about twenty years later, which caused Tertullian [who believed in the Trinity] to write his tract." "Our information about Noetus comes from Hippolytus [who believed in the Trinity]. Noetus was from Smyrna in Asia Minor, and he founded a theological school in Rome. His followers included Epigonus, Cleomenes, and Sabellius. Hippolytus bitterly charged the two Roman bishops after Victor [Victor was a Roman bishop] Zephyrinus (199-217) and Callistus (217-23) - with promoting the views of Noetus. Callistus excommunicated both Hippolytus and Sabellius." "Sabellius was apparently the most prominent modalist teacher.... ... Sabellius probably came from Libya. He apparently preached in Rome ABOUT 215 [my emphasis; like I mentioned note these late dates for those who taught modalism/oneness]...."

I should mention (since we want the balanced truth) that David K. Bernard, who has written extensively to argue for the oneness view of God, is able to show from the writings of Tertullian and Hippolytus that they mentioned that the oneness/modalistic viewpoint was being accepted by many Christians in their day. (See Tertullian's "Against Praxeas" in chapter 3 in Vol. 3 of "The Ante-Nicene Fathers," for example. He mentioned that "the simple...who always constitute the majority of believers" found it difficult to see the total Unity that exists between the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit "who are so closely united with the Father in His substance" and that we must believe what the triune God has revealed about Himself. I'm not suggesting, by the way, that every detail that Tertullian said about the Trinity was correct, but that he was right to

teach the Trinity and oppose the oneness that came on the scene through Praxeas and others in his day.)

Paul F. Pavao ("Decoding Nicea" [Greatest Stories Ever Told, 2011, 2014], 463 pages), who believes in the Trinity, mentions (on page 46) that "Sabellius...was an early-third-century teacher who was excommunicated for denying the three persons of the Trinity. To Sabellius, God was just one divine person revealing himself three ways, in much the same way as an actor might play three roles." He goes on to point out that Sabellianism was easier to understand. [[It probably is easier to understand if you don't get into the details. For one thing, as Pavao points out, "The majority of believers in pre-Nicene Christianity came out of paganism. They had come from a religion of many Gods to Christianity of only one God. (Tertullian made this point.) How could this one God also have a Son? And how could this Son also be God?" We must understand that the Bible doesn't teach three separate Gods: There are three distinct Persons related in ways that we do not fully understand (because it hasn't been fully revealed), but the fact that the Son and the Spirit (though fully God) have roles that are subordinate to God the Father helps us understand the relationship of the three Persons. Who can fully understand God beyond what He reveals? We will understand a whole lot more after we are glorified.]] But just because it's easy doesn't make it true. We should not be surprised that the truth about God is somewhat difficult for humans to understand." Somewhat difficult, or not, we must teach the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. And I believe the oneness/modalistic viewpoint is much more difficult (or I could say impossible) to believe when you get into the details of all that the Bible has to say on this topic.

I'll quote a paragraph from Edward L. Dalcour, who believes in the Trinity ("A Definitive Look at Oneness Theology: In the Light of Biblical Trinitarianism" [Copyright © 2011 by North-West University], page 26): "Shortly after the Christian church condemned Sabellius as a heretic...Modalism generally died off, at least until Emanuel Swedenborg [AD1688-1772] had a 'revelation' that Jesus was the one Person behind the masks of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, whereas early Modalism (Sabellius in particular) taught that the one Person behind the three masks or modes was the Father, not Jesus." In the next paragraph he discusses how the modern Oneness Pentecostalism, "with the UPCI being the largest Oneness denomination," started when some early Pentecostals began to consider the correct baptismal formula. "From 1913 to 1916 several Pentecostal leaders...began teaching the 'correct' baptismal formula must be 'in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ' [based on Acts 2:38]...." This ultimately led some to a modalistic view of God, where Jesus (not the Father, with Sabellius) is the One true God. This included their wrong idea that Jesus is the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Matt. 28:19. There isn't one place in the New Testament (with over 900 uses of the name)

where the name Jesus is used of the Father, the Spirit, or the Trinity. Significant details like this are common.

For the details regarding what happened from 1913-1916 see pages 153-158 of Vinson Synan's "The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States" (Eerdmans, 1971, 248 pages). Also see chapter 2 ("The 'New Issue' [referring to the oneness viewpoint] Controversy," starting especially on page 45 under the heading "Birth of the 'New Issue'") in "Christianity without the Cross: A History of Salvation in Oneness Pentecostalism" by Thomas A. Fudge (Universal Publishers, 2003, 394 pages). This "birth of the 'new issue' " started in April, 1913 at a "World-Wide Apostolic Camp Meeting in Arroyo Seco, California near Pasadena" (page 45). They weren't borrowing from earlier oneness believers at that time but relying on their interpretation of the relevant verses (like Acts 2:38 and Matt. 28:19) while relying on the [supposed] revelation of the Holy Spirit. I believe those Christians were totally sincere, but I also believe they seriously misinterpreted the Bible, and it is quite possible that they received some "revelations" from demon spirits who are always eager to "help" Christians. I am confident that this has rather often happened with sincere Christians (it ought not be!), not to mention those on the edge of Christianity.

It is significant that they did not feel a need to specifically deal with modalism/oneness at the Council of Nicea (AD 325). The council was called to first and foremost deal with the heresy of Arius, who denied the deity of the Lord Jesus. (If you deny the deity of the Son, you deny the Trinity, but that is very different than teaching the oneness [one Person] viewpoint.) Essentially all of the bishops and leaders who were there accepted the Nicene Creed, which didn't leave any room for the oneness viewpoint. We will discuss the council and the creed as we continue.

David Bernard also wrote "The Oneness of God," which is very popular among oneness/modalistic Christians. I read the book a few years ago. I obviously disagree with most of his interpretation of the Bible on this topic. I'll comment on his interpretations of John 1:1; 17:5; and Phil. 2:6 when we deal with these passages in this paper. It seems clear to me that his interpretations of these verses and many other verses are very strained (and wrong) in an attempt to make them fit his oneness doctrine. (Bernard isn't the only Christian scholar who is forced to do this. I'm sure he realizes that many of these interpretations are strained, but he is forced to say something that will fit the viewpoint he is committed to. For one thing, the people of his denomination and other oneness Christians have been looking to him [and others] to defend modalism/oneness and prove that it is true.)

In the process of writing this present paper, one of the books I purchased and read was "Kiss the Son: A Christological Apology in Response to David K. Bernard's 'The Oneness of God' " by Michael R. Burgos Jr. (Biblical Press, 2012), 147 pages. Burgos wrote the book specifically to refute Bernard's oneness teaching, mostly dealing with his interpretation of the Bible. I agree with just about everything Burgos says. I'll quote the first paragraph of his Conclusion: "If there is one thing that I have sought to demonstrate within this book, it is that David K. Bernard has approached the Scriptures with a preconceived doctrinal commitment regarding what constitutes biblical monotheism [believing in one God; believing this one God must be one Person]. Again and again Bernard has been shown to have imported unitarianism [uni/one person] into the text of Scripture. [Bernard would, of course, insist it was always there in Scripture. I'm sure with Burgos that Bernard is wrong.] While it is commendable to emphasize the monotheistic theology of Scripture, it is another thing entirely to repetitiously resort to eisegesis [which means reading into Scripture what isn't there] in an effort to justify a particular type of monotheistic theology. Unitarianism, whether it be that of the Arians, Socinians, Muslims, or Oneness Pentecostals, always results in a low view of the Son of God. In Bernard's case the Son is relegated to being someone who began to exist at a point in time [at the time of the virgin birth]" (page 135).

The Bible doesn't teach a oneness/modalistic view of God, but it is clear that God didn't adequately or clearly reveal the Trinity in the Old Testament. That was part of His plan. Revelation is progressive. He didn't adequately or clearly reveal the Son of God in the Old Testament or that the Messiah would be deity either, and Israel didn't believe in, or have much room for, those things when Jesus came on the scene. We need to keep our minds open for God to correct what we believe. Israel didn't have any adequate excuses for rejecting their Messiah when He came.

I agree that oneness/modalistic Christians can make what seems to be a strong case for their viewpoint if they limit themselves to a few passages that seem to fit their viewpoint well. (Most Christians, not just oneness Christians, are typically willing to accept a viewpoint, and then close their minds to other viewpoints, based on their understanding of less than five passages.) I dealt with at least most of the key passages they use in my thirty-three page paper, "More on the Trinity: Some Key Passages from the New Testament Where We See the Full Deity and Preexistence of God the Son with God the Father and Some Key Bible Passages Used to Teach a Oneness View of God." (As I mentioned, I'll quote most of that paper in this paper.) Many books written by Trinitarian authors deal with the relevant passages. (Now, having finished the twelve paragraph digression, I'll continue the quotation from Irvin Baxter:)]

The Apostles and the early church had always baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. [[As I showed above, the oneness scholar David Bernard, in his "Oneness and Trinity - AD 100-300 - The Doctrine of God in Ancient Christian Writings," demonstrates that Baxter was wrong in saying that "the mode of baptism that had always been used by the church from baptizing people 'in the name of Jesus Christ' " was changed at Nicea in 325. It is very easy to demonstrate that there was a whole lot of baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the early Christian church, as I demonstrate in this paper. That didn't start at Nicea (AD 325) like Baxter says it did.]] Acts 2:38 says,

'...be baptized every one of you **in the name of Jesus Christ** [Baxter's emphasis (for the last six words)]....'

Acts 8:16, Acts 10:48 and Acts 19:5 all tell of people being baptized 'in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ'. In fact, every single account of baptism in the Bible tells of it being done in the name of Jesus Christ. [[There are many accounts of baptism in the New Testament that do not mention baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. (The wording in these four accounts varies in a couple of ways, ways that I don't consider significant, but they demonstrate that they didn't have a fixed formula.) These four verses in Acts are the only ones that mention being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ in the New Testament [cf. 1 Cor. 1:10-17.]]

This changed with the Council of Nicea when the Roman Catholic Church decided that there were three distinct persons in the godhead.

[[Some More Comments in Another Double Bracket (Ten Paragraphs) that Responds to what Baxter Has Wrongly Said Regarding the Viewpoint of the Apostles and Early Christian Church. Then I'll continue to quote from Baxter.) It isn't true that it was decided that there were three distinct persons in the godhead at the Council of Nicea in AD 325. (We'll discuss the Council of Nicea more as we continue with this paper.) That had already been decided by what the Lord Jesus had passed on to the apostles and those who learned from them. We can see this throughout the New Testament, with a rather strong confirmation from the Old Testament. And, as I have demonstrated, we can see this in the early church writings from before AD 325. Furthermore, the Council of Nicea was not under the church at Rome. The church at Rome was involved at Nicea, but they did not play a dominant role there. The bishop of Rome wasn't even there at Nicea. Apparently that had something to do with his age, but he did send representatives to Nicea. It is very clear that the bishop of Rome was not recognized across the Roman Empire as having final authority in matters of the Christian church.

The bishop of Alexandria (in Egypt), Alexander, played a much more prominent role in the Council of Nicea. For one thing, the primary reason that Constantine, the Roman emperor, called these Christian leaders together, was to deal with the Arian heresy. Arius, who was an elder in the church at Alexandria, came up with the serious doctrinal error, clearly deserving the name "heresy," of saying that the Son of God was a created being, thereby effectively denying the deity of the Lord Jesus. Alexander, the bishop at Alexandria, rejected this teaching of Arius.

The bishops from across Constantine's Roman Empire were not gathered to Nicea to adopt the doctrine of the Trinity, as Baxter stated. They were at Nicea to refute the teaching of Arius (and a few other things), not to refute oneness, but the Nicene Creed did make it clear that they were upholding the Trinity, not modalism/oneness. The apostles (who along with, and under, the Lord Jesus, laid the foundation for the new-covenant church, Christianity) understood and accepted the foundational truths regarding God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit at least by the time of the Day of Pentecost. The apostles may not have been able to fully and adequately explain the triune God, and we aren't able to fully and adequately explain Him either.

We can only know as much as God reveals to us; and our capacity to understand God in our present state of existence is limited, but God is not asking us to believe something that is all that difficult to believe. He (or His Word) is not asking us to believe that three equals one or anything like that. Not at all! He is asking us to believe, based on His revelation, that there are three Persons in the Trinity, all of them fully deity. Who knows enough to inform God that He has to exist in a more simple form (oneness, one Person). In reality, as I have mentioned, when you get into the details, the oneness/modalistic viewpoint is not easier to believe, quite the opposite.

By the time Jesus went back to the Father forty days after His resurrection (cf., e.g., Acts 1:2, 3; 2:33; Luke 24:25-27; 44-49), the apostles would have adequately understood the deity of the Lord Jesus, God the Son, who had always existed with God the Father, and through whom all things had been created (cf., e.g., John 1:1-5, 14; 17:5; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 2:13-17; and Heb. 1:1-3). Jesus also made it clear that the Father had sent Him into the world, starting at the time of His virgin birth (cf., e.g., John 3:11-13; 6:38, 42). This information left no room for the oneness/modalistic view of God. Jesus had told them enough while He was with them for them to understand His deity before the cross (before His all-important atoning death), but it is clear that they did not understand His deity yet. That was a lot to understand! For one thing, Israel did not believe in God the Son or that the Messiah (Christ) would be deity. (I'm not denying that a few individuals may have understood these things.) The fact that the apostles did not believe Jesus had been raised from the dead until He proved it to them (cf., e.g., Mark

16:11-14; John 20:8, 9) confirms that they did not yet adequately understand and believe in His deity. I don't believe any apostle ever seriously considered the oneness idea that God the Father and the Lord Jesus were the same Person or that God the Father was incarnate in the Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man.

Receiving the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost enabled the apostles (and all born-again Christians) to better understand the triune God and to relate to God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit on a deeper, more personal level. What Jesus said in John 14:26 is relevant here: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, 'He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.' " (John 14:26 is one of a very large number of passages throughout the New Testament, very much including the book of Revelation, where we read of the distinction between the three Persons of the Trinity.) THE APOSTLES ALWAYS AND CLEARLY AND RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD THAT JESUS WAS NOT THE FATHER OR THE HOLY SPIRIT. I am confident that they never were even tempted to accept such ideas. The Lord Jesus had taught the apostles a whole lot when He was with them for at least two and one-half years before the cross, and IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT HE WAS ABLE TO SUPPLEMENT THAT INFORMATION WITH MUCH MORE DETAIL AND COMPLETENESS IN THE FORTY DAYS HE INTERACTED WITH THEM AFTER HIS RESURRECTION AND BEFORE HIS ASCENSION. For example, see Luke 24:25-27; 44-49; Acts 1:1-8. Furthermore, He was able to communicate with them after His ascension by appearing to them in person, like with the apostle Paul, or by the Holy Spirit, or by God's angels.

I don't believe the thought ever entered the mind of the apostles that maybe God the Father did not exist apart from the Lord Jesus (that He was the divine nature of Jesus). That thought certainly did not enter their minds before they understood the deity of the Lord Jesus, and there was no basis for that thought to enter their minds later on the basis of anything that they learned from the Lord Jesus or anywhere else. And the New Testament and those taught by the apostles did not believe in or teach a oneness view of God. Jesus taught the apostles that the Holy Spirit was a different Person than God the Father, and they certainly clearly understood that point by the Day of Pentecost.

There isn't one verse, rightly understood, that teaches oneness. Furthermore, as I mentioned, the early Christian writings from the days before Nicea are packed with these same truths that came, in large part, from revelation given to the apostles. As I mentioned, you can find references to some who taught oneness in the early Christian writings, but the oneness view was strongly rejected in those writings. (The Christian writings that dealt with the oneness viewpoint didn't demonstrate any people teaching that viewpoint until toward the end of the second century, and as it was pointed out

above, those writings came from Trinitarians who were rejecting the oneness viewpoint.) THE REALLY IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THERE AREN'T ANY VERSES IN THE BIBLE (RIGHTLY UNDERSTOOD) THAT TEACH ONENESS. As I mentioned, the writers of the New Testament did not believe in oneness. This doesn't mean that they understood every detail regarding the Trinity. We don't understand every detail either, because God hasn't revealed every detail.

As I mentioned, there are several verses that fit the oneness view well, but none of those verses teach oneness, and a gigantic number of verses make it clear that the oneness view is wrong. I believe most Christians who hold the oneness/modalistic view of God would open their minds and change their viewpoint if they could get beyond the few verses (we sometimes call them "proof texts") that they are sure teach their viewpoint. Once you get beyond those supposed proof texts, the New Testament makes it quite clear that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are not the same Person. It isn't true that when we get to heaven we will find the oneness/modalistic Jesus there by Himself. We will see God the Father on His throne, and the Holy Spirit will be there too. (I'm not sure if the Holy Spirit exists in a form where we will be able to see Him.) Jesus is the name of the eternal Son of God who always existed with God the Father, who humbled Himself to become a man (but so much more than just a man). As I mentioned, the name Jesus (which is used over nine-hundred times in the New Testament) is never used in the New Testament for God the Father or the Holy Spirit or the Trinity. There is a reason for facts like this: The oneness view is wrong.

Most of the leaders who came to Nicea were from the eastern part of the Roman Empire. (Rome was in the western part of the Roman Empire.) Their language was Greek, unlike the Romans who spoke Latin, and they certainly did not look to the church at Rome as the final authority. (But it was understood that the church at Rome had a very important heritage in Christianity from early days. The apostle Paul spent quite a bit of time there, as did the apostle Peter. Tradition says that both of them were martyred for Christ there.) Now I'll continue to quote from Baxter:]] This change in doctrine [at Nicea in 325, according to Baxter] threw the Roman Catholic Church into spiritual whoredom. The doctrine of the trinity states that God is three - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost [Spirit]. However the first commandment in Deuteronomy 6:4 states, 'Here, O Israel, the LORD [Yahweh in the Hebrew] our God is one Lord.' " We have discussed Deut. 6:4 to some extent already; we will discuss it in a fuller sense later in this paper (see the Contents).

Some More Comments Regarding Baxter's Statement that as a Result of Adopting the Doctrine of the Trinity "at the Council of Nicea...[they] changed the mode of baptism that had always been used in the church from baptizing people 'in the name of Jesus Christ' to 'Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' " It is very clear (as I have demonstrated and will further demonstrate as we continue) that very large numbers of Christians were baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the years before Nicea. For one thing, the statement of the Lord Jesus recorded in Matt. 28:19 would eventually carry a lot more weight than the fact that baptizing in the name of Jesus was mentioned four times in the book of Acts, but nowhere else in the New Testament, except for 1 Cor. 1:13. We'll discuss Matt. 28:19 some as we continue, but I'll mention here that baptizing "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" is included in the early Christian document called the "Didache" (the Teaching). It was probably written before the end of the first century. Regarding Matt. 28:19, there is some uncertainty regarding when the Gospel of Matthew was written, but it was probably written in the 60s. The Day of Pentecost probably took place in AD 30. I'll quote from the Didache as we continue.

It is very important to see that the fact that Peter spoke of being baptized in the name of Jesus on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2:38, for example, had nothing (zero) to do with his believing or teaching a oneness view of God, which Baxter is wrongly assuming. Baptizing in the name of Jesus (or praying in His name, etc.) is one thing. Accepting the oneness view of God is something TOTALLY different. The apostles did not believe (on the Day of Pentecost or any other time) that the Lord Jesus was God the Father incarnate, or that Jesus was wrong when He spoke of being with the Father before being sent to the earth and of His going back to be with the Father (cf., e.g., John 1:1-3, 14; 3:13, 17; 7:33; 19:36; and 17:5; and there are many similar verses).

Jesus was with the apostles off and on for forty days before He ascended to the Father some ten days before the Day of Pentecost. He told them He was going back to the Father. There was no basis at all for them to think He was the Father incarnate (or the Holy Spirit). Acts 2:33 is a verse of key importance (it fits the typical New Testament pattern; we see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three distinct Persons, but not three independent Persons, not three Gods): "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God [God the Father], and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He [the Lord Jesus] has poured forth this which you both see and hear [on the Day of Pentecost]."

Peter and the apostles knew a lot about the relationship between God the Father and the Lord Jesus, because Jesus had taught them (and demonstrated before them) of His relationship with God the Father, who had sent Him into the world to be born of the

virgin and to return to the Father when He had completed His all-important mission that has saved us and defeated the devil and those who follow him. And it is extremely important that Jesus was able to supplement what He had taught them and to correct any wrong ideas during the forty days before He ascended from the Mount of Olives. Peter's speaking of being baptized "in the name of Jesus" (Acts 2:38) had absolutely nothing to do with his having a oneness view of God; that thought never entered his mind. And none of the other apostles, or of the 120 gathered in the upper room, including His mother according to the flesh, had any room for the oneness view of God. I'm sure that they did not fully understand the person of the Lord Jesus or the relationship He had with God the Father, but they knew as much as they needed to know, and they certainly did not believe that Jesus was God the Father incarnate. It is certain that the apostles had become grounded in the deity of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, in the days following the resurrection and before the Day of Pentecost.

I doubt that you could have found one person among all the Jews who were gathered on the Day of Pentecost, including the disciples of Jesus, who thought in terms of Jesus being God the Father incarnate. It would take a long time for a wrong view like that to arise since, for one thing, none of the apostles, who laid the foundation for the Christian church believed it. The first thing - the controversial thing - that those who were listening to Peter preach on the Day of Pentecost needed to understand and accept was that Jesus was the Messiah, the Messiah that Israel had rejected, starting with most of the leaders. That would be a giant, and a necessary, first step.

Peter, in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), didn't get into the details regarding Jesus being Son of God and deity with God the Father. (At least those things, things which are super-important, are not mentioned in Acts 2.) Anyway, those things are super important and you can be sure that those who repented and opened their hearts to God the Father and His new-covenant salvation would have been taught those essential truths very soon, perhaps before they were baptized. We cannot adequately understand new-covenant salvation without learning that the Messiah is deity, God the Son - Hallelujah! What a Lamb of God! What a Savior!

Peter spoke of His all-important atoning death which was ordained by God the Father and of His resurrection that had come to pass in accordance with prophecy, and as I mentioned, that He had been taken up in glory and received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and that He had poured forth the Spirit, which was confirmed by the supernatural things (including the fact that "suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they [those gathered in the upper room] were sitting"). And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them" (Acts 2:2, 3), and the

fact that they were speaking in tongues before the gathered multitudes in languages they did not know but were known by those gathered there; they were "speaking of the mighty things of God" (Acts 2:11). They were certainly speaking of the glory of new-covenant salvation through the virgin born, sinless, crucified, resurrected, glorified, and ascended Savior, who is God the Son who became the God-man.

The Jews who were gathered together on the Day of Pentecost needed to understand and submit to the fact that Jesus was the promised Messiah, who had been sent by God the Father in accordance with His promise. They needed to repent (including for having rejected the Messiah) and submit to Him and God's new-covenant plan of salvation. That's what Peter was exhorting them to do. It is significant, as I have mentioned, that the Jews did not believe that the Messiah, the offspring of King David, would be deity. They hadn't been taught about the Person of God the Son. Under those circumstances it would have been quite shocking to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. It was appropriate to baptize in the name of Jesus: The apostles and other disciples had been working miracles and casting out demons in His name (Matt. 7:22; Mark 9:38, 39; Luke 10:17) and many verses demonstrate that they continued to do these things and many other good things, including praying, in His name. It is always totally appropriate for believers to pray in the name of Jesus. The New Testament shows that we typically pray to the Father in the name of Jesus. (See my paper, "Who Do We Pray To?" Our access to the Father is through the Son [e.g. John 14:6].)

To be baptized in the name of Jesus included repenting and submitting to Him as the promised Messiah and Savior. To be baptized in His name included the ideas of becoming united with Him and being accepted through Him. It would also have been clearly understood that those who repented and submitted to the Messiah were also submitting to God the Father WHO SENT HIM TO SAVE US, and who has the preeminent role in the Trinity. Also, Jesus had taught the apostles about the Holy Spirit being a Person too. He had been active throughout the ministry of Jesus, and, starting on the Day of Pentecost, He was poured out in the promised new-covenant dimension, which includes the new birth and power that enables Christians to walk in the righteousness and holiness of God and to take the gospel to the world. Without the poured out Spirit of life and righteousness and holiness we couldn't be born again and have new-covenant salvation or take the gospel to the world.

Some Excerpts that Deal with Water Baptism from "A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs: A Reference Guide to More Than 700 Topics Discussed by the Early Christian Fathers" by David W. Bercot, editor (Hendrickson Publishers, 1998). Bercot takes his

excerpts from the ten volume "The Ante [which means Before] Nicene [referring to the AD 325 Council at Nicea] Fathers" (edited by Roberts and Donaldson; 1885-87; Hendrickson Publishers, 1994). I have the Eerdmans 1983 edition of this set. (The set sells for a reasonable price.) I have used it quite a bit. Bercot deals with water baptism on pages 50-64.

I'll give some excerpts from under the sub-heading "Mode and description of baptism" (pages 56-59). These excerpts all deal with statements that were made by early Christian writers long before the Council of Nicea (AD 325). Remember that Baxter stated that they didn't baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit until the Council of Nicea. "...baptize into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - in living water [in a river, for example]. But if you do not have living water, baptize into other water. If you cannot baptize in cold water, baptize in warm. But if you have not either, pour out water three times upon the person's head in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. ..." [from the] "Didache" (The Teaching) (written approximately 80-140, E [E means that it was written in the eastern part of the Roman Empire; W is for the western part], 1.379 [which means that this excerpt is found in volume 1 of the ten volume set on page 379].

"... They there receive the washing with water in the name of God (the Father and Lord of the universe), of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit." For Christ said, 'Unless you are born again, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.' " Justin Martyr (about 160, E), 1.183. The early Christian writers did not consider the matter of becoming a Christian complete before water baptism.

"He commands them to baptize into the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit - not into a unipersonal [one person] God. And, indeed, it is not once only - but three times - that we are immersed into the three Persons, at the mention of each individual name." Tertullian (about 213, W), 3.623.

Bercot includes a quotation from Cyprian (about 250, W) from 5.383. I'll include a different excerpt from Cyprian from that page. "Finally, when, after the resurrection [of Jesus], the apostles are sent to the heathens [to the nations], they are bidden to baptize the Gentiles 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' " Cyprian goes on to reject the idea that it is acceptable to baptize "only in the name of Jesus Christ." I certainly wouldn't say that a person could not be saved who is baptized in the name of Jesus. You could say that it is Biblical to baptize in the name of Jesus (based on the book of Acts), and we do a lot of things in the name of Jesus, but I believe we should baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, based on Matt. 28:19. We certainly want to exalt and glorify the name of Jesus, but we

certainly also want to exalt and glorify God the Father, who has the preeminent role in the Trinity and who sent His Son to save us, and the Holy Spirit who is deity with the Father and the Son and who is so actively involved in our salvation from the beginning and forever.

(Bercot has this next excerpt under "Trinity" on page 654.) " 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit' [Matt. 28:19]. By this he showed that whoever omits any one of these three, fails in glorifying God perfectly. For it is through this Trinity that the Father is glorified. [The preeminent role of God the Father is frequently acknowledged in the Bible, especially the New Testament, and in the early Christian writings.] For the Father willed, the Son did, and the Spirit manifested." Hippolytus (about 205, W), 5.228.

(Another excerpt from under Bercot's "Trinity" heading, on page 655.) "Saving baptism was not complete except by the authority of the most excellent Trinity of them all. That is, it is made complete by naming the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In this, we join the name of the Holy Spirit to the Unbegotten God (the Father) and to His Only-begotten Son." Origen (about 225, E), 4.252.

(Under Bercot's "Trinity" heading on page 655.) " 'Go therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.' He [Jesus in Matt. 28:19] suggests the Trinity, in whose sacrament the nations were to be baptized." Cyprian (about 250, W), 5.380.

Bercot has more than five pages of excerpts (pages 651-657) under "Trinity." All of these excerpts, except one, date before the Council of Nicea. Those excerpts demonstrate that these early Christian writers, before Nicea, were Trinitarians. As these excerpts show, they rejected oneness, but they also rightly rejected the idea of three Gods. What Baxter said regarding the Trinity and baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is wrong.

One of the Books I Read in Preparing to Write this Paper was "Decoding Nicea" by Paul F. Pavao (published by The Greatest Stories Ever Told, 2011, 2014). I'll include some excerpts from this book that deal mostly with the Council of Nicea. I don't agree with Pavao on every detail, but I found this 462 page book to be quite thorough and informative. He deals extensively with the Council of Nicea and Christianity before and after Nicea. Pavao writes from a solid Bible-believing perspective, and his book is packed with excerpts from the ancient writers who were involved.

Constantine, the Roman emperor, who had just overthrown his co-emperor in the eastern part of the Roman empire in AD 324 and who had begun to call himself a Christian (he was serious about being a Christian, but it is clear that there were problems with his Christianity too), was quite disappointed to find serious religious strife in his empire that wasn't being resolved. That strife started "around AD 318" with the heretical teaching of Arius, who was an elder in the church at Alexandria, Egypt. He claimed that Jesus was a very high level created being who was created out of nothing and had a beginning; He was not deity in any adequate sense (page 27). "As we will see throughout our narrative, the early Christians never doubted the divinity of Jesus Christ, and they spoke about it both often and in depth. (See especially chapters 16 and 17.)" (page 20).

When Constantine was not able to get those involved to back down, very much including Arius and his bishop, Alexander, who rejected Arius's heretical teaching, Constantine "called all the bishops of his empire to the resort town of Nicea..." (page 40).

There is some doubt about how many bishops came to Nicea, but Pavao says "over 250 and less than 325 would be an accurate figure" (page 48). And there was a large number of elders, deacons, etc. in attendance. Athanasius, a deacon from the church at Alexandria, strongly opposed the Arians at Nicea and especially after Nicea. The council continued for about ten weeks.

Eusebius of Nicomedia, who was a very influential bishop in the east, was the primary leader who supported the views of Arius at the Council of Nicea. Sometimes in the midst of controversy, and with people being exiled, etc., views change, but among many of the Arians their views didn't really change; they still did not believe in the full deity of the Lord Jesus. There was a lot of twisting words and supposedly agreeing with the Nicene Creed, but not really substantially changing what they believed. When opportunity arose, or conditions changed, like when an emperor came along they could convince to accept their heresy, they would be teaching Arianism and attacking those who believed in the Trinity, like Athanasius. Athanasius ended up being exiled five times after he became the bishop at Alexandria in 328. Knowing how these things often work out in the affairs of men, sometimes even including true Christians, I'm confident that some dishonest or unfair things took place among those who supported the full deity of the Lord Jesus too. For one thing, it takes more than believing in the full deity of the Lord Jesus to make a person a true Christian. For another thing, true Christians don't always walk by the Holy Spirit, which they are called, enabled, and required to do.

I'll quote a few sentences from what Pavao says under "The Role of *Apostolic* Tradition" (pages 52, 53). "We also have to remember that the doctrines of Arius didn't stand a chance. ... the tradition of the church on the substance of the Father and the Son was long standing and unanimous. (He has a footnote. "See Chapter 15.") [The ideas that the Son didn't always exist and that He was created out of nothing didn't fit with the doctrines taught by the apostles. Neither did oneness/modalism fit.] ... As far as Pre-Nicene Christians were concerned, elders and bishops had just one theological function: to preserve the truth they had received from the apostles ... *unchanged*. '... ..What have I been taught, what has been entrusted to me to hand down to others?' " (The partial quotation at the end of this excerpt, starting right after the word "unchanged," came from "Schaff, Philip. 'The First Ecumenical Council: Historical Introduction.' 'The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers' Series II, Vol XIV.")

I'll quote the Nicene Creed decided upon in AD 325. (Pavao points out that "The one quoted in churches today is slightly modified, with some phrases added later in the fourth century and approved at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and that the word 'Catholic' used in the creed simply means universal. It was a reference to the united churches that were descended from the apostles. 'Holy, catholic, and apostolic' is explained in Chapter 15.):

"We believe in one God, the Father Almighty. Maker of all things visible and invisible [The next paragraph acknowledges that the Son was active in creation; the New Testament speaks of the Father creating through the Son (cf. John 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2). Note the preeminent role of God the Father, while acknowledging the full deity of the Son (and the Holy Spirit)];

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father; that is, of the substance of the Father; God of God and Light of light; true God of true God; begotten, not made, one in substance with the Father; by whom [God the Son] all things were made, both which are in heaven and on earth; who for the sake of us men, and on account of our salvation, descended [He was with the Father before He descended.], became incarnate, and was made man, suffered, arose again the third day, ascended into the heavens, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Also in the Holy Spirit.

But the holy, catholic, and apostolic church anathematizes those who say, 'There was a time when He [the Son] was not'; 'He was not before he was begotten'; 'He was made from that which did not exist'; and those who assert that he is of other substance or essence than the Father, that he was created, or is susceptible to change."

It is clear that this creed was written to refute Arianism, but it also effectively refutes oneness theology. Pavao discusses the creed. For one thing, he points out that "The anathemas at the end of the creed are no longer recited by any churches. Arius' views disappeared from mainstream churches after the fourth century, rendering them unnecessary" (page 63). He also mentions that Arianism "was revived by Charles Russell and the Jehovah's Witnesses in the early 20th century" (page 64).

Almost all the bishops signed the creed. One view is that all but five bishops signed the creed. Arius and a few bishops were exiled, but the exiles didn't last long. For one thing there were some recantations. Such recantations were not always sincere, and apparently some who had supported Arius who signed the creed were not in total agreement with the creed. As I mentioned, some are good at twisting words and being dishonest. Eusebius of Nicomedia, who was mentioned above and who was exiled was one who recanted after being exiled.

After the Council of Nicea had dealt with the heresy of Arius, they dealt with the controversy regarding which day Christians should celebrate Passover/the Resurrection of Jesus. (Pavao deals with this in his chapter 6.) The majority said Sunday; some said whatever day the 14 of the Jewish month Nisan would fall on that year. The Council decided on Sunday, which "was by far the most common practice" (page 82). On that same page Pavao mentions that "There were more issues to consider [at Nicea], but none so major as Arianism or Passover. These were summed up in 20 canons." He discusses the 20 canons that the Council issued in his chapter 7. **NONE OF THEM DEALT WITH ONENESS/MODALISM.** I'll quote a few sentences from his chapter 7: "Canon 6 makes it clear that there was no pope in the fourth century. The history prior to Nicea established this clearly as well, but Canon 6 finalizes the argument in one short paragraph. I am not really sure how the Roman Catholic Church can argue for the historicity of the papacy if the public knows about Canon 6 of Nicea" (page 83). "This canon makes it clear that the bishop of Rome was not 'pope' at the time of Nicea. In fact he carried no more authority than the bishop of Alexandria, although this authority was clearly great" (page 96). "Neither before nor at the time of Nicea did any church regard the Roman bishop as supreme over all churches. The evidence for this is both abundant and one-sided" (page 338). And Pavao goes on to discuss this evidence.

Another book that I purchased and read in preparing to write this paper is "The Trinity: How Not to be a Heretic" by Stephen Bullivant (Paulist Press, 2015), 121 pages. He is a senior lecturer in theology and ethics at Saint Mary's University in London. I don't agree

with every detail in this book, but most of what he says is helpful and rather easy to understand and he deals with quite a bit of Scripture. I'll include some excerpts.

A theme Bullivant starts with (page 1) and comes back to again and again is that there are three points we must understand to understand the Trinity: 1. There is only one God. 2. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is each God [deity]. 3. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not the same.

I'll quote a paragraph from what Bullivant says about modalism from his chapter 4 that deals with modalism. "[Hippolytus (about 170-236)] criticizes the modalists for selectively quoting from Scripture and for taking phrases out of context: 'In fact, whenever they want to get up to their tricks, they hack the Scriptures to pieces. But let [Noetus] quote passages in full, and we will discover the purpose behind what is being said.' (Hippolytus, Against Noetus, 9) Tertullian makes the same complaint. He accuses Praxeas of making 'a heresy out of unity' (Tertullian, Against Praxeas, 1) by stressing Scripture's witness to the oneness of God, while pointedly ignoring its testimony to the genuine distinctions between Father, Son, and Spirit. The modalists focus on two or three proof texts, and try to force all the rest of the evidence to yield to them. This is, Tertullian notes, 'the characteristic of all heretics' (Tertullian, Against Praxeas, 20)." Oneness/modalistic writers in our day typically use quite a few proof texts, but there is a very large amount of Scripture that they "force...to yield to them." (We dealt with Hippolytus, Tertullian, Noetus and Praxeas above.) Once your mind is closed you can go to great lengths in forcing everything else to fit while thinking you are doing a service for God. Many Christians do this on many different topics, but very few errors are as serious as oneness/modalism.

I'll quote two sentences from pages 55, 56 of this chapter. "It cannot be said often enough: Christianity developed and defended its understanding of God as Trinity not despite, but demonstrably because of and out of the biblical witness. As Hippolytus remarks, 'The whole of the Scriptures are a proclamation about this' (Hippolytus, Against Noetus, 14)." And we must understand that the New Testament came to us through the revelation given to the apostles. It is also quite significant that "beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, [the risen Christ] explained to them [especially the apostles] the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures [referring to the Old Testament]" (Luke 24:27).

Building on what Bullivant says on page 56, I agree that those who teach on the Trinity need to be careful what they say. If we overstate the case or use sloppy language, it makes it difficult to understand or believe in the Trinity. (We desperately need the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches on this topic, as on every topic, but this topic is

extremely important. We are talking about God, the God of the Bible, the God of creation, the God of Israel, the God of salvation, and God the Judge.) For one thing, it certainly isn't biblical to leave the impression that somehow there are three Gods sitting at a triangular table ruling the universe, or three Gods who must be exactly alike in every way (including their having equal authority except for the time Jesus lived as a man [the God-man] on the earth among men) for them to be God/deity. I believe this is a good example of Christians saying more than God has revealed. God doesn't need for us to defend Him with statements that aren't true, or fully true.

One problem we have had is that some Christians have felt a need to overstate the role of the Son of God, so that there is essentially no difference between God the Father and God the Son. In ancient times and still today, many people deny His deity, so there is a tendency to want to overstate the role of the Son of God. What we need is the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches, the balanced truth of reality. It seems clear to me that although it is totally necessary to believe in the full deity of God the Son, it is also biblical and necessary to acknowledge the eternal subordinate (I didn't say inferior) role of God the Son. I am sure that the Lord Jesus Himself would be the first One to insist on the eternal preeminent role of God the Father. I am going to discuss this important point further in another paper. One really important thing we need to see is that the subordination (not inferiority) of the Son loses any possible negative implications when viewed in the light of the infinite love between the Father and the Son.

I believe we must see that although God the Son is deity with God the Father (and the Holy Spirit) in a totally full sense, His role before He condescended to become the God-man; His role during the time He (having greatly humbled Himself) lived on the earth as a man (the God-man), in accordance with the Father's will; and His role for the rest of eternity (which never ends) is subordinate to God the Father. God the Son is in total agreement with His subordinate role. He loves the preeminent role of the Father that flows out of the reality of who the triune God is. I am totally sure that there is NOTHING (ZERO) in Him that ever wanted, wants, or ever will want a higher place in the Trinity. He doesn't grasp for more.

It certainly isn't biblical to speak of three Gods, but there are three distinct Persons who interact with one another in perfect harmony. I BELIEVE IT CAUSES SIGNIFICANT CONFUSION IF WE OVERSTATE THE ONENESS OF GOD (way beyond what the Bible actually teaches), which I believe is often done in our day. (I'm not referring to oneness/modalist Christians here. I'm speaking of those who say they believe in the Trinity.) The Bible speaks of the oneness of God on occasion. Deuteronomy 6:4, for example, speaks of God being one (or alone), but that verse was written in a context to

deny polytheism, not to deny the Trinity that would clearly be revealed in subsequent revelation.

We don't have three (independent) Gods, but we have three Persons who are united in perfect love and perfect harmony beyond what we can fully comprehend, with each of the Persons fulfilling their roles perfectly. It causes confusion to overstate the oneness; it also causes confusion to speak of three (independent) Gods. As I have mentioned, I don't believe God has revealed enough for us to understand every detail, and there probably are some details we couldn't understand in our present level of existence. We will know more after we are glorified, but maybe we won't fully understand the triune God then.

Everybody in the ancient world believed in many gods. Deuteronomy 6:4, in a way that would have sounded totally arrogant and offensive to all of Israel's neighbors, was saying that there is only one God, the God of creation, the God of Israel. They didn't want to hear that in the ancient world, just like today they don't want to hear that we must be saved through and in the Lord Jesus. Jesus said in John 14:6, for example, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." The Truth is the Truth, no matter what people want to hear. And we are not doing people a favor by hiding the Truth from them. We need the truth so we can repent and submit to God and His truth to be saved.

Deuteronomy 6:4 had NOTHING (ZERO) to do with denying the subsequent clear revelation of God the Son and God the Spirit in the New Testament. I'm going to include an excerpt from my paper "More on the Trinity" that deals with Deut. 6:4 after I finish discussing this book by Bullivant. We are sure to confuse the issue if we overstate the oneness of God and make it sound like we are saying that we must believe that one equals three or three equals one, which it doesn't. All it takes is one misunderstanding like that to make the truth sound totally unreasonable. We may not be able to fully understand God, and especially now before we are glorified, but we can refrain from asking people to believe things the Bible doesn't really teach.

On page 95 Bullivant mentions "a sober admission of the undeniable constraints we face in broaching the One 'we can never think about...as he deserves,' and whom 'no words of ours are capable of expressing' (Augustine, On the Trinity....)." I'll quote part of what Bullivant says regarding the inadequacy of the word "person" when applied to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit:

He gives an excerpt from Augustine's "On the Trinity": "In very truth, because the Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father, and the Holy Spirit...is neither the Father

nor the Son, they are certainly three.... Yet when you ask 'Three what?' human speech labors under a great dearth of words. So we say three persons, not in order to say precisely, but in order not to be reduced to silence.' The word 'person' is preferred, *not* because we know it to be a perfect and accurate description, but because we *hope* that it is less imperfect and inaccurate than the other options. ... (page 95)." ... "The problem is this: we tend to think of 'person' as signifying an independent individual, separate from all other, equally independent individuals. ... (page 96)." We cannot expect the concepts and words of mankind to adequately explain God.

On page 67 Bullivant points out that "Very few western bishops journeyed to the far east of the empire to adjudicate upon matters of which they likely had little detailed knowledge. (Remember that the Arian controversy was conducted almost exclusively in Greek, whereas the western half of the empire - Rome included - was mainly Latin-speaking.) Those gathered in May 325 were however, sufficiently representative - every Roman province (except Britain) had at least one delegate, and a Spanish bishop, Osius of Cordoba, chaired the meeting - to signal 'the consent of the whole church' (Acts 15:22)."

I'll Quote Two Passages (Deuteronomy 6:4 and Isaiah 9:6) from my Paper "More on the Trinity: Some Key Passages from the New Testament Where We See the Full Deity and Preexistence of God the Son with God the Father and Some Key Bible Passages Used to Teach a Oneness View of God" (33 Pages) under the Heading "Some Key Bible Passages Used to Teach a Oneness View of God." I'll quote what I said under Deut. 6:4, which is the number-one passage used by oneness Christians to try to prove their viewpoint. Then I'll quote what I said under Isaiah 9:6, which could be considered the number two passage. If you don't stop and get into the details, the oneness interpretation of these two passages sounds very convincing. Anyway, I am totally sure that neither one of these passages, or any other passages, teach a oneness view of God.

Deuteronomy 6:4. "Hear, O Israel! The LORD [Yahweh in the Hebrew] is our God, the LORD [Yahweh] is one." I'll quote a sentence from what J. A. Thompson says here ("Deuteronomy" [Inter-Varsity Press, 1974], page 121). "This small section (Deut. 6:4-9) has been known to the Jews for many centuries as the 'Shema' (Hebrew, 'Hear' ["Shema" is the Hebrew word translated "Hear" at the beginning of Deut. 6:4.]) and has been recited along with 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41 as a daily prayer."

Based on what I have heard and read, Deut. 6:4 is the number-one verse used (sincerely used) by Christians who deny the Trinity and argue for a oneness view of

God. I am quite sure, however, that this verse was written for the sole purpose of declaring that the God of Israel (the God of creation, the God of the Bible, the God of Abraham) is the only true God. Some of the gods of the nations existed all right and they did some supernatural things, but they were evil beings under Satan, and they were far from being in the class of the only true God, the One who had created every being and everything that exists. (God didn't create Satan or any of the angels evil, but Satan rebelled against God through pride, and a third of the angels followed him in his rebellion.)

For one thing, it was totally necessary for the people of Israel to understand what a serious sin it was for them to worship the gods which all of the peoples apart from Israel were worshipping in the ancient world, and had been worshipping for a long time. All too often many of the people of Israel succumbed to the temptation to worship the gods of the nations. That sin went directly against the first commandment of the Ten Commandments. See Ex. 20:3 ("You shall have no other gods before Me" [or, as in the margin of the NASB, "besides Me"]); Deut. 5:6-10; and 6:5. Those verses communicate exactly the same message as Deut. 6:4. Israel (and everybody else who submitted to God) must not worship any other gods. So too, verses like Deut. 4:35, 39 communicate the same message as Deut. 6:4 with the words, "To you it was shown that you might know that the LORD [Yahweh], He is God; there is no other besides Him" and "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD [Yahweh], He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other." THERE IS NO OTHER GOD!

DEUTERONOMY 6:4 WAS NOT WRITTEN TO DENY THE TRINITY that God progressively revealed, starting in the Old Testament, including in the five books of Moses. As my paper titled "The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son: The Name Yahweh and a Listing of Some of the Large Number of Passages in the Hebrew Old Testament Where We Can See God the Son Along with God the Father" demonstrates, there are a large number of passages in the Old Testament where we can see the Person of God the Son. (That paper does not begin to cover all such passages.) It is true, however, that we needed the incarnation of the Son of God and the light of the New Testament to adequately see that glorious Person, and the Trinity.

I'll quote a few sentences from what Earl S. Calland says here ("Expositor's Bible Commentary," Vol. 3 [Zondervan, 1992], page 65) to show that the Hebrew word "echad" that is translated "one" in Deut. 6:4 was sometimes used of a oneness that consisted of more than one part, "To the Jews verse 4 is not only an assertion of monotheism, it is also an assertion of the numerical oneness of God contradictory to the Christian view of the Trinity of the Godhead. [In other words, they reject the deity of Christ/the Messiah and the Trinity]. This kind of oneness, however, runs contrary to the

use of *echad* in the sense of a unity made up of several parts. In Exod. 25:6, 11, the fifty gold clasps are used to hold the curtains together so that the tent would be a unit (*echad*)."

I'll quote several sentences from page 2 of the 14 page article titled, "The Historic Case for the Trinity" by K. Dayton Hartman (www.answering-islam.org). He is discussing Deut. 6:4 and making the point that the Jews left a lot of room to see some plurality in their one God before the arrival of Christianity. "The possibility of plurality existing in a monotheistic Godhead was an active topic in pre-Christian Jewish theology. (See especially, Larry Hurtado, "One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism" (Fortress Press, 1988). A text that inspired much of this debate is found within Daniel's book of prophecy. In Daniel 7:9, a plurality of thrones exists in heaven, all of which, the text proposes, belong to Yahweh. The text reads, 'I kept looking until the thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat...'. In the passage there are multiple seats of power (thrones), yet a single being of power (the king). [For the record, Dan. 7:18, 22, and 27 show that the saints will be reigning too; the thrones are for the saints (also see Rev. 20:4-6).] N. T. Wright, commenting on pre-Christian Judaism, points out that, 'Within the most fiercely monotheistic of Jewish circles...there is no suggestion that "monotheism" or praying the 'Shema,' had anything to do with the numerical analysis of the inner being of Israel's God Himself.' ("The New Testament and the People of God" [Fortress Press, 1996], page 259.) ... After reviewing the evidence N. T. Wright concludes that: 'The oneness of Israel's God, the creator, was never an analysis of God's inner existence, but always a polemical doctrine over against paganism and dualism. It was only with the rise of Christianity...that Jews in the second and third centuries reinterpreted "monotheism" and the numerical oneness of the divine being' " (same reference).

A Better Way To Interpret Deuteronomy 6:4. After further study and prayerfully considering this verse, I have come to the opinion that the proper way to understand this verse (the way intended by the ultimate Author of the Bible) is to see that the name Yahweh refers to God the Father here, as it typically does throughout the Old Testament, not to the Trinity. (At least that is the way Israel understood the name Yahweh in the days of the Old Testament, and God didn't correct them, and the word God typically refers to God the Father in the New Testament.) This applies to Deut. 4:35, 39 (verses quoted above), and to many similar verses in the Old Testament (including Isa. 43:10, 11; 44:6, 8; 45:6, 21, 22; and 46:9). In most of the verses dealt with in my paper titled "The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son: The Name Yahweh and a Listing of Some of the Large Number of Passages from the Hebrew Old Testament Where We Can See God the Son Along with God the Father," for example, the name Yahweh typically refers to God the Father. The Old Testament

was written in the years before God wanted to fully reveal the Person of His Son and the Trinity.

When Jesus first came to Israel, having been born of the virgin, none of the people of Israel understood that the Messiah would be deity. ((We will never understand the Trinity until we see that God the Son, who always existed with God the Father, was to become the God-man and the promised Messiah, and that the Messiah would, therefore, be deity. The deity (full deity) of the Messiah took the promised new-covenant salvation to a whole new level. To be united with the Messiah, by grace through faith, is to be united with God the Son, the One who brings us to the Father.)) The apostles didn't understand His deity until after His resurrection. They didn't even believe in His resurrection until after He was resurrected, even though He had told them that He would be resurrected on the third day (cf., e.g. Matt. 16:21; 17:23; John 20:9).

God's revelation, which includes His opening the eyes of His people to understand the Scriptures, is progressive (see, for example, Luke 24:25-27, 44-49). The name Yahweh typically refers to God the Father in the Old Testament, even as the word God typically refers to God the Father in the New Testament. And the New Testament has quite a few passages like JOHN 17:3 ("This is eternal life, that they may know You, THE ONLY TRUE GOD [my emphasis], and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." Verses like this and those I list as we continue were not intended to deny the full deity of the Lord Jesus, but they do demonstrate the preeminent role of God the Father.); ROMANS 16:26, 27 (I'll quote verse 27, "to THE ONLY WISE GOD [God the Father], through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen!"); 1 CORINTHIANS 8:4-6 ("Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that THERE IS NO GOD BUT ONE [referring to God the Father]. (5) For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, (6) 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, by whom are all things [These words would be better translated "through whom are all things." God the Father created all things through God the Son.], and we *exist* through Him."); 1 CORINTHIANS 15:27, 28 (I won't quote these verses here, but these verses strongly emphasize the preeminent role of God the Father.); EPHESIANS 4:4-6 ("*There is* one body and one Spirit [the Holy Spirit], just as you were called in one hope of your calling; (5) one Lord [the Lord Jesus], one faith, one baptism [referring to water baptism], (6) ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL WHO IS OVER ALL AND THROUGH ALL AND IN ALL."); 1 TIMOTHY 1:17 ("Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, THE ONLY GOD [referring to God the Father], be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."); 1 TIMOTHY 2:5 ("For THERE IS ONE GOD, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus...."); 1 TIMOTHY 6:13-16 ("I charge you in

the presence of God [God the Father], who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, (14) that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) which He [God the Father] will bring about at the proper time - HE WHO IS THE BLESSED AND ONLY SOVEREIGN, the King of kings and Lord of lords, (16) who alone possesses immortality and dwells in inapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen."); and JUDE 1:24, 25 ("Now to Him [God the Father] who is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, (25) TO THE ONLY GOD OUR SAVIOR [referring to God the Father], through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.")

Verses like the ones I just quoted from the New Testament that greatly exalt God the Father and His preeminent role (calling Him "the only God" and such expressions) do not diminish the fact that the Bible (and especially the New Testament) clearly teaches the full deity of God the Son (and the Holy Spirit). For one thing (as I have pointed out in the three companion articles to this article; I am quoting from my paper "More on the Trinity" here), the name Yahweh is used on occasion for God the Son in the Old Testament and the word God is used for Him several times in the New Testament, which strongly teaches His full deity. The fact that God the Father has the preeminent role in the Trinity does not detract from the full deity of God the Son (or the Holy Spirit). We desperately need the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. I am convinced, by the way, that God the Son (and God the Holy Spirit) loves the verses that greatly exalt God the Father and the reality expressed in those verses.

After we receive the full revelation regarding the Lord Jesus Christ (and the Holy Spirit) through the New Testament, we can clearly see the full deity of the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament, but I don't believe we have to try to see Him typically included when the name Yahweh is used in the Old Testament. I'm quite sure that wasn't God's intention, and it confuses the issue. For one thing, if we overstate the oneness of God based (to some significant extent) on a misinterpretation of Deut. 6:4, we certainly confuse the issue. It's proper to speak of one God, three Persons, but we don't want to overstate that oneness. (We do have to make it clear however that we don't have three Gods just as we also need to make it clear that there are three Persons in the Trinity: The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Father; the Father is not the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not the Father; the Son is not the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not the Son.) We desperately need the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. We also confuse the issue if we don't take seriously what the Bible, very much including the New Testament, says about the eternally subordinate role of God the Son (and the Holy Spirit). Full deity, Yes! Eternally subordinate to God the Father in His role, Yes! This

subordination helps us see that we don't have three independent Gods who are exactly like one another in every way.

Isaiah 9:6. (As I mentioned, this is one of the verses most often used by oneness Christians to try to prove their oneness viewpoint, but quite inappropriately.) **"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us** [[It is important to see that this "child/son," referring to the Messiah (see Isa. 9:7 for example), was "GIVEN" to us. HE WAS GIVEN BY GOD THE FATHER. We see the two Persons of God the Father and God the Son here, as we so often do throughout the Bible, even though the Person of God the Son wasn't clearly and fully revealed until the days of the New Testament. It would be impossible to adequately understand Isa. 9:6 until you know of God the Son and that He will become the promised Messiah, deity with God the Father. Many passages demonstrate that God the Son existed with the Father before any creating ever took place (He always existed with God the Father [and the Holy Spirit]), and that all beings and things that were ever created, were created by God the Father through God the Son. ((All of the key passages are discussed in my papers (many of them are discussed in this paper), and I'll be commenting on the preexistence of the Son with the Father and the fact that all things were created by Him later in this paper. (These things demonstrate the full deity of God the Son, and quite a bit of Scripture speaks clearly of His full deity.) Once you see the full deity of God the Son who existed with God the Father before any creating took place, there can be no more room for the oneness viewpoint of God.]]; **and the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God** [[The words "Mighty God" were quite shocking in that old covenant setting, but we Christians can understand and appreciate these words as one more passage that shows the full deity of the Son of God. Thank God for all such passages! As I have mentioned (emphasized), this super-important fact wasn't even understood by the apostles until after His resurrection. They didn't really believe that He would be raised from the dead on the third day (even though He told them that He would on several occasions) until after He had been resurrected and proved it to them.]], **Eternal Father** [[These words were equally shocking as were the words, "Mighty God." I'll comment on these words after I finish quoting this verse. These words certainly caused some confusion for a long period of time, but I am thankful that God included them in the Bible. These words came from God. They certainly didn't come from Isaiah himself. WHAT A BOOK! WHAT A PRIVILEGE TO HAVE SUCH A BOOK! WHAT A BLESSING TO KNOW THAT WE HAVE SUCH A BOOK! How could we know the truth if God didn't reveal it to us. We are totally dependent on His grace.]], **Prince of Peace.**"

I have an eight page discussion on Isa. 9:1-7 in my paper titled "Verse-by-Verse Studies of Selected Eschatological Prophecies from the Book of Isaiah," published in August,

2000. (Google to Karl Kemp Teaching.) I recommend that you read that entire discussion, but I'll quote part of what I said regarding the meaning of the words, "Eternal Father" here (I am taking the liberty to modify what I said in that paper to some extent for this paper. This excerpt goes on for two pages): This name also strongly indicates the deity of the Messiah. He is Father of His people in the eternal dimension. Taken in the fullest sense, this includes His work at creation (John 1:1-3, for example) and the fatherly care of His people (saving, guiding, protecting, and providing everything that is needed).

I'll quote part of what J. Alec Motyer said here ("Isaiah" [Inter-Varsity Press, 1999], pages 89, 90.): "used of the Lord [the Lord Jesus], 'father' speaks of his concern (Ps. 65:5), care and discipline (Ps. 103:13; Pr. 3:12; Is. 63:16; 64:8); cf. Ps. 72:4, 12-14; Is. 11:4."

And I'll quote part of what F. Delitzsch said here ("Commentary on the Old Testament," Vol. 7, page 253): This name, "Eternal Father," springs out of the last name, "Mighty God" "for what is divine must be eternal. The title Eternal Father designates Him [the Lord Jesus], however, not only as the possessor of eternity...but as the tender, faithful, and wise trainer, guardian, and provider for His people even in eternity (Isa. 22:21). He is eternal Father, as the eternal, loving King, according to the description in Ps. 72."

Further Discussion Regarding God as Father:

In the Old Testament the word "father/Father" was used more than five hundred times. Reading through the Old Testament verses listed under father/Father in my concordance (NASB), I found eleven verses (not counting Isa. 9:6) where God was pictured as Father to His people (Deut. 32:6; Psalm 68:5; 103:13; Prov. 3:12; Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:4, 19; 31:9; and Mal. 1:6; 2:10; also compare 2 Sam. 7:14; 1 Chron. 17:13; 22:10; and Psalm 89:26). In the New Testament we find the word *Father* used of God much more often than in the Old Testament, 264 times. It is used exclusively of God the Father in the New Testament; it is never used of God the Son, the Messiah.

We were not prepared to understand the New Testament name/title of "God the Father" (or "the Father") before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, which (for one thing) made a gigantic difference in the relationship believers have with God. The New Testament clearly reveals the Person of God the Son, the Son of God the Father (the old-covenant believers did not comprehend the Person of God the Son), and it reveals the glorious fact that new-covenant believers actually become born-again children of God the Father through new-covenant salvation in union with God the Son. God the Father actually becomes "the Father" of His born-again children in a very real, very special, very

personal sense. This is glorious indeed, but it must be understood, of course, that we don't become deity. Nobody is going to worship us, but we will worship God, the triune God, as we reign with Him.

It would cause substantial confusion if Christians used the term "Father" for Jesus Christ (the Son of God) now that we have been given the much fuller, New Testament revelation regarding God the Father and the triune God. It was reasonable in Old Testament days for Messiah to be called "Eternal Father" in this very important prophetic passage. For one thing, it was an effective way to shockingly declare the deity of the Messiah, along with the words "Mighty God." (It must be understood that God didn't choose to clearly reveal God the Son in the Old Testament, or the fact that He would become the God-man and the Messiah. These facts that are so clear to us now were concealed for the most part until it was God's time to clearly reveal them.) In the same way that it was reasonable (and very important) to call the Angel of the LORD "Yahweh" or "God" on occasion (see my paper "The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son") it was reasonable to call the Messiah "Eternal Father," and especially in the middle of a glorious prophecy in the Old Testament that dealt with His saving work and where He was just called "Mighty God."

As I mentioned, oneness Christians (who deny the Trinity) typically use Isa. 9:6 as one of their primary proof texts, but quite improperly. There are multiplied hundreds of verses in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, which demonstrate that God the Father and God the Son are distinct Persons in the Trinity. Very often the Father and the Son are mentioned together in the same passage as separate Persons: God the Father created through the Son; they talk to one another; they talk about one another; the Father sends the Son; the Son goes back to the Father; the Son is at the right hand of the Father; and the Son reigns with the Father and is worshipped with the Father, etc. The oneness doctrine is widespread in our day, and I believe that many of those holding that doctrine are true Christians. (Of course I'm not the Judge.) I must also say, however, that I consider this teaching to be a serious error, and it is one of the most divisive issues in the body of Christ.

The oneness doctrine may seem to make God easier for the human mind to understand (if we don't stop and think about the details), and it sounds reasonable if we are willing to limit ourselves to a few proof texts that seem to teach oneness (but they don't really teach oneness), but it cannot stand when we take into account all that the Scriptures teach on the topic. ((Based on what I have heard and read from them, most of the people who have ascribed to the oneness viewpoint did so on the basis of the oneness interpretation of just a very few verses that seemed so clear to them. I have included at least most of those verses in this section of this paper (referring to my paper "More on

the Trinity" that I have been quoting). And then, as it so often happens with Christians [but not just Christians], once we have determined what we are sure is the correct, biblical viewpoint, we tend to close our minds. That issue is settled! Every other verse in the Bible must fit that viewpoint, one way, or another! I must be faithful to God and guard this "truth" with my life. It can appeal to our pride to think that we are one of the select few who really have the truth and are really saved. We all need to face the fact that we can be motivated by pride, with pride and unbelief being at the root of sin.)) By the way, it's not surprising that we cannot fully understand God. We are required to believe *all* that the Scriptures teach about Him, whether we can fully understand or not. There certainly is no basis to say that the triune view of God presented in the Bible is unreasonable. We will understand God a whole lot better after we are glorified, but even then I'm quite sure that we won't fully understand Him.

WHERE WE ARE GOING WITH MOST OF THE REST OF THIS PAPER. I am going to put the emphasis on looking at some of the key passages that demonstrate the preexistence of God the Son and the fact that all beings and things that were ever created were created by God the Father through Him. As I mentioned, if you can see that, you have to abandon the oneness viewpoint, even if you might not fully understand the Trinity. We probably never will fully understand the Trinity. Even after we are glorified there will still exist a gigantic difference between God and us. I also want to mention three scholarly Trinitarian authors, and include some excerpts from them. I purchased and read one of the books while preparing to write this paper, and the two books I had read in the past but reread while preparing to write this paper. In the light of what I said above, I'll put the emphasis on dealing with the preexistence of the Son of God and His role in creation.

First I'll quote the first section (of the two sections) in my paper "More on the Trinity." That section, which is titled "Some Key Passages from the New Testament where We See the Full Deity and Preexistence of God the Son as a Person Distinct from God the Father," is very important to understand the Trinity. ((As I have mentioned, even one passage that clearly shows that God the Son existed [existed as a Person] with God the Father in the beginning, before any creating had taken place, overthrows the oneness viewpoint. I believe oneness Christians will agree with my last sentence: They dogmatically insist that the only One who existed before the virgin birth was God the Father who took on flesh and human nature in the incarnation.)) All of these passages include the preexistence of the Son, and several of them include the fact that all beings and things that were ever created were created by God the Father through Him. The Passages are John 1:1-18; John 8:58 (with 8:57, 59); John 17:1-5; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-17; and Heb. 1:1-3.

JOHN 1:1-18. (For a fuller discussion of these super-important verses, which are the prologue for the Gospel of John, see my paper "John 1:1-18; Colossians 1:15-3:17" that is on my internet site: Google to Karl Kemp Teaching.) **"In the beginning** [Compare Gen. 1:1. John means back before any creating had taken place. The time system of our world didn't exist yet, and God isn't limited to the time system of our created world.] **was the Word** ["The Word" (Greek "Logos") is a title for God the Son, who always existed as a Person with God the Father (and the Holy Spirit). Also see John 1:14; 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13.], **and the Word was with** [Greek preposition "pros" with "with" being used of a face-to-face, Person-to-Person relationship] **God** [God the Son was with God the Father. I'll quote John 17:5, "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was." They always had an infinitely glorious, loving, Person to Person relationship.], **and the Word was God.** [[(This double bracket continues for four paragraphs.) "The Word" isn't being confused with the Person of God the Father here. For one thing, the second use of the Greek word for God ("theos") in this verse does not have the definite article, whereas the first use of the word does have the definite article (the word translated "the"). The word for God with the definite article perfectly fits and refers to God the Father, the One who is typically called God throughout the New Testament. The second use of the Greek word, without the definite article, communicates the fact that the Word is fully deity, without confusing Him with the Person of God the Father. As we continue with these verses, we learn that every person, being, or thing, including matter, that was ever created was created *through* the Person of God the Son (cf., e.g., John 1:3, 10, 11, Col. 1:16; and Heb. 1:2). And as we continue with the Gospel of John it is confirmed again and again that the Word was a Person, a Person who was eventually sent into the world by the Father.

I'll read 1 JOHN 1:1-3, which is a very important cross-reference, "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the WORD [my emphasis] of life - (2) and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us - (3) what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." They had fellowship with God the Father and the resurrected Son of God, two Persons; three with the Holy Spirit.

I'll comment briefly on what the very influential oneness writer David K. Bernard says on the meaning of the word "Word" in John 1:1 in his very influential book "The Oneness of God" (Word Aflame Press, 1983, pages 60, 61). I'll just quote two key sentences from

the almost two pages of what Bernard says here. "Rather the Word was a thought or a plan in the mind of God. It was with God in the beginning and was part of Him (John 1:1)." Bernard probably did the best he could do to try to remove the Person of the Son of God from this passage, but I don't believe there is any possibility that what he said fits what the apostle John said here. It seems clear to me that what 1 John 1:1-3 says, which is quoted in the preceding paragraph, should suffice by itself to show that the Word was a lot more than a thought or a plan in the mind of God in the beginning, before any creating took place.

In the verses that follow John 1:1, the apostle John goes on speaking of a Person (not a thought or a plan). There is no way, for example, that what John says in 1:4 ("In Him was life and the life was the Light of men") can refer to a thought or a plan in the mind of God. "Him" (masculine in the Greek) refers to the Word, the Son of God, and John continues to speak of Him (not of a thought or plan in the mind of God). He goes on to speak of this Person (the Word) coming into the world in verses 9-13 and in verse 14 John specifically mentions His incarnation with the words "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His [the eternal Son of God's] glory, glory as of the only begotten [see below for a better translation than "only begotten"] from the Father, full of grace and truth." It is also very significant that the apostle John speaks of the Person of God the Son as "the Word" in 1 John 1:1-4 and "the Word of God" in Rev. 19:13. More could be said, but it seems so clear to me that Bernard is wrong here. I doubt that he feels comfortable with what he said, but he had to say something to try to remove God the Son from John 1:1, since he is writing to argue that there was no Person (the Son of God) with the Father in the beginning and there is no Trinity.]] **(John 1:2) He was in the beginning with God.** [[(This double bracket goes on for two long paragraphs.) As the margin of the NASB shows, "He" would more literally be translated "This One." Whether we translate "He" or "This One," this word, which is masculine in the Greek, clearly refers to a Person, not to a word, thought, idea, or plan in the mind of God the Father, or anything other than the Son of God. The fact that the word is masculine is only a very small part of the reason we know that "This one" is a Person. The fact that He is a Person is confirmed by essentially all of the verses here in John 1:1-18: In the beginning, before any creating had taken place, He was with God the Father and He (the Son of God) was God/deity in company with God the Father (1:1). He (not a thought, plan, thing, etc) was in the beginning with God (1:2). All beings or things were created through Him, a Person (cf. 1 Cor. 8:6 ["...and one Lord Jesus Christ by (or better, "through") whom are all things..."]; Col. 1:16 ["all things have been created through Him and for Him"]; Heb. 1:2 ["...His Son...through whom He made the world."]) (John 1:3). In Him were life and light (things which He had by virtue of His being God the Son); He made the Light available to men before He became the God-man (1:4, 5). John the Baptist testified about Him (1:6). He (God the Son, who was with the Father in

the beginning) came into the world (He became the God-man at the time of His virgin birth) (1:9). He came into the world but the world that was made through Him did not know Him; they did not receive Him because of their spiritual death, darkness, and sinful state (1:10, 11). However, those who did receive Him in faith were born again (1:12, 13). The Logos/the Word (see verse 1) became flesh (He became the God-man) and lived among us, and His apostles and others were able to see His glory, the glory of the unique Son of God the Father (1:14). John the Baptist testified, for one super-important thing, that this Person (God the Son, the Logos) who was conceived after he (John the Baptist) was (as far as His humanity was concerned) existed before him (1:15). Those who submitted to the One who came into the world from heaven have received of His fullness and grace upon grace (1:16). The Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ (1:17). No one has seen God the Father at any time (but we will see Him after we are glorified), but this Person, the unique Son of God, who was with the Father before any creating took place, has revealed Him on a level that no One but the Son of God could do (1:18).

This is important information when we consider that the oneness interpretation of John 1:1-3 does not, and cannot, leave any room for the Logos (the Word) a Person to exist with God the Father in the beginning; the Son from their point of view cannot exist before the virgin birth. If the Word is a Person, which He clearly is in these verses, then the oneness view of God is wrong. I don't make a comment like that to show disrespect for anyone; not at all; but we desperately need the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches, and especially when we are considering what the Bible teaches about the God (the triune God) we worship. I'm not attacking anybody. My desire is to be a blessing to everybody that I can.]] **(John 1:3) All things came into being through Him** [[through the Person of God the Son. I'll quote the relevant words from John 1:10, "and the world was made through Him." I'll quote 1 Cor. 8:6, "yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father [the preeminent role of God the Father is strongly emphasized in this verse and in quite a few other verses in the New Testament], from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom [The Greek has the same preposition used in John 1:3, 10, and in the next two verses that I'll quote as we continue, the preposition "dia" used with the genitive case. I would translate "through whom" here in 1 Cor. 8:6] are all things [in that God the Father created all things through Him], and we *exist* through Him." I'll also read the words at the end of Col. 1:16, "all things have been created through Him and for Him." And Heb. 1:2 says, "in these last days [God the Father] has spoken to us in His Son, who He appointed heir of all things, through whom [God the Son] also He [God the Father] made the world." These verses all make it clear that God the Father created everything through His Son, a Person, not through a word, thought, plan, or anything else. Also see Heb. 1:10-12.]], **and apart from Him [God the Son] nothing came into being that has come into**

being. (John 1:4) In Him [God the Son] was life [In that God the Son was deity, He had life in Himself (very much including spiritual/eternal life).], and the life was the Light of men. [[The Gospel of John frequently speaks of Jesus being the Light of men. One of the roles of God the Son was to make light, spiritual light (which includes the truth about God) available to men. (The triune God is the only source for life, light, truth, righteousness, and everything else that is good.) As the next verse and verse 9 show, the Son made that light available as He shined with the light of God in the days before He became the God-man. And the Gospel of John shows that He made that light available (and in a more personal, more powerful way) after He became the God-man.]]

(John 1:5) The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. [[The light from God the Son was shining in the darkness, but mankind, speaking of mankind in general (there were exceptions like Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc.), was not receptive to the light - mankind rejected the light. Mankind was in spiritual darkness and spiritual death after the rebellion and fall of Adam and Eve (see Rom. 5:12-21, for example). As we will see in John 1:9-11, even after God the Son came into the world as the God-man, mankind, speaking of mankind in general, still rejected God the Father, God the Son, and the light of God (see John 3:19-21, for example). The sin problem runs very deep in the heart of man. Verse 13 adds (thank God!) that some people did receive God the Father, the Lord Jesus, and the light of God and became born-again Christians. The Holy Spirit was, of course, right in the center of these glorious things!]]

(John 1:6) There was a man sent from God, whose name was John [John the Baptist]. (John 1:7) He came as a witness, to testify about the Light [see John 1:29-40, for example], so that all might believe through him [through John the Baptist]. (John 1:8) He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. (John 1:9) There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. [[(This double bracket continues for two long paragraphs.) I can't live with the translation of the NASB here. I'll give a literal translation of the Greek that yields, I believe, the intended meaning: (My translation is very similar to the NIV, which I'll quote, (NIV) "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.") **"The true Light [God the Son], which shines on every man, was coming into the world."** I believe it is better to translate "shines on" (which is a reasonable way to translate the Greek verb used here) than "gives light to" because the translation "gives light to" tends to wrongly communicate the idea that the people receive the light (and are enlightened by the light) that is made available to them, but verse 5 has already informed us that the people in the darkness (speaking for the large majority) did not receive the light. Verses 9, 10 confirm that the people (speaking for the large majority) had not received the light, and did not even receive the light when God the Son (through whom they had been created) came into the world through the virgin birth. The words, "coming into the world" speak of God the Son's coming into the world to become the God-man. Notice that verse 10 starts with the words, "He was in the world."

The words at the end of verse 9 speak of His coming into the world. Verse 14 adds, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."

I'll list some of the verses from the Gospel of John that speak of God the Son's, a Person, coming into the world from heaven, having been sent by God the Father. For one thing, these verses, by themselves, suffice to show that God the Son is a Person distinct from God the Father, and that He existed with God the Father before He became a man. Quite a few verses in the New Testament (including John 1:1-18 and other key verses that we discuss in this paper) show that He existed with the Father before any creating took place, before the time system of our created world existed: John 3:13 ("He who descended from heaven"; The Word, the Son, had to be in heaven to descend from heaven for His incarnation); John 3:17 (God the Father sent His Son into the world); John 3:31 (He comes from above and "He who comes down from heaven"); John 6:38 ("For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."); John 6:46 ("Not that anyone has seen the Father except the One who is from God; He [God the Son, a Person] has seen the Father."); John 6:62 ("...the Son ascending to where He was before"); John 7:33 ("then I go to Him who sent Me"); John 8:14, 16, 18 ("I know where I came from and where I am going"; "But I and the Father who sent Me"; "and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me"); John 13:3 ("Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God [God the Father] and was going back to God [back to God the Father after His crucifixion and resurrection, at His ascension]."); John 16:27, 28 ("For the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.")] **(John 1:10) He was in the world** [He, this Person, the Lord Jesus, the Word, God the Son, who had taken on flesh to become the God-man], **and the world was made through Him** [John has already informed us in verse 3 that God the Father created the world through Him, through God the Son in His preincarnate state.], **and the world did not know Him.** [[John has already informed us in verse 5 that mankind (speaking for the great majority), which was in the darkness, did not receive the light that shined on them. They did not know Him when He came into the world, which showed how serious the spiritual death, bondage to sin and to the kingdom of darkness problem was, and as the next verse shows they "did not receive Him."]] **(John 1:11) He came to His own** [[The Greek more literally reads, "Unto His own things (or, possessions) He came." "His own things/possessions is a translation of the Greek "ta idia,"" where "ta" is a *neuter* plural definite article and "idia" is a *neuter* plural adjective. Apparently John used the *neuter* here (even though the masculine form of the adjective was readily available, as we will see as we continue with this verse) to make the important point that the people to whom the Word, God the Son, came were part of that which God the Father had created through Him. Having

been created by God (the triune God), they owed Him their allegiance, and all the more so after the Word condescended to become a man (the God-man) and then to die for them, bearing their sins with the guilt and the penalties (including the major penalties of spiritual death and bondage to sin, so that we could get out from under those penalties). The NIV translates, "He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive him."], **and those who were His own did not receive Him.** ["His own" here is a translation of "hoi idioi," where "hoi" is a *masculine* plural definite article and "idioi" is a masculine plural form of the same adjective that was used earlier in this verse. After making the point that the Word came to "His own things/possessions" with the first words of this verse (by using the *neuter* plural form of this adjective), he switched to a *masculine* plural form of this same adjective. The masculine was the typical gender used for people, unless the people happened to be female.

Many believe "His own" and "those who were His own" is limited to the people of Israel. It is true, of course, that God had a special relationship with the people of Israel and that they had a special obligation to submit to the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. I believe, however, that John was speaking of mankind worldwide here in verse 11, as he was in verses 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, and 13. The Gospel of John was written for Gentiles too.]] **(John 1:12) But as many as received Him** [received Him by submitting to Him in faith, and to the One who sent Him, and to the gospel], **to them He** [God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ] **gave the right** [or, the authority] **to become children of God** [As verse 13, and many other verses show, we become born-again children of God the Father.], **even to those who believe in His name** [[the Word's, God the Son's, the Lord Jesus Christ's name. To believe in His name includes believing all that the Bible teaches about Him, very much including all that the Bible teaches about Him here in John 1:1-18. And we must understand that *believing* in His name includes a commitment from the heart to live in accordance with the terms of the new covenant, on a continuous basis, by the saving, enabling grace of God in Christ. And there is no way we can submit (in faith) to God the Son and not submit to God the Father, the One who sent Him into the world. Jesus always made it very clear that He had been sent by the Father and that He was totally committed to the Father and His will. For one super-important thing, He came to solve the sin, spiritual death problem and bring us to the Father. See John 14:6 for example.]], **(John 1:13) who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.** [[This glorious, all-important birth comes from God (see, for example, John 3:3-8; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; and 1 John 2:29; 3:9). It does not, and cannot, come from anything of the created world, including man, or the will of man.]] **(John 1:14) And the Word** [God the Son, who had always existed with God the Father; see John 1:1] **became flesh, and dwelt among us** [[See Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-38; Rom. 1:3; Gal. 4:4; Phil. 2:7, 8; Heb. 2:14; 1 John 1:1-3; 4:2; and 2 John 1:7. God hasn't revealed all the details, but it is clear that the Word, God the Son,

became a man, but not just a man - He became the God-man. From the time of His incarnation, He was one Person with two natures, He was deity (God the Son) and He was human. He temporarily set aside His glory (to a significant extent) when He became a man (see John 17:1-5, Phil. 2:7, 8, for example), but He never ceased being deity, and He will be worshipped forever with God the Father (see, for example, Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 5:11-14; 21:22, 23; and 22:1-21). Jesus Christ was not spiritually dead (including at the time He was being crucified or after He died; see my paper "Did Jesus Die Spiritually?"), as all men have been since the fall, and He never sinned. Hallelujah! What a Savior! What a Worthy Sacrifice! What a Salvation Plan!]], **and we saw His glory** [[Throughout His life on earth, His glory was manifested to some extent, and especially after He was anointed by the Spirit to become the Anointed One/the Messiah/the Christ (see John 2:11, "This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory...") through who He was and by the things He said and did. The apostles Peter, James, and John were privileged to see His glory in a special sense at the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36; and 2 Pet. 1:16-18). Many disciples, especially the apostles, saw something of His glory after He was resurrected.]], **glory as of the only begotten from the Father** [I would translate, "**the unique Son of the Father**" or "**the unique One of the Father**"], **full of grace and truth** [see John 1:17]. [[In the margin the NASB has a note, "or unique, only one of His kind," instead of "only begotten." There is widespread agreement in our day that the Greek adjective "monogenes" does not mean "only begotten"; it should be translated "unique" or the equivalent. (See my paper on John 1:1-18 on my internet site for the details.) It is important to understand that when orthodox Christians have spoken of the only-begotten Son, they were not saying that there was a time when the Son did not exist. They thought in terms of His being *eternally* generated/begotten by the Father. (See my paper on John 1:1-18 for more details.) This same adjective is also used of the Son of God in John 1:18; 3:16, 18 and 1 John 4:9. In John 3:16, 18 and 1 John 4:9 (and probably also in John 1:18), the word "Son" is included in the Greek. I would translate "the unique Son" in John 3:16, 18; and 1 John 4:9; we'll discuss John 1:18 as we continue. Here in John 1:14 it is necessary to supply another word with the adjective; we could translate "the unique Son" or "the unique One." The angels are sometimes called "sons of God" in the Bible, and so are born-again Christians, but the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Son of God in a *unique*, very special, sense. He is deity, through whom the angels and men (and everything else) were created, for one super-important difference.]] **(John 1:15) John** [John the Baptist] **testified about Him and cried out, saying, 'This was He of whom I said, "He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me** [see John 1:30]." ' [[Jesus came after John the Baptist in that He was born some six months after him (see Luke 1:36) and in that John's ministry started earlier and prepared the way for Jesus and His ministry. But John realized that he and his ministry were very much subordinate to Jesus and His

ministry (compare, for example, Matt. 3:11-15; Luke 3:16, 17; John 1:27). John knew quite a bit about Jesus and His ministry (see John 1:26-43; Luke 1:5-80, for example). It is significant that John knew about Jesus' preexistence: He said, "for He existed before me," even though it was understood that John was born before Jesus. John the Baptist was speaking of Jesus' preexistence as a Person, not of His preexisting as a word, or thought, etc. in the mind of God the Father. John the Baptist also knew, for example, that Jesus was the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29, 36) and that He would baptize in the Holy Spirit (John 1:33), in the Holy Spirit and fire (Matt. 3:11, 12). He also saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Jesus and heard a voice out of heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (see Matt. 3:16, 17; Mark 1:10, 11; John 1:33).] **(John 1:16) For of His fullness we have all received** [compare Eph. 1:23; 3:19; 4:13; Col. 1:19; and 2:9], **and grace upon grace.** [[Every aspect of new-covenant salvation that we receive in/through the Lord Jesus (which includes everything we could ever need now and forever, including truth, knowledge, wisdom, redemption, forgiveness, righteousness, holiness, provision for our daily needs in this world, glorification, having a place in God's eternal kingdom, and reigning with Him and the Lord Jesus Christ forever) comes to us by the all-sufficient, super-abundant grace upon grace of God in Christ Jesus. We did not, and we could not, earn/merit these things.]] **(John 1:17) For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.** [[The Law, which was the foundation for the old covenant, was given through Moses. The Mosaic Law was from God, it was good, it was *true*, and some *grace* accompanied that covenant, but God didn't give the old covenant to solve the sin, spiritual death, darkness, Satan problem. God's plan, from before the creation of the world (see, for example, 1 Pet. 1:20; Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8; 17:8), was to send His Son to die for our sins and to fully solve the sin, spiritual death, Satan, darkness problem. The all-sufficient grace of God in Christ - the "grace upon grace" spoken of here in verse 17 - avails to fully save us and to totally remove sin, spiritual death, darkness, Satan and all who continue to follow him in his rebellion against God from His kingdom forever. The Mosaic Law was *true*, but the full, complete *truth* was not manifested until Jesus Christ, who is *the truth*, was manifested. As verse 14 says, He was "full of grace and truth." Compare John 8:32; 14:6; and 18:37.]] **(John 1:18) No one has seen God at any time** [Compare Ex. 33:20; 1 Tim. 6:16; and 1 John 4:12. No man has seen God the Father at any time, not in any full, direct sense. After we are glorified we will see Him as He is (compare 1 John 3:2) and face to face (compare 1 Cor. 13:12; Rev. 22:4).]; **the only begotten God** (See my paper on John 1:1-18 for more details on this verse.) [[(This double bracket continues for two paragraphs.) or, probably better "**unique Son**," not "only begotten God." The Greek behind "only begotten" is "monogenes," the adjective that we discussed in some detail under verse 14. Here, as in verse 14, I believe a translation like "**unique**" was intended. The interpretation of this verse is complicated by the fact that many ancient

Greek manuscripts of the New Testament have the word for "Son" ("huios") following "monogenes" instead of the word for "God" ("theos"). Quite a few translations follow the Greek text that has the word for "Son," including the KJV and NKJV ("the only begotten Son"); the RSV ("the only Son"); the NEB ("God's only Son"); the *New Living Translation* ("his only Son"); and the *Jerusalem Bible* ("the only Son"). If the original reading was *monogenes* followed by *huios* (and I rather strongly favor this reading), I would translate **"the unique Son,"** or the equivalent. Remember that John 3:16, 18, and 1 John 4:9 have the Greek adjective *monogenes* followed by the word for Son.

It is possible that "God" (instead of "Son") was the original reading. If so, I would understand this verse in the sense given by D. A. Carson ("Gospel According to John" [Eerdmans, 1991], page 134) and others too. See my paper on John 1:1-18 for more details on this verse): "...the unique and beloved one (the term is *monogenes*...), [himself] God, has made him [God the Father] known. That is probably the correct text [with the reading *God* instead of the *Son*].... What it means is that the beloved Son, the incarnate Word (1:14), himself God [God in the sense of deity, as in verse 1] while being *at the Father's side* - just as in v. 1 the Word was simultaneously God [God the Son] and with God [with God the Father]...."] **who is in the bosom** [{" 'In the bosom of' is a Hebrew idiom expressing the intimate relationship of child and parent, and of friend and friend (cf. [John] 13:23)" (R. V. G. Tasker, "Gospel According to St. John" [Eerdmans, 1969], page 49).}] **of the Father, He has explained Him.** [{"has made him known" NIV; "has revealed him" *New American Bible*. The Lord Jesus Christ was the perfect Person to reveal/make known God the Father (and the triune God). He was/is deity with the Father; He became a man (the God-man), which permitted Him to dwell with men and communicate with us in our dimension; He was anointed by the Father with the Holy Spirit; He had the same nature, character, attitudes, motives, and priorities as the Father, and He spoke the words that the Father wanted Him to speak and did the works the Father wanted Him to do (compare, for example, John 5:19; 10:37, 38; 12:49; and 14:8-10).}]

Michael R. Burgos ("Kiss the Son," 2012) discusses John 1:1 on pages 55-64. He interacts extensively with what David Bernard says on John 1:1. Chapter 4 of Gregory A. Boyd's "Oneness Pentecostals & The Trinity" is titled "Did the Son of God Exist Before His Birth" (pages 93-114). He discusses John 1:1-18, especially John 1:1 on pages 94-97. I'll quote a few sentences from what Boyd says here: "There is perhaps no stronger testimony to the actual distinct pre-existence of Christ than the entire first chapter of the Gospel of John. It was, in fact, largely my own study of this chapter that finally convinced me that the Oneness view of the Son of God [which he previously held] could not possibly be correct" (page 94). And "The conclusion that John understood Jesus actually and personally to preexist with God [the Father] and as God

[as deity] prior to His becoming flesh seems unavoidable. Therefore, the Oneness attempt to explain Christ's preexistence as an existence either as the actual Father or as the idealized envisaged Son [the One who oneness Christians say did not exist until the virgin birth] cannot succeed in this passage" (page 96).

Edward L. Dalcour ("A Definitive Look at Oneness Theology," 2011) discusses John 1:1 in some detail on pages 119-131. He rightly says that this verse shows the eternity of the Son, the distinction between the Father and the Son, and the full deity of the Son. He interacts with Bernard to some extent. I'll give one short excerpt: "...Oneness theology says the Son is the humanity and not the deity of Jesus. They also assert that since the Sonship began (was created) in Bethlehem, the Sonship will cease to exist after time (cf. Bernard, 1983, page 106)" (page 121).

JOHN 8:58 (WITH 8:57, 59). "So the Jews said to Him, 'You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?' (58) Jesus said to them, 'Truly [Amen], truly [Amen], I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.' (59) Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself [A note in the margin of the NASB has "was hidden"; if this is the idea God hid Him, one way, or another; it is clear that this wasn't the right time for Jesus to die, and He was not to die by stoning.] and went out of the temple."

Jesus clearly spoke of His preexistence (His preexistence as a Person) in verse 58, having existed before Abraham (who lived some two thousand years before Jesus was born of the virgin), but He did more than that: There is very widespread agreement that He was declaring His deity with the words "I am." The words "I am" here (also compare John 8:24, 28; 13:19) undoubtedly build on the super-important words "I AM" and "I AM WHO I AM" (or, probably better, "I AM FOR I AM") of Ex. 3:14, where God gave these words as His name. The name "I AM" is very closely related to the name "Yahweh," which was used in Ex. 3:15, and that Hebrew noun is used more than 6,800 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. See the discussion on the super-important meaning of these names at the beginning of my paper titled, "The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son."

Those Jews would have undoubtedly stoned Jesus for just saying that He existed before Abraham, but they would have been much more angered by His claim to be deity with the words "I AM." It was totally legitimate for Jesus to take that name for Himself because that name, which referred first and foremost to God the Father in the Old Testament, was applicable for Him too in that He (the Son of God) was deity with the Father, and it was used for Him several times in the Old Testament. In fact, there is

widespread agreement that it was God the Son who appeared to Moses in Exodus chapter 3, as the Angel of Yahweh. (See Ex. 3:2 and my paper, "The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son.")

JOHN 17:1-5. ((Jesus' words here, especially verses 3-5, clearly show that He, the Word, God the Son, in His preincarnate state, had been existing in glory with God the Father before the world was created, as in John 1:1-3. And they show that the Father sent Him (this Person through whom all creating took place) into the world to become the God-man. As this paper shows, many verses in the Gospel of John confirm that the preexistent Son was sent into the world to become the God-man. John 17:24 mentions that God the Father loved the Son (loved the Son as a Person who existed with Him at that time) before the creation of the world. Jesus spoke these things to the Father before His apostles after the Lord's Supper and before He was arrested the evening before He was crucified.)) **"Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, (2) even as You gave Him authority over all flesh [cf., e.g., Matt. 28:18; John 3:35], that to all whom You have given Him [cf., e.g., John 17:6, 9, 20-24], He may give eternal life. [[On Jesus' being glorified see John 17:5. The Father *glorifies* the Son by raising Him from the dead (He was the first man, though He was much more than just a man, to be raised with a glorified body), by exalting Him to His right hand, by "giving Him authority over all flesh" (over all mankind), etc. Christ's authority over all flesh includes His "[giving] eternal life" to those chosen by God ((the elect [Taken in the fullest sense, God's elect includes all the people who will have a place in the new heaven and new earth with its new Jerusalem, very much including all the believers who lived in the days before the new covenant was ratified through the atoning death of the Lamb of God. The names of the elect are written in the Lamb's book of life (see, for example, Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 20:15, and 21:27).]] and His judging and removing all who persist in rebellion, without repentance (compare John 5:21-29). We enter "eternal life" through the new birth by the Spirit (see, for example John 3:3-8, 15, 16, 36; 5:24). The resurrected Christ was also given authority to judge and remove Satan, the evil angels, and the demons at the right time. God the Father, who has the preeminent role in the Trinity, will also be active in the end-time judgments (cf., e.g., Rev. 11:15-18; 12:10; and 20:11-15).]] (3) This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God [[The full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ (and the Holy Spirit) is clearly taught in the New Testament (including here in John 17:1-5), but there are quite a few verses like this in the New Testament that emphasize the preeminent role of God the Father (cf., e.g., Rom. 16:26, 27; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 15:27, 28; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2:5; 6:13-16; and Jude 1:24, 25). Here He is called "the only true God." I'm totally sure that the Lord Jesus (and the Holy Spirit) love the fact that God the Father has the preeminent role in the Trinity.]], and Jesus Christ whom You have sent [God the Father sent His Son, who always**

existed with Him, into the world to become the God-man and to save us (cf., e.g., John 3:17; 17:8, 21, 23, 25)]. [[The triune God is the only source of life, very much including "eternal life," and of everything else that is good. We have the great privilege through new-covenant salvation to be right with, to be in union with, and to know (know in an experiential sense) God the Father with a person to Person relationship. So too with Jesus Christ whom He has sent, who brings us to the Father through His incarnation and all-important atoning death (cf. John 14:6). So too with the Holy Spirit of life who dwells in every born-again Christian (cf. Rom. 8:9). Christians partake of spiritual/eternal life in a preliminary sense from the time they are born again by the Spirit of God, but most of the glory of eternal life is reserved for the end of this age, when we will be born into the fullness of eternal life (cf., e.g., Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:42-57; Col. 1:27; Titus 3:7; and Rev. 12:5).]] **(4) I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.** [[Compare John 4:34; 6:38. The Lord Jesus always perfectly obeyed the Father and perfectly accomplished the work assigned to Him. His greatest work involved His voluntary atoning death, which hadn't been accomplished when He spoke these words, but there is widespread agreement that Jesus spoke here from the point of view that it had been accomplished in that the time had now arrived for His crucifixion and He was fully committed to carry out that one last great work on the earth (cf., e.g., John 1:29, 36; 3:14-18; 10:11-18; 12:20-33; 13:21-33; 18:11; and 19:28-30). It was perfectly accomplished!]] **(5) Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was** [Compare John 1:1-3, 14; 17:24 ("for you [Father] loved Me, a Person [and not the thought or idea of Me] before the foundation of the world"); Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:15-17; and Heb. 1:1-3]. It is very important to see that a whole lot more is taking place here than God the Son's being restored to the glory that He had with the Father before He condescended to become a man, the God-man (cf. Phil. 2:7, 8; John 1:14). Now the Lord Jesus Christ (the God-man), having overcome sin and God's enemies through His sinless life and His all-important atoning death, was to be glorified by the Father, which included His resurrection and ascension. Now He (the God-man) would have the commission and authority to save (with a very full salvation) all believers and to judge and remove all unrepentant rebels, including the devil, evil angels, and demons.

Genesis 3:15 had prophesied that Satan and his followers would be defeated by man. The God-*man* makes this work, but we (His people) have the privilege to participate in that warfare and judgment (see, for example, Rom. 16:20; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Rev. 2:26, 27; 5:10; 12:5; 17:14; and 19:19). All the verses I just listed refer to the time after we are glorified. Pretty soon comes eternal glory!

Those who are united with the Lord Jesus Christ by faith will ultimately be glorified with Him and reign with Him (see, for example Rom. 8:17, 18, 29; Rev. 3:21; 20:6; 22:5 [Rev. 22:5 shows that this will be a NEVER-ENDING reign]). If He had not become a man (the God-man), we could not have been saved through His all-important atoning death, and have become united with Him, and be glorified in union with Him. Christ Jesus exalts His people FAR ABOVE what Adam had before the fall (compare 1 Cor. 15:45-52). We will be glorified with Him and reign with Him forever! What a salvation plan! We will not, of course, become deity/God with Christ. We will be worshipping God (the triune God), serving Him, and enjoying Him and everything else in His kingdom forever. We will not be worshipped in any sense.

I'm going to discuss what David K. Bernard says on John 17:5 in his "The Oneness of God," pages 183, 184. It sure is confusing to me, and I'm sure it's wrong. I'll try to unpack what Bernard says here. I'm trying to be fair to what he says. He says "In John 17:5 [KJV] Jesus [[From Bernard's oneness point of view this has to be the humanity of Jesus praying to God the Father, who (the Father) had taken on flesh and who was the divine part of Jesus. For Bernard the name Jesus includes the Father and the Son (and the Holy Spirit too, but the Spirit isn't involved in this passage), but for him the Son doesn't exist (except in the mind of God) until the virgin birth. I'll quote part of a sentence from his page 67, "Jesus was not only the Son in His humanity but also the Father in His deity.']] prayed, 'O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was [[Here, according to Bernard, Jesus is speaking as the Father, the One who had the glory in the beginning and He is speaking as the Son who "had the glory in the plan and mind of God." In his next sentence he says this.]]' Again, Jesus spoke of the glory He had as God in the beginning and the glory the Son had in the plan and mind of God. It could not mean that Jesus pre-existed with glory as the Son. [[Here Bernard is denying (as he is forced to do in order to believe in his oneness view of God) that the Son existed and had glory with the Father as a Person in the beginning, which He clearly did according to this verse and quite a few other verses. Bernard is forced to say that the Son, who didn't exist in the beginning, had the glory only in the plan and mind of God the Father. To say that the Son, who did not yet exist, had the glory in the plan and mind of God the Father is a very strained idea as is much of what Bernard is saying.]] It could not mean that Jesus pre-existed with glory as the Son. [Bernard said "It could not mean that Jesus pre-existed with glory as the Son," because that would show that the oneness view is wrong.] Jesus was praying, so He must have been speaking as a man and not as God. [Actually He was speaking/praying as the eternal Son of God who had condescended to become the God-man.] We know [we know if we accept the oneness point of view that] the humanity [the human part of Jesus from a oneness point of view] did not pre-exist the Incarnation, so Jesus [the human part of Jesus] was talking about the glory the Son

had in the plan of God from the beginning." However, Bernard has already told us that "Jesus [also] spoke of the glory He had as God in the beginning." The fact that Jesus speaks as the Father and the Son in one super-complicated sentence, and that this is rather typical for oneness interpretations, testifies that something is wrong here. Sentences like John 17:5 are easy to understand if we accept the Trinity.

I don't believe these verses could make it any more clear that Jesus, having been sent into the world by the Father and having perfectly fulfilled His mission except for His all-important atoning death, which He would complete long before the next twenty-four hours were over, was requesting the Father to glorify Him together with the Father with the glory He (a Person, the Son of God) had always had with Him before He was sent into the world.

Michael R. Burgos ("Kiss the Son," 2012,) discusses John 17:5 on pages 85-89, including interacting with what Bernard says on this verse. Edward L. Dalcour ("A Definitive Look at Oneness Theology," 2011) discusses John 17:5 on pages 131-134. I'll include two short excerpts from what Dalcour says here: "Even though the plainness of the passage cannot be denied (the Father and the Son *sharing* glory before time), Oneness teachers (cf. Bernard, 1983: 116, 117 [Dalcour was referring to a different section in Bernard's book]) argue that the glory that Jesus (the Son) had *with the Father* only signified the *future* glory or plan in the Father's mind" (page 132). Oneness doctrine contorts Jesus' High Priestly prayer to the Father [of John chapter 17], reducing it to a mere un-intimate mirage: Jesus as the non-divine Son [the humanity of Jesus] praying to His *own* divine nature (the Father), only appearing to be numerically distinct. [In other words, from a oneness point of view, there really is only one Person, Jesus, not the Father and the Son.]"

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11. **"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus** [[The apostle Paul was speaking of the attitude of humility, as the preceding and following verses show. If God the Son could humble Himself to become a man (the God-man) and die for us as the Lamb of God, certainly we Christians can, and we must, humble ourselves before God and before one another. Humility is the opposite of pride, which (with unbelief) is the root of sin.]], **(6) who although He existed in the form of God** [[In verse 6, as the context shows, we are seeing God the Son, a Person who existed with God the Father (and God the Holy Spirit) before He humbled Himself to become the God-man. The Greek noun translated "form" could also be translated "nature." The NIV, for example, translates, "Who being in very nature God." He was deity, God the Son. He existed in the form of God, being God the Son, who was there with God the Father before anything was ever created, and through whom all things were created (see John 1:1-3, Col. 1:16, 17; and Heb. 1:1-3, 8-13).]], **did not regard**

equality with God a thing to be grasped [[Even though the Son of God always was fully deity with God the Father, He always recognized (and loved) the fact that He had a subordinate role to God the Father in the Trinity. I didn't say He was inferior to the Father. God the Father created through Him; God the Father sent Him into the world; He was the Son of the Father; and many verses throughout the Bible show that God the Father has the preeminent role. (See my papers "Who Do We Pray To?" and "The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son" for many examples, and quite a few examples are included in this paper. Also my next paper will deal with the subordinate role of God the Son.)

Rather than grasp for more (which would include trying to get rid of His subordinate role in the Trinity), He (as the next verses show) humbled Himself to leave the glory behind and become a man (the God-man), which was a gigantic condescension, and then to die a shameful death on the cross, all in loving submission to the Father's will. He understood that He would be saving all believers and overthrowing all rebels through His incarnation, sinless life, and all-important atoning death.]] **(7) but emptied Himself** [I'll quote part of what the BAGD Greek Lexicon gives for the meaning here: "he emptied himself, divested himself of his prestige or privileges."], **taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.** [[He didn't cease being deity, God the Son, but He temporarily exchanged an infinitely high place for a place of little reputation (that included becoming a man, the GOD-man) that involved great suffering, but was infinitely important.]] **(8) Being found in appearance as a man** [after His incarnation], **He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** [[Having become the God-man, He humbled Himself much further by voluntarily submitting to the crucifixion and all that it involved (cf. John 10:17, 18), doing the Father's will (cf. Matt. 26:38-44; Mark 14:34-39). The physical suffering was a small part of what He submitted to. The Scriptures make it quite clear that this was a very difficult assignment: "And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44). "Then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.' And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not My will, but as You will' " (Matt. 26:38, 39). "About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?' that is, 'MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?' " (Matt. 27:46). He was totally committed to always do the Father's will, and He knew that He was earning the right to save us and to judge and remove the devil and all those who follow him. Talk about two super-important accomplishments!]] **(9) For this purpose also** [or, "Therefore" with the NIV.], **God** [God the Father] **highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name** [[Before God the Son humbled Himself (as pictured in verses 7, 8), He had a name above every name,

excluding the name of God the Father. But now He had earned the right to save us with a very full salvation; we are even united with Him (with God the Son, and through Him with God the Father) through His incarnation, atoning death and resurrection, and we are destined to be glorified with Him and to reign with Him forever. (I am emphasizing God the Father and God the Son, but none of this would work without the Holy Spirit, who dwells in every born-again Christian, for one thing). And now He has totally defeated the devil (see, for example, John 12:31; 16:11; and Heb. 2:14 [see Heb. 2:15-18 on His saving us]). This defeat will be fully manifested at the end of this age (cf., e.g., Rev. 12:7-9; 20:1-3, 10).]], **(10) so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**" God's people bow willingly; His enemies (including Satan and his followers) will be subdued and forced to bow and acknowledge that God has defeated them through His beloved Son and that Jesus Christ is Lord, all to the glory of God the Father, who always had, and always will have, the preeminent role in the Trinity. God the Father did not give His Son a name above His name, nor could He have.

David K. Bernard ("The Oneness of God," 1983) discusses Phil. 2:6-8 on pages 220-224. I'll quote and comment on part of what Bernard says about Phil. 2:6. (He is using the KJV.) "Apparently, this verse of Scripture is saying that Jesus had the nature of God, that He was God Himself. [[Keep in mind that from a oneness point of view (including Bernard) in the days before the incarnation (and Phil. 2:6 is speaking of a time before the incarnation) God the Father (who Bernard calls "God" and "Jesus" here) was totally by Himself; there was no humanity, no human nature. As far as I can see, it doesn't communicate anything reasonable or meaningful to say that God the Father "thought it not robbery to be equal with God [that is to be equal with Himself]" or with the NASB translation, "did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped."]] God has no equal (Isaiah 40:25; 46:5, 9). The only way God the Father [[in the days before His incarnation in this context; keep in mind that Bernard believes that God the Father, not God the Son, took on flesh (became incarnate)]] can be equal with God is for Him to be God. So, Jesus [more specifically from the oneness point of view, the divine nature of Jesus] was equal with (the same as) God because He was God. [Again, I don't think that anything reasonable or meaningful is being said here.] However, He did not consider His prerogatives as God something to be held or retained at all costs, but He was willing to lay these aside and assume a human nature so that He could save lost mankind. [[However, from Bernard's oneness point of view, and it seems from a totally necessary point of view, God the Father continued to function as the God of the universe, so in that sense He didn't lay His glory aside, if I understand what he is saying. I'm sure he believes that God the Father (whatever He is called) continued to function as the God of the universe (if not the universe could not continue to exist),

without laying His glory aside. (What the apostle Paul says here is that the Son of God, not God the Father laid His glory aside. However, Bernard doesn't believe the Son of God even existed at that time.) This much has to be true even though He believes that God the Father was incarnate in the God-man Jesus and He was the Spirit (the divine nature) of Jesus. After the incarnation He still functioned as God, but now (according to the oneness viewpoint) the humanity of Jesus could now pray to, and interact with, His divine nature, His divine nature that was functioning as God of the universe.]] He willingly became a humble, obedient servant and even submitted to death on the cross. [[Who did this? It seems that everyone will have to agree that God the Father continued to function as the God of the universe. Surely the God who was, and always continued to be God over the universe was a different Person than the One who "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of man" (Phil. 2:7 NASB) or "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7 KJV). (I am not in any way denying the full deity of the humble, obedient servant who submitted to death on the cross; for one thing, His deity was required for this PERFECT SACRIFICE to be accepted. It seems to me that when we get into the details the oneness viewpoint is impossible, not to mention that I don't believe any verses actually teach oneness. It was God the Son, who was with the Father in the beginning (before creation began), who became incarnate. Then everything fits perfectly, even if we don't know enough to fully understand the Trinity!]] (page 221).

Michael R. Burgos ("Kiss the Son," 2012) discusses Phil. 2:5-11 on pages 75-85, including interacting with David Bernard and another oneness writer. I'll include a brief excerpt where Burgos (on page 78) quotes from Bernard and comments on what Bernard said on pages 392, 399 of "The Oneness View of Jesus Christ," 1994. "Bernard has also argued: 'if "equal with" indicates a distinct person [referring to the fact that Trinitarians believe God the Son is a distinct person from God the Father], then Jesus [God the Son from a Trinitarian point of view] would not merely be a distinct person from the Father, as Trinitarians teach, but a distinct person from God altogether, which they deny; for verse 6 does not say 'equal with the Father' but 'equal with God.' If God is a trinity and if equality implies a personal distinction, then Jesus is equal to the whole trinity yet a distinct person from the trinity." As Burgos rightly points out, Bernard is wrongly assuming that the word "God" in "equal with God" (KJV) in Phil. 2:6 refers to the Trinity. It refers to God the Father as the word typically does in the New Testament. I'll quote Phil. 1:2 for one of a very large number of examples: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." I should mention that Bernard (see his "The Oneness of God" on pages 207-211, for example) believes that the word "and" after the word "Father" (in Phil. 1:2) should be translated "even," not "and." There are several places where the Greek "kai" should be translated "even" in the New

Testament, but I don't believe there is any possibility that it should be translated "even" in Phil. 1:2 or in many similar passages. I consider that to be a desperate attempt to eliminate quite a few super-important verses that clearly demonstrate that the oneness view is wrong.

Gregory A. Boyd ("Oneness Pentecostals & The Trinity," 1992) briefly discusses Phil. 2:5-11 on pages 105-108, including interacting with David Bernard and another oneness writer. I'll quote a small part of what he says on page 106. "Bernard says that 'Jesus was equal with (the same as) God in the sense that He was God' ("The Oneness of God," 1983, page 21). And again, '...in His divinity, He is truly equal to, or identical to God. The word equal here means that the divine nature of Jesus was the very nature of God the Father' (same book, page 222).

This explanation simply does not work. First, neither in Greek ('isos') nor in English does the word 'equal' mean 'identical.' [In some contexts this Greek word could be translated "identical" but not in a context like this one.] There are a number of ways in Greek for saying one thing is 'identical to' or 'the same as' something else, but Paul does not employ them here. 'Equality' is a term of *relationship*, and it therefore implies some type of plurality [not equal with yourself, but equal with another or others]."

Edward L. Dalcour ("A Definitive Look at Oneness Theology," 2011) discusses Phil. 2:6-11 on pages 134-139, interacting with David Bernard and other oneness viewpoints. I'll include two short excerpts from what he says: "Throughout this Epistle, Paul plainly distinguishes the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ as two distinct subjects (e.g., 1:11; 2:6-11; and esp. in Paul's salutation [1:2] as exegetically brought out in Chapter 3.3.3.3 [in Dalcour's book, on page 69, where he discusses the use of the Greek "kai" in Phil. 1:2 and many other verses, which I briefly discussed above ("and" not "even").] ... In effect, we see the distinction between the Father and Jesus uncomplicatedly" (page 136).

And "The Oneness interpretations of the Hymn [Phil. 2:6-11; that, for one thing, the Father, not the preexistent Son (who didn't exist from their point of view), humbled Himself and took on flesh] do not follow theologically or contextually. From start to finish, the Hymn presents a positive affirmation that the Son was in the very nature of God subsisting and pre-existing. It was the Son who emptied Himself, becoming incarnate, *taking* the very nature of humanity. He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ..." (page 139).

COLOSSIANS 1:15-17. **"He is the image of the invisible God** [[Compare John 14:9; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6; Heb. 1:3. Because Jesus is the image of the invisible God (God the Father),

He was able, for one super-important thing, to reveal the Father to us (see John 1:18). Since He became a man (the God-man) He could effectively communicate with us in our dimension; the apostles (and many others) were able to see Him, to hear Him, to see the things that He did in the physical, human dimension. And as we have discussed, when we see His character, we are seeing the character of God the Father, and when we hear Him and see the things that He does, we are hearing and seeing things the Father gave Him to say and to do.

It must be understood, of course, that He is the image of God in a very much higher sense than Adam, who was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), but who, unlike the Son of God, wasn't deity. However, through the glory of new-covenant salvation, in union with God the Son, "we will be conformed to the image of [God's] Son" (Rom. 8:29; compare 1 Cor. 15:49; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10) when we are glorified at the end of this age. In union with Christ we will be taken to a place much higher than what Adam had in the garden of Eden before the fall. It's bought and paid for. But even after we are glorified there still will be a very substantial difference between the Lord Jesus Christ and us. He will be deity with God the Father (and the Holy Spirit); we won't be, and we will worship Him with God the Father (and the Holy Spirit). We won't become deity, but a glorious destiny awaits us, even reigning with the Lord Jesus forever.], **the firstborn of all creation.** [[I would translate "**the firstborn over all creation,**" with the NIV, and it is to be understood that He is the firstborn *Son of God the Father* over all creation. Sometimes in the Bible, including here, the word "firstborn" has nothing to do with the idea of someone literally being born first. (Some have wrongly understood these words to teach that there was a time when the Son did not exist and that He was the first person/being ever created. For one thing, He was there before our world, including the time system of our world, was created.) God the Son always existed with the Father; He was not created; if He had been created He would not be deity/God the Son. Psalm 89:27, which is all the more important as a cross-reference because it prophesies of David's greater Son, the Messiah, helps show what the word "firstborn" means here: God the Father says, "I also shall make him *My* firstborn, The Highest of the Kings of the earth." As Psalm 89:27 shows, for God to make the Messiah His firstborn Son means that He gives Him authority over all authority everywhere. Paul's point here in Col. 1:15 is that God the Father has given the Lord Jesus authority over all creation, which includes His having authority over every being or thing ever created, and this is after He became a man (the God-man). This authority enables the Lord Jesus to save all believers and to judge and remove the devil and all who align with him.

This is important, so I'll give three other cross-references that will help us understand what the apostle Paul meant by the word "firstborn" here. In Ex. 4:22 God said to Moses, "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD [Yahweh], 'Israel is My

son, My firstborn." ' ' It is clear that Israel wasn't God's *firstborn* son in any literal sense. And I'll read what God said in the last part of Jer. 31:9, "For I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn." I'll quote one last example, an example that is quite relevant to the glorious status that we have as born-again children of God. I'll quote the relevant words from Heb. 12:23, "church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven...." The word "firstborn" is plural in the Greek. It refers to all true Christians "who are enrolled in heaven." We aren't dwelling in heaven yet but we have access there through the Lord Jesus and by the Holy Spirit, and we have a place reserved for us to dwell there forever. The word "firstborn" here in Heb. 12:23 has nothing to do with our being born first in any literal sense, but it refers to our privileged status as born-again children of God.

We could say that God the Father has given Him a name above every name (Phil. 2:9-11). Paul had already informed us in Phil. 2:6, 7 that the Lord Jesus was deity with the Father before He became the God-man, and in Col. 1:16, 17 Paul goes on to speak of the super-exalted status of the Lord Jesus, God the Son.]] **(16) For by Him all things were created** [[These words give one reason (we'll speak of the other reason as we continue) why Jesus is "the firstborn over all creation": "For by Him all things were created." That fact certainly qualifies Him to have authority over everything that was created by Him. Typically the New Testament speaks of God the Father creating all things *through* Him, which it also does at the end of this verse.]], **both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities** [[This includes the thrones, dominions, rulers, and authorities both in the heavenly dimension and on the earth that are loyal to God and those who are in rebellion against Him. It is important to know that God did not create any of them evil; they followed the devil in his rebellion against God. If the Lord Jesus did not have authority over these evil beings, starting with the devil, they could thwart God's salvation plans and wreck havoc in the lives of Christians. For one thing, God limits what the evil one and his hosts are able to do against us, and at the right time they will be judged and totally removed from God's universe. The Lord Jesus will be very active in that judging.

It is also necessary for Christians to know that everything they could ever need is available in Christ. (See the discussion of Col. 2:8-10 later in this paper.) We never have to go looking for help anywhere else, and we are certain to get in trouble if we start looking for help from angels or any other spiritual beings rather than to God and His beloved Son. Of course God can and does use His angels to bless us in various ways, but we must look to Him through Christ. Note that there was a problem at Colossae with an improper "worship of the angels" (Col. 2:18).]] - **all things have been created through Him** [all things have been created by God the Father through Him (see John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor. 8:6; and Heb. 1:2).] **and for Him.** [[For one thing, the fact that all things have been created for Him shows that all beings owe their allegiance to God the Father

and the Son. God the Father's plan to bring salvation and peace to His fallen world centered in His Son, who was to become the God-man, and who (after His all-important atoning death, resurrection, glorification, and ascension) would save all the elect and remove by judgment the devil and all who continue to follow him through His authority as Lord over all.

This authority came not just because He was God the Son and all things had been created through Him, as important as that was. This authority came in part (a super-significant part) because He became the God-man, lived a sinless life, and died His all-important atoning death, through which He earned the right to save us and to overthrow Satan and all who follow him in his rebellion (see, for example, John 12:31; 1 Cor. 15:20-28; Eph. 1:20-22; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:13; 2:8-15; and Heb. 2:14-16). The "peace" that Paul mentioned in Col. 1:20, for example, includes the peace that results when all persons have submitted to Jesus as Lord or have been removed by judgment.]] **(17) He is before all things** [He existed before they were created; they were created through Him and for Him, and He is before them in that He has authority over them.], **and in Him all things hold together.**" Compare Heb. 1:3. After all things were created through Him, God the Son has a role in holding all things together. The more we learn about the physics of our universe, the more we can appreciate the fact that He holds all things together. It is gigantic; it is super-packed with power and energy, and it is super-amazing in its design and complexity. However, He does not hold all things together independent of God the Father or the Holy Spirit.

HEBREWS 1:1-3 **"God** [God the Father], **after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, (2) in these last days has spoken to us in His Son** [In the sense these words are used here, God the Father began to speak to us through His Son after He became the God-man and began His ministry on the earth.], **whom He appointed heir of all things** [[The Lord Jesus has authority now over all beings and things everywhere (see, for example Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-23; Phil. 2:9; Col. 2:10, 15), but He is waiting for the Father's time for Him to return to fully save His people and to subdue all who continue in rebellion (see, for example, Heb. 10:12, 13; 1 Cor. 15:23-28; Rev. 12:7-9; 19:19-21; 20:1-3, 7-10, 11-15; and there are a very large number of verses throughout the Bible that speak of the things the Lord Jesus will do at His second coming). When He returns He will establish His kingdom on the earth (the millennial kingdom) but that temporary kingdom will be replaced by the full glory of God's kingdom in His new heaven and new earth, with its new Jerusalem, as pictured in the last two chapters of the book of Revelation. Romans 8:17 is exciting for Christians, "and if children [born-again children of God], heirs also, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him." Being faithful to God involves some suffering for this age, but that relatively short

time that involves some suffering is extremely small in comparison with eternal glory that is coming very soon.]], **through whom also He made the world.** [These words (along with John 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16, 17 and other verses) show that all things were created through the Son who was with the Father in the beginning, and many verses show that the Son was with the Father before He was sent into the world.] **(3) And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature** [compare 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15], **and upholds all things by the word of His power** [compare Col. 1:17]. **When He had made purification of sins** [He purified us from sin through His all-important atoning death. Compare, for example, Heb. 10:10, "...we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."], **He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high** [referring to God the Father. See Psalm 110:1; Heb. 1:13; 8:1; 10:12, 13; 12:2. We see the two Persons of God the Father and God the Son in these verses, as we do so often throughout the Bible, especially the New Testament.].

I'M GOING TO QUOTE WHAT I HAVE IN MY PAPER "MORE ON THE TRINITY" UNDER THE HEADING "SOME KEY PASSAGES WRONGLY USED TO TEACH A ONENESS VIEW OF GOD." This will involve some repetition in this paper, but this is quite important information and worthy of some repetition. We are discussing the God of creation, the God of the Bible, the God we worship and must make our number one priority. There is a very big difference between the Trinity and a oneness view of God.

FIRST I'LL LIST AND BRIEFLY DISCUSS SOME VERSES FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN THAT SHOW THAT GOD THE FATHER AND GOD THE SON ARE DISTINCT PERSONS (Some of these verses are much more important than others to show that the oneness viewpoint is wrong): Many of the verses I'll list and briefly discuss demonstrate that God the Son existed with God the Father before the Father sent His Son into the world. This is very important because oneness believers are forced to deny that the Son of God existed (existed as a Person, as something more than a thought or a plan in the mind of God the Father) before the incarnation took place. JOHN 1:1, 2 (The Son [the Word] was with God the Father before any creating took place, and we are told that the Son was deity too. We see two Persons. [See the discussion of John 1:1-18 in this paper, and see my paper that covers John 1:1-18 verse-by-verse for more details.]); JOHN 1:3 (Everything that was ever created was created by God the Father through the Son. We see two Persons.); JOHN 1:4 ((See under John 1:4, 5 in the discussion of John 1:1-18 in this paper. In Him, in the Son, was life, including spiritual life, and He was the Light of men, which demonstrates that this Person was deity; He was a Person distinct from God the Father from the beginning; these words would be totally inappropriate if the "Word" was nothing more than a word, or thought, or idea in

the mind of God the Father before the incarnation. And I'll list quite a few verses from the Gospel of John as we continue which confirm that the Son was a Person with the Father before the virgin birth.); JOHN 1:9-13 ((I'll quote 1:9 from the NIV, "**The true light** [the "Light of men" of John 1:4] **that gives light to** [that shines on] **every man was coming into the world.**" He came into the world through the virgin birth. Having come into the world, which had been created through Him [and "for Him" Col. 1:16], most people did not receive Him. The spiritual death and bondage to sin problem is deep-seated in the heart of mankind. Those who do receive Him are born again of God and become children of God.); JOHN 1:14 (The Son, the Logos, became the God-man.); JOHN 1:18 (No one has seen God the Father, but the unique Son has revealed Him, made Him known. See the discussion of John 1:1-18 above in this paper.); JOHN 1:30 (John the Baptist testified that Jesus existed before him, even though John the Baptist was born before Jesus was born of the virgin.); JOHN 3:13 (Jesus, who always existed with God the Father, descended from heaven.); JOHN 3:17 (God the Father sent His Son into the world.); JOHN 3:19 (The Light, God the Son, has come into the world, but men, but not all men, "**loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil,**" and they didn't repent.); JOHN 3:31 (John the Baptist said Jesus came from above/heaven.); JOHN 6:38 ("**For I [Jesus] have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me** [God the Father]."); JOHN 6:46 ("**Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God** [the Lord Jesus]; **He has seen the Father.**"); JOHN 6:62 ("**What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?**" referring to the time when the Son of God was with the Father before He became the God-man.); JOHN 7:33 ("**Therefore Jesus said, 'For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me.'**" It was God the Son who had become the God-man who was going back to the Father, not the human nature of Jesus.); JOHN 8:12-19 ("**Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, 'I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life'** [see John 1:4, for example]. **(13) So the Pharisees** [opponents of Jesus] **said to Him, 'You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is not true.'** **(14) Jesus answered and said to them, 'Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, for I know where I came from** [God the Son came down from heaven, having been sent by the Father.] **and where I am going** [He was going back to heaven, to God the Father, who had sent Him.]; **(15) You judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. (16) But even if I do judge, My judgment is true, for I am not alone *in it*, but I and the Father who sent Me** [We see two Persons here, both before He came into the world and after He came into the world.]. **(17) Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. (18) I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.'** [We certainly see two Persons here. The Father testified about Jesus in many ways, including the prophecies about Him in the Old Testament, His speaking

audibly about Him from heaven on several occasions, His giving Him the Holy Spirit without measure, His drawing the elect to Him, etc.] **(19) So they were saying to Him, 'Where is Your Father?'** [Jesus had been telling them, but their hearts were on a different wavelength. They thought of themselves as being prime examples of the people of God, but their rejection of His Son proved that they didn't really know God the Father. And Jesus said on occasion, including in this verse, that they didn't know God the Father.] **Jesus answered, 'You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would have known My Father also.'** " There was no way they could reject the Son (who spoke the words the Father gave Him, did the works that the Father gave Him to do, and who was like the Father in every way) and know or love God the Father who sent Him. So too, there was no way they could really come to know the Father without coming through the Son (John 14:6, for example). I should mention that some oneness Christians use this verse, John 8:19, to demonstrate oneness, but quite improperly.); JOHN 10:15, 17, 18 (**"even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father, and I lay down My life for the sheep. ... (17) For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. (18) No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."** We can clearly see two Persons here.); JOHN 12:27, 28 (Jesus said these words shortly before His crucifixion. **"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. (28) 'Father, glorify Your name.'** Then a voice came out of heaven, **'I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.'** " We see two Persons here, as we so often do throughout the Bible.) JOHN 13:3 (**"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God [God the Father] and was going back to God."** We again see that the Son was with God the Father before He was sent into the world, and now He was going back to the Father. We see two Persons.); JOHN 13:31, 32 (**"Therefore when he [Judas] had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him, (32) if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.'** " Jesus spoke these words on the evening before His crucifixion. He would defeat sin, Satan, and spiritual death in His atoning death; then He would be resurrected on the third day and glorified. After forty days He would be taken up in glory to the right hand of God the Father. I'll quote Acts 2:33, **"Therefore, having been exalted to the right hand of God [God the Father], and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear."** The new-covenant church was born through the blood of the Lamb and the outpouring of the Spirit of God, the third Person of the Trinity. We definitely see God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit here in John 13:31, 32.); JOHN 14:16 (**"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another helper, that He may be with you**

forever." We see the Trinity here.); JOHN 14:23 ("**Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and my Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.'**" We see two Persons here.); JOHN 14:26 ("**But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**" We see the Trinity here.) JOHN 14:28 ("**You heard that I said to you, 'I go away, and I will come to you.' If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.**" The Father has the preeminent role in the Trinity, and especially during the time that Jesus lived on the earth.); JOHN 15:1, 2, 8-10, 16, 21, 23, 24, 26 ((I'll just quote John 15:10, 21, 26, "**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. ... (21) But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. ... (26) When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father [see Acts 2:33], that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me.**" We see the Trinity in this last verse.)); JOHN 16:3, 5 ("**These things they will do because they have not known the Father or Me. ... (5) But now I am going to Him who sent Me....**"); JOHN 16:15 ("**All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He [the Holy Spirit] takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.**" We see the Trinity here.); JOHN 16:23, 24 ("**In that day [after Jesus is glorified and we are born again] you will not question Me about anything [or, better, "you will not ask Me for anything"]. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. (24) Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.**" We see two Persons here.); JOHN 16:26-28 ("**In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf, (27) for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from the Father. (28) I came forth from the Father and have come into the world [through the virgin birth]; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.**" Again we see two Persons and the preexistence of God the Son.); JOHN CHAPTER 17 ((Essentially all the verses of this chapter are relevant to show the two Persons of God the Father and God the Son, but I'll just quote John 17:1-5 [We discussed these verses earlier in this paper.]: "**Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You. (2) even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. (3) This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God [Quite a few similar statements showing the preeminent role that God the Father has in the Trinity are found throughout the New Testament (see Rom. 16:26, 27; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; 11:3; 15:27, 28; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2:5; 6:13-16; and Jude 1:24, 25).], and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (4) I glorified You on the**

earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. (5) Now Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.' " This last verse is especially helpful in that it shows that God the Son was with the Father before the world, or anything else, was ever created (see John 1:1-3, for example). He was a Person sharing glory with God the Father, and through whom all things were created. This verse, by itself, should suffice to show that He was a Person with God the Father (and God the Holy Spirit) before creation began. There is no way we can say that He was just a word or a thought or an idea in the mind of God the Father before He became the God-man.); JOHN 20:17 ("Jesus [having been resurrected] said to her [to Mary Magdalene], **'Stop clinging to Me, for I am not yet ascended to the Father, but go to My brethren and say to them, "I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God."** ' ' " It is clear that Jesus, after His resurrection, still was a Person (God the Son, not just the human nature of Jesus) distinct from God the Father and that God the Father has the preeminent role in the Trinity.)

I'LL ALSO LIST AND QUOTE AND BRIEFLY DISCUSS SOME VERSES FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN THAT EXPLAIN WHAT JESUS MEANT WHEN HE SAID THAT HE AND THE FATHER ARE ONE, AND THAT HE WHO HAS SEEN HIM HAS SEEN THE FATHER, AND SIMILAR EXPRESSIONS (Jesus didn't ever communicate the idea that He [He being the Son of God in His deity] and the Father were the same Person; how could He?): JOHN 5:17-23 ((When Jesus was attacked for healing a man on the Sabbath, **"He answered them, 'My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.'** [As verse 19 shows, Jesus didn't heal on the Sabbath on His own initiative; He always said and did the things God the Father wanted Him to do.] **(18) For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.** [Jesus in His humanity (in His human nature) wasn't calling God His own Father, but He was saying this as the Son of God, who had become the God-man.] **(19) Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, 'Truly [Amen], truly [Amen], I say to you, the Son can do nothing unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing, for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.** [The Son cannot be limited to the human nature of Jesus; His deity as the Son of God is in the spotlight.] **(20) For the Father loves the Son** [He loves the Son, not His (the Father's) human nature]., **and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and *the Father* will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. (21) For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son** [the Son of God] **also gives life to whom He wishes. (22) For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son** [to God the Son, to the God-man, not to the human nature of Jesus], **(23) so that all will honor the Son**

[God the Son] **even as they honor the Father** [God the Father]. [[Note that the Father and the Son are distinct Persons. To speak of all honoring the Son even as they honor the Father would be blasphemous if Jesus were not deity with the Father. And I don't believe it would make sense for the human nature of Jesus (or for the physical body of Jesus, which some oneness believers think the Son is) to be honored even as God the Father is honored.]] **He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him** [[Many passages show that the Father sent Him from heaven when it was time for the incarnation (cf., e.g., John 3:17 with 3:13; 10:36; 16:5). I remind the reader that all it takes to prove that the oneness view of God is false is to demonstrate that God the Son existed as a Person with God the Father before the Father sent Him from heaven into the world at the time of His virgin birth.]]' " We clearly see two Persons in these verses (God the Father and God the Son, not the divine nature of Jesus and His human nature), as we so often do throughout the Bible.)); JOHN 8:26-29 (" **I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me** [the Father sent Him from heaven (cf., e.g., John 3:17 with 3:13; 10:36; 16:5)] **is true; and the things which I heard from Him** [Here it seems that Jesus is speaking, at least for the most part, of the things He had heard from the Father before/when He was sent into the world. Anyway, it is clear that the Father revealed many things to Jesus after He came into the world.], **these I speak to the world.'** (27) **They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father. (28) So Jesus said, 'When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He** [On the words "I am He," see under John 13:19 in my paper on John chapters 13-17. These words demonstrate His deity.], **and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. (29) And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.'** " We see two Persons.)); JOHN 12:49 ("For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak." As in John 8:26, the idea here is that the Father sent Him from heaven and at that time He gave Him directions as to what to say and what to speak. As I mentioned, it is clear that the Son communed with the Father on a regular basis while He ministered on the earth, which included receiving directions from the Father, which undoubtedly included, for example, the ones He should choose as apostles [cf. Luke 6:12-14] and when He should and should not go to Jerusalem where they wanted to kill Him.); JOHN 14:24 ("**He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.**"); JOHN 14:31 ("**but so that the world may know that I love the Father** [One Person loves another Person. The Father and the Son (Two Persons) have always had a super-powerful love relationship. We become recipients of the love that the Father has always had for the Son (cf. John 17:23; quoted as we continue). That's an overwhelming thought! What a salvation plan!], **I do exactly as the Father commanded Me.**")

JOHN 10:30 (WITH JOHN 10:27-29) with John 17:21-23 and 10:36-38. ((When we read John 10:30 in the light of the other things Jesus said in the Gospel of John, it doesn't offer any real support for the oneness view of God. It is clear that Jesus didn't mean that He and the Father are the same Person. See my paper titled, "Verse-by-Verse Study of John Chapters 10-12 (with John 9:35-41)" for more details.)): **"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. (28) And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. (29) My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all [God the Father has the preeminent role in the Trinity, and especially during the time that the Lord Jesus was living on the earth. We see God the Father and God the Son here.], and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. [[These verses strongly emphasize the security of believers, but they do not teach that true Christians cannot willfully turn from God and His truth and righteousness and fall away. Believers can become unbelievers. ((I had a footnote: See my paper titled, "Once Saved, Always Saved?" In Revelation chapters 2, 3 Jesus warned many of the Christians that if they didn't repent, they would cease to be His people, and those passages make it clear that He was speaking to true Christians. For example, He told the Christians at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1-7) that if they didn't repent He would remove their lampstand. The fact that they had a lampstand proved that it was a true Christian church (Rev. 1:20). If He removed their lampstand, however, they would no longer be true Christians. And Jesus warned the majority of the Christians at Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6) that if they didn't repent He would come against them in judgment like a thief, that they would not walk with Him in white, and that He would erase their names from the book of life. The fact that He told them that they must "wake up and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die" (Rev. 3:2), that they had soiled their garments, unlike the few Christians at Sardis who had not soiled their garments, and that their names were in the book of life showed that the Christians who must repent, or else, had become true Christians.))]] (30) I and the Father are one."** [[The fact that the word "one" is neuter in the Greek, not masculine, further demonstrates that Jesus was not saying that He and the Father are one Person. The Gospel of John (as I have demonstrated), and even these few verses (John 10:27-30), make it quite clear that Jesus wasn't saying that He and the Father are one Person. I am quite sure that none of the apostles, or other disciples, thought that Jesus meant that He and the Father were the same Person. They didn't even believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus until after He was raised from the dead and appeared to them (cf., e.g., John 20:9; Mark 16:14).]]

John 17:21-23 is a helpful cross-reference: In those verses Jesus [the Son of God; the God-man] prayed to God the Father [a different Person], **"that they [true Christians] may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be**

one in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. [[We see God the Father and God the Son here (two Persons, not the divine nature and the human nature of the one Person Jesus), as we do in the two verses that follow and a VERY LARGE number of other verses throughout the Bible. I don't believe it is possible that the human nature of Jesus was praying to His divine nature here, or anywhere else. Jesus was praying to the Father that all true Christians (persons) become one with the Father and the Son (Persons) in a supernatural way. He was praying for this to happen essentially at once, while they were still living on the earth, to help the world see the reality of new-covenant salvation, which includes believing that the Father sent His unique Son into the world to save all who will submit (in faith) to Him, His Son, and new-covenant salvation.]] **(22) The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one** [[As the context shows, the "glory" that Jesus was speaking of here included the divine enablement (through the indwelling Holy Spirit of life and glory) for us to be one with the Father and the Son and one another in a supernatural way. The Father and the Son are distinct Persons, even as we continue to be distinct persons after we become one as the Father and the Son are one. We must understand, of course, that the fact that we become one as the Father and the Son are one in a very real sense does not mean that we become deity with the Father and the Son (and the Spirit).]] **(23) I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that you sent Me, and have loved them, even as You have loved Me.**" It is super-obvious that we are not going to become one Person with God the Father or God the Son, which helps confirm that Jesus is not one Person with God the Father either. If Jesus didn't pray what He did here, it would be essentially impossible to believe that the Father loves true Christians with the same love that He has for the Lord Jesus (also see 17:26). In 17:24 Jesus mentioned, for one thing, that the Father had loved Him "before the foundation of the world." The Father loved Him, not the thought or idea of Him in the Father's mind. Then in 17:25 Jesus mentioned, as He so often did, that the Father had sent Him into the world (the Son who had always been with Him, the Son through whom the world had been created).

So what does it mean that Jesus and the Father are one? As these verses show, they are one - they are united - in their desire and commitment to make sure that no one (very much including the devil himself) will be able to snatch even one of God's sheep (the elect; true believers) out of their hands. They are united in every way, including the mutual exceeding great love between the Persons of God the Father and God the Son that has always existed, and including the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ had been sent by the Father and was totally motivated to always say and do everything that the Father would have Him say and do. Since Jesus was God the Son, He was able to reveal the Father in a unique way (see John 1:18, for example). The more you picture (as the oneness Christians do) the Lord Jesus being one Person with a divine (God the Father

and God the Holy Spirit) and a human nature (a human nature which didn't exist until time of the virgin birth), the more you lose the super-intense love relationship between the two Persons of God the Father and God the Son that has always existed.

I'll quote John 10:36-38, verses that are closely tied to John 10:30, "**do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?** (37) **If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; (38) but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father.**" (For one thing, the Spirit of God was dwelling in the Lord Jesus in a very powerful way from the time Jesus was anointed by the Spirit and became The Anointed One, The Messiah (Hebrew), The Christ (Greek) at the time He was baptized in water and the Spirit descended upon Him. He was God the Son and deity before that anointing, but He didn't begin His ministry until after the Spirit came upon Him right after He was baptized in water [cf. Luke 3:21, 22].) These verses like the large number of verses I quoted from the Gospel of John in the two sections above, demonstrate the two Persons of God the Father and God the Son, and that God the Father and God the Son are one in that Jesus' works were "the works of [His] Father" (not to mention the other ways in which they are one, including the words that Jesus spoke that came from the Father; His deity, their mutual love, etc.).

JOHN 12:44, 45. (These verses are discussed in my paper on John chapters 10-12. See Matt. 10:40; Luke 10:16. Essentially everything I said above dealing with the Gospel of John applies here too.) "**And Jesus cried out and said, 'He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.** [[Jesus was not saying, of course, that those who believed in Him did not believe in Him. He was making the super-important point that those who really believe in Him (based on who He really is) necessarily believe in the One who sent Him, God the Father, who has the preeminent role in the Trinity. A person could not believe in the Messiah and not believe in God the Father who sent Him.]] **(45) He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.'**" Although these verses are used by some oneness Christians to argue for a oneness view of God, I believe it is totally clear in the light of the other things that John said in this Gospel (and the other relevant things said throughout the Bible, especially the New Testament) that Jesus was not saying that He and the Father are one Person. The point that Jesus was making in verse 44 was that those who honored Him by believing in Him (which included submitting, in faith, to Him for who He was) were also believing in and honoring God the Father who had sent Him. The one who really sees Jesus is also seeing God the Father in the sense that the Son reveals the Father (John 1:18) in His character, His words, His works, etc. Those who rejected Jesus showed that they didn't really believe in the One who sent Him. It is not possible to really see the Son and reject Him and to

really believe in the One who sent Him and want to do His will (cf., e.g., John 3:19-21; 5:37-47; 7:16, 17; 8:39-47). For us to believe in Jesus requires us to believe all that the Bible reveals about Him, including His being God the Son, who was sent by the Father into the world. We certainly cannot skip believing in His deity, like some do.

JOHN 14:7, 9-11 (WITH JOHN 14:1, 2, 6). (These verses are discussed in my paper on John chapters 13-17. Jesus spoke these words to His apostles on the last night before He was crucified.) **"(1) Do not let your heart be troubled, believe in God [or, "you believe in God"], believe also in Me. (2) In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you [or, "if there were not, would I have told you that I am going to get a place ready for you?"] ... (6) Jesus said to him [to Thomas], 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life [see John 1:4; 11:25, for example]; no one comes to the Father but through Me. [[One reason I quoted verses 1, 2, and 6 here is because these verses, along with a large number of verses in the Gospel of John (as I demonstrated above) and throughout the Bible, speak of the two Persons of God the Father and God the Son (and three Persons with the Holy Spirit). These verses also help set the stage for the following verses. The Lord Jesus brings us (He is the way) to God the Father through our becoming the Father's born-again children when we repent and become Christians. At the end of this age, He will bring us to God the Father in the ultimate sense, when we will be glorified, including having resurrected, glorified bodies designed for us to live in heaven. Also, when Christians die they go to heaven, but not (at that time) in the ultimate, fully glorified sense.]] (7) If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also [[My Greek New Testament (The United Bible Societies' "Greek New Testament" (fourth revised edition) gives a different reading, which is favored by many commentators, and after further study I prefer this other reading: "If you have come to know Me, you will know My Father also."]]; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him. [[(This double bracket goes on for three paragraphs.)** The apostles had already come to know Jesus person to Person on one level, and they had come to know a lot more about God the Father through Jesus, but they hardly knew the Father on a person to Person basis. Now they would come to know Jesus and God the Father on a much deeper person to Person level. As verses 8-11 show, the disciples had already seen God the Father in one sense, in that they had seen the Lord Jesus Christ (God the Son), and they had heard the things that He had said and seen the things He had done from the Father. They came to know Jesus and God the Father on a deeper level through the things Jesus said to them that last evening (before the cross). They came to know Jesus and God the Father on a much deeper level through seeing the resurrected Christ and having Him share with them on numerous occasions throughout the forty days that started with His resurrection and culminated with His being taken up in a glory cloud from the Mount of Olives to return to the Father while they were watching. But

their knowledge of God the Son and God the Father was taken to a whole new level through receiving the promised Holy Spirit, starting on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit brought the new birth and enables Christians to participate in spiritual/eternal life; He sanctifies; He reveals; He convicts; He anoints to minister; He distributes the charismatic gifts; etc. After we are born-again, we can know God the Son and God the Father in the Spiritual dimension. Now we can worship the Father in the Spirit and in the truth (see John 4:23, 24). Now the Spirit of God bears witness with our spirits that we are (born-again) children of God, and we can cry out in sincerity and in truth, Abba, Father (see Rom. 8:15, 16). But the best is yet to come, when we will be glorified (see Rom. 8:17, 18, for example) and begin to reign with God and His Son.

In John 14:18 Jesus says He will come to the disciples, and in verse 23 He says the Father and the Son will make their abode with the disciples. Those glorious intimate relationships come to pass (at least for the most part) through the Holy Spirit, who dwells in new-covenant believers. Romans 8:9 shows that we are not true (born-again) Christians if the Holy Spirit does not dwell in us.

Oneness Christians use John 14:7, 9-11 (along with John 10:30; 12:44, 45) to argue for a oneness view of God, but Jesus wasn't saying in 14:7 or in verses 9-11 (or anywhere else), that He and God the Father are one Person. What I said above regarding John 10:30 and 12:44, 45 fully applies here.]] **(8) Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.'** **(9) Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father** [As we have discussed, those who had seen Jesus had seen the Father in that the Son revealed the Father (John 1:18, for example) in many different ways.]; **how can you say, "Show us the Father?"** **(10) Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?** [[Compare John 10:37, 38; 14:20. I'll quote these verses. (Jesus spoke the words of John 10:37, 38 to Jews who had rejected Him and wanted to kill Him.) "If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe Me; (38) but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." John 14:20, "In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me and I in you." We can see two Persons here in John 14:10, God the Father and God the Son. With the words that follow here in 14:10, 11, Jesus tells us (a big part of) what He meant when He said "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).]] **The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.** [[Jesus, God the Son, didn't stop being deity when He lived on the earth in a physical body, but He temporarily laid aside His glory when He became the God-man. He didn't work any miracles until after He had received the Spirit when He was baptized by John the Baptist (see John 2:11). At that time He became the Anointed One, the Messiah, the

Christ.]] (11) [Jesus was speaking to Philip in verse 10, but the Greek shows that He began to speak to all of the apostles here in verse 11.] **Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me** [[Many verses speak of our being in Christ and His being in us, but we aren't the same Person. I am not suggesting that the glorious relationship that we have with the Lord Jesus is fully comparable with the super-glorious relationship God the Son has with God the Father, but it serves to confirm that we are not to think of one Person here.]]; **otherwise believe because of the works themselves.** " As Jesus so often said, the words that He spoke and the miraculous works that He did didn't originate with Him. They originated with God the Father and very much included the work of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life. It is significant, for one thing, that the Old Testament had prophesied that the Messiah/Christ would do these works (see, for example, Luke 4:17-21; 7:18-23).

ACTS 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 1 COR. 1:13 with MATT. 28:19 and BAPTIZING IN/INTO the NAME OF.... These four verses from Acts speak of baptizing in, or into, the name of Jesus Christ (or, the name of the Lord Jesus). 1 Corinthians 1:13 is similar, but Matt. 28:19 says that Jesus, after His resurrection, told His apostles to, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Based on Jesus' words (for one primary reason) most Christians in our day baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. So too throughout most of the history of the Christian church. The instructions in "The Didache" (an early Christian document, which is typically dated in the late first century or early second century) mentions baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

I don't think we have enough information to answer every question, but it seems rather clear to me why Peter didn't mention baptizing in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit to his Jewish audience in Acts 2:38 on the Day of Pentecost. I'm confident that the apostle Peter (and the other apostles) would not have intentionally disobeyed what the Lord Jesus told them about baptism a short while before the Day of Pentecost. Jesus may have informed them, one way, or another, that they wouldn't use the words in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit at first. The apostles themselves *had just begun* to understand the deity of the Lord Jesus and the Trinity, and they didn't receive the Holy Spirit to help them understand until the Day of Pentecost, the very day Peter was preaching. Some fifty days before the Day of Pentecost the apostles didn't really believe in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (even though He had told them He would be killed and resurrected on the third day on several occasions), and they certainly didn't fully understand His deity and the Trinity fifty days before the Day of Pentecost (see Luke chapter 24 and John 20:9, for example).

The Jews didn't know about or believe in God the Son, and they were not expecting the Messiah to be deity. (Nor were they expecting the sacrificial death of the Messiah [but John the Baptist spoke of "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" in John 1:29, 36.], or His resurrection.) These things which are so clear to us now were not understood back then, even though there were prophetic passages that spoke of these super-important things. God's salvation plans through, and in, the Messiah were MUCH GREATER than they had anticipated, even as the Messiah was VERY MUCH GREATER than they had expected. It took a while for the details concerning the Trinity to sink in, and the Jews that Peter was speaking to on the Day of Pentecost wouldn't have understood His deity or the Trinity yet, and there is no record that Peter spoke to them of His deity or the Trinity on that day. At least Peter didn't emphasize His deity or the Trinity before the large audience. (It would be different regarding those who were ready to submit to the Lord Jesus and new-covenant salvation. The deity of Christ and the Trinity is super-important foundational Christian doctrine.) Peter's message, as he was led by the Spirit, centered on the fact that Jesus was God's promised Messiah, and that He was the One who, after He had been crucified and resurrected and taken up to heaven (all according to the plan of God the Father), received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit and poured forth the Spirit, which was causing the things to happen that they were seeing and hearing (see Acts 2:1-33). In such a setting it would have been very confusing (and very controversial) to publicly baptize converts in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

As Acts 2:36-42 show, Peter was calling the Jews to repent of their sin, and especially for the super-serious sin of having rejected their Messiah, and to submit to Him and God's new-covenant plan of salvation. I'll quote ACTS 2:36-42: " **Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God [God the Father] has made Him both Lord and Christ - this Jesus whom you crucified.** [Jesus is the Son of God who became the God-man. The name Jesus is never used for the Father or the Trinity, and the Father didn't become incarnate - the Son did. The oneness view is wrong.] **(37) Now when they heard this they** [some of those who heard Peter (by the Holy Spirit) speak on the day of Pentecost] **were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?' (38) Peter said to them, 'Repent** [Note that Peter said, "Be saved from this perverse generation" in verse 40.], **and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (39) For the promise** [[The promise was for new-covenant salvation in Christ Jesus. The promise that God would give/pour out His Spirit on believers was a big part of what new-covenant salvation is all about. See, for example, Acts 1:4, 5; 2:33; Ezek. 36:27; Joel 2:28-32 with Acts 2:16-21; John 7:37-39; Rom. 8:1-17; Gal. 5:5, 16-18, 22, 23, 25, and there are many more such verses in

the New Testament and in the Old Testament.]] **is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God** [[Peter is referring to God the Father. On the word "Lord" for God the Father (Greek "kurios"), see Acts 2:25, 34, for example; in Acts 3:22 the Greek behind "the Lord God" (which clearly refers to God the Father) is exactly the same as the Greek here in Acts 2:39.]] **will call to Himself** [compare, for example, Rom. 8:28-30; 9:24; 1 Cor. 1:9, 24, 26-31.].' **(40) And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation!'** [On being saved, see Acts 2:21.] **(41) So then, those who had received his word [in faith] were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. (42) They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching** [[They would begin to get solidly grounded in super-important details like the virgin birth, deity of Christ, and the Trinity here (and His atoning death, resurrection, second coming, etc.). Under normal circumstances, believers should be grounded in such details before they are baptized. Those who were baptized that day might have been taught these things before they were baptized. If not they would have been grounded in those details shortly thereafter.]] **and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."**

It was totally appropriate for them to baptize in (or, into) the name of Jesus in that setting. Jesus was the Messiah God had sent, and Israel (centering in most of its leaders) had rejected Him. They must repent and submit to the One who had died for them, bearing their sins. He was the only One who could bring them to the Father and to His new-covenant salvation. ((I had a footnote: Ananias, who had been sent to Saul/Paul, said to him, "Now why do you delay: Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16). It is appropriate for us to call on the name of God the Son, who condescended to become the God-man and then, after living a sinless life, died for us bearing our sins with the guilt and the penalties (including the major penalties of spiritual death and bondage to sin) so we could be born-again and begin to live in the righteousness and holiness of God, on the road that leads to eternal glory.)) And, as Acts 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; and 1 Cor. 1:13 show, they continued to baptize in the name of Jesus Christ (or the Lord Jesus) for many years. Some may have been baptizing in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (with Matt. 28:19 it wouldn't be surprising), but no examples are recorded in the New Testament.

I am totally sure that when the apostles or those associated with them were baptizing in the name of Jesus in those early years it was super-clear that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, the One who had been sent by the Father. There was no idea whatsoever that "Jesus" was the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, or that Jesus (the Son) was in the spotlight while God the Father was in the background. Everything the Son did was directly tied to God the Father and His plan of salvation. I wonder if you

could have found one Jew in Israel who thought that the name Jesus included God the Father (or the Holy Spirit). (The name Jesus is used over nine hundred times in the New Testament but it is never used for the Father, or the Holy Spirit, or the Trinity.) Some thought Jesus was Elijah, or John the Baptist come back from the dead, or another prophet, etc., but nobody thought He was the One we call God the Father.

Based on Matt. 28:19 and other considerations, most Christians think we should baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and I agree. (Oneness Christians speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but they believe there is only one Person and His name is Jesus.) There is nothing wrong with baptizing in the name of Jesus (we do a lot of things, including praying in the name of Jesus, and we have Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5 and 1 Cor. 1:13), but why exclude the Father and the Holy Spirit when we have Matt. 28:19. (Of course oneness Christians don't believe in the Persons of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, but it is clear to me that they are wrong.) God the Father has the preeminent role in the Trinity, and we are totally dependent on the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us as born-again Christians. Through the Lord Jesus, with whom we are united when we become Christians, and through whom we come to God the Father, we become born-again children of God the Father, and the Spirit of God dwells in us.

It is important to see that Peter made a clear distinction between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ in his message on the Day of Pentecost, which is a distinction consistently made throughout the Bible. He spoke of the two Persons of God the Father and the Lord Jesus in Acts 2:22-24. So too we see God the Father and the Lord Jesus in the words of Psalm 16:8-11 that Peter quoted in Acts 2:25-28, verses that prophesy of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. (The word "LORD" [Yahweh in the Hebrew] near the beginning of Acts 2:25 refers to God the Father.) We also see God the Father and the Lord Jesus mentioned in Acts 2:30-32, in Acts 2:33 (where we see the Trinity), in Acts 2:34, 35, and in Acts 2:36. You don't have to strain to see the two Persons of God the Father and God the Son. The Bible is literally packed with examples. You have to really strain though to try to see one Person.

We have a big problem with the typical oneness interpretation of Jesus' words in Matt. 28:19 in our day. I'll quote Matt. 28:19 again, "**Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.**" They believe that, based on the passages in Acts and 1 Cor. 1:13 and other considerations, we can see that Jesus is the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit and that there is only one Person. (Oneness Christians speak a lot about the divine nature and the human nature of the one Person [Jesus] interacting with one another.) They totally reject the idea of the distinct Persons of God the Father, God the

Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The oneness viewpoint may seem to fit a few verses OK, but there are a very large number of passages throughout the Bible that show that that view is wrong.

For one super-important thing, as I mentioned, the name Jesus is NEVER used for God the Father, the Holy Spirit, or the Trinity in the Bible, nor would it be appropriate to use that name for God the Father, the Holy Spirit, or the Trinity. The name Jesus, which is the same as the name Joshua, (more accurately "Yeshua" or "Yehoshua" in the Hebrew) is used 911 times in the New Testament of the NASB, 1995 edition. (One of those 911 uses, in Col. 4:11, refers to a different person, and three times the NASB translated "Joshua" (referring to the leader who followed Moses in the Old Testament) not "Jesus," in Luke 3:29; Acts 7:45; and Heb. 4:8.) The name Yeshua (Jesus) means "Yah [which is short for Yahweh] saves," or "Yah is salvation." That name was given to the God-man by revelation (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31) when the Son of God took upon flesh, and it is still used for Him after He was glorified and went back to sit at the Father's right hand.

I'LL QUOTE A SMALL PART OF WHAT GREGORY A. BOYD SAYS IN HIS CHAPTER 3, "IS JESUS HIS OWN FATHER?" ("Oneness Pentecostals & The Trinity" [Baker Books, 1992], 234 pages). He points out in the first paragraph that the cornerstone of oneness teaching is that Jesus is God the Father incarnate. "Jesus is explicitly referred to as 'the Son' over two hundred times in the New Testament, and never once is he called 'Father.' By contrast, over two hundred times 'the Father' is referred to by Jesus or someone else as being clearly distinct from Jesus. ... This typical New Testament way of speaking is, of course, exceedingly strange if Jesus is himself God the Father.

[After continuing with such statements for another page Boyd says:] In the light of these facts, I think it is small wonder that the Oneness phrase 'Jesus is the Father' sounds so 'off' to unprejudiced biblically trained ears, just as it did to the biblically astute ears of the early church fathers WHEN MODALISM FIRST RAISED IT DIVISIVE HEAD IN THE LATE SECOND CENTURY [my emphasis]. Given this general pattern of speaking and teaching in the New Testament, could anything be more natural than to assume that Jesus is in fact 'the Father's Son' (2 John 3)? And, conversely, could anything be more *unnatural* by biblical standards than to think that Jesus is also 'God the Father,' indeed, that he is his own Father?

... ...[the apostles'] message that Jesus is 'the Son of God' comes through loud and clear. Not a trace of ambiguity is involved here. ... Why is the (supposed) fact that Jesus was his own Father so secretively hidden in the New Testament if indeed one's

salvation depends on believing this?according to most oneness groups, Trinitarians are simply blind to the 'Oneness revelation,' and indeed far more than 99.99% [that sounds a little high] of all lovers of Christ who have ever lived have died without hope of heaven because they, being trinitarians, failed to pick up this 'secret identity' of Jesus. ..." (pages 67-71).

The word "name" is singular in Matt. 28:19, which emphasizes the perfect unity of the Trinity, with the three Persons. We desperately need the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches on every topic. For one thing, the Bible does not teach three Gods, and those who believe in the Trinity do not believe in three Gods. The preeminent role of God the Father and the subordinate roles of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, who are fully deity with God the Father and who are worshipped with God the Father, demonstrate part of the reason why we don't have or worship three Gods. The Trinity with three Persons is totally different than three independent Gods who are exactly alike one another, including their authority. (Many Trinitarians believe they are the full equivalent of one another, including the authority. I'll discuss this topic in my next paper.) I am not suggesting, by the way, that we have enough information (or the ability) to fully understand the Trinity. But then again, it isn't difficult to believe. We are not saying three equals one or anything like that. When you seriously seek for the balanced truth of all that the Bible says on this topic, it is VERY MUCH easier to believe in the Trinity than a oneness view of God.

It is important to understand that essentially every person who was there on the Day of Pentecost, very much including Peter and the other apostles and the three thousand souls who were added to the Body of Christ that day, would have rightly understood that the name of Jesus Christ referred exclusively to Jesus the Messiah. None of them (including those who submitted to the Lord Jesus Christ that day and those who didn't) would have thought that the name Jesus could include God the Father (or the Holy Spirit). They knew the difference between the Messiah and the One who sent Him. And Jesus Himself consistently made it clear that He was a Person distinct from the One who sent Him (and from the Holy Spirit). Those Jews weren't about to make that mistake.

Also, the Samaritans who were converted through the preaching of Philip, and the Gentiles who were converted through the preaching of Peter, who were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (in Acts 8:16; 10:38), although they wouldn't have had as much background information as the Jews, would have understood that the Lord Jesus was a Person distinct from God the Father (and the Holy Spirit). So too for those converted through the apostle Paul who were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:5; 1

Cor. 1:13). Paul consistently taught about the Persons of God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (See the next two headings, for example.)

1 CORINTHIANS 8:4 (WITH 8:5, 6). **"Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that THERE IS NO GOD BUT ONE** [my emphasis; referring to God the Father (see verse 6)]." I have heard this verse used to argue for a oneness view of God, but it doesn't teach that at all, as the following verses demonstrate. We clearly see the Persons of God the Father and God the Son in 1 Cor. 8:5, 6, as we so often do. And we see the preeminent role of God the Father, which we so often see throughout the Bible. I'll read 1 CORINTHIANS 8:5, 6, **"For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on the earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords** [There are evil beings behind many of the gods, idols, and religious, or occult practices of peoples, but they are enemies of the one true God (see 1 Cor. 10:19-22; Acts 16:16-19, for example).], **(6) yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father, from whom are all things** [compare Rom. 11:36], **and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by** [It would be much better to translate "through" instead of "by." The Greek preposition ("dia") that I would translate "through" here with the NIV and NKJV is the same preposition translated "through" later in this verse and in John 1:3; Col. 1:16, for example.] **whom are all things, and we exist through Him."**

The apostle Paul shows what he meant when he said "there is no God but one" in 1 Cor. 8:4 and "for us there is *but* one God, the Father" in 1 Cor. 8:6. He was referring to God the Father, who is a Person distinct from the Lord Jesus Christ, in these verses. There are quite a few verses like this in the New Testament (cf. John 17:3; Rom. 16:27; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:17; 2:5, 6; 6:13-16; and Jude 1:25). And there are a large number of passages throughout the Bible that demonstrate the preeminent role of God the Father. (For many examples, see my papers titled, "Who Do We Pray To?" and "The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son.")

I must point out that the writings of the apostle Paul (in agreement with the rest of the Bible) strongly teach the full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son. Paul mentioned here in 1 Cor. 8:6, for example, that, "through whom [the Son] are all things [the Son existed with God the Father before everything that was created was created by God the Father through the Son], and we exist through Him [the Son]," which confirms His full deity. The word "God" is typically used of God the Father in the New Testament, and the name "Yahweh" was typically used of God the Father in the Old Testament, but the fact that both words were sometimes used for the Son of God, along with many other considerations, strongly demonstrate the full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

COLOSSIANS 2:8-10. **"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. (9) For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form** [[Colossians 1:19 is an important cross-reference, "For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him." All of the wisdom, authority, power, etc. that is included in what the word deity means is available in the Lord Jesus.]], **(10) and in Him you have been made complete** [[I prefer the translation, "**you have been made full,**" with the margin of the NASB. The NIV has, "you have been given fullness." The Greek noun "pleroma" translated "fullness" in verse 9 was derived from the Greek verb "pleroo," which is used in verse 10. Verse 10 has a perfect participle formed from this Greek verb joined with a verb that would normally be translated "you are." These are the words that I would translate "you have been made full," or the equivalent. However we translate the verb we should recognize the connection between the *fullness* of verse 9 and our having been *made full* of verse 10.]], **and He is the head over all rule and authority.**" If He didn't have the authority "over all rule and authority," some evil ruler might be able to thwart God's plans, including His plans for individual Christians.

Colossians 2:9 is one of the few key verses used to argue for a oneness view of God. I suppose they typically use the translation of the King James Version, "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." I would translate "Deity" with the NASB, instead of "the Godhead." (Whether we translate Deity or the Godhead, it must be understood that everything that is available in the Trinity is available in the Lord Jesus Christ.) Under the Greek noun "theotetos," which is only used this one place in the New Testament, the BAGD Greek Lexicon gives "deity" as the meaning in this verse.

I don't see this verse offering any real support for the idea of oneness. The fullness of deity dwells in God the Son. He is fully deity with God the Father and God the Spirit, and everything that God the Father and the Holy Spirit have are available in (and through) God the Son. And this is true of God the Son even though He greatly humbled Himself and temporarily laid aside His glory (see Phil. 2:5-8; John 17:3-5, for example) and became the God-man with a physical body. Note the words at the end of verse 9, "in bodily form." Now that He has been resurrected and taken up to the right hand of God the Father, He has a glorified body, but He is still "in bodily form" and always will be.

If God the Son had not become a man (the God-man) with a body and lived a sinless life and died for us, bearing our sins with the guilt and the penalties (including the major penalties of spiritual death and bondage to sin), we could not be saved. See Col. 2:11-

15, for example. I'll quote verse 15, "When He [God the Father] had disarmed the rulers and authorities [speaking of the evil rulers and authorities, starting with Satan], He [God the Father] made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him [through His unique Son, the Lord Jesus Christ]. (We see the two distinct Persons of God the Father and God the Son here, as we so often do throughout the Bible, especially in the New Testament.) Satan had gained his authority over man through our sin, especially the sin of Adam (see Rom. 5:12-21), but God "disarmed the rulers and authorities" through the all-important atoning death of His Son. Freedom from sin and from these evil rulers is part of what God the Father has provided for us in the Lord Jesus and new-covenant salvation. The Lamb of God bore the penalty of spiritual death so we could be born again, and He bore our bondage to sin and demons so we could be set free from that bondage and be made righteous and holy with the righteousness and holiness of God. Of course He also bore the guilt of our sin so we could be forgiven. After the Lord Jesus [God the Son, who became the God-man] had completed His assigned work, which centered in His all-important atoning death, He was resurrected, then after forty days He was taken up in glory to the right hand of God the Father. Some ten days later He poured out the Spirit, the promised Holy Spirit, which He received from God the Father, which enabled new-covenant salvation to begin.

The apostle Paul knew that some of the Christians at Colossae were being tempted to modify the gospel and to look other places for truth, victory over sin, help, etc., rather than to stick with God's new-covenant plan of salvation that centers in the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom God the Father has provided EVERYTHING we need. That's what verse 9 is all about, "in Him [in Christ, with whom all true Christians are united (see Rom. 6:1-11; Col 2:10-15, for example)] all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." There is absolutely nothing that we could ever need that has not been provided in Christ. Like Paul said in verse 10, "in Him [we] have been made full." Of course we must abide in Him, which includes abiding in the truth and righteousness of God by His grace through faith, or we will not be able to partake of the fullness He has provided for us.

When Christians face problems they are often tempted to look somewhere else for help, especially if God isn't quick to meet our needs (I'll mention some examples from the apostle Paul in a minute), but that always is a mistake, and sometimes it is a gigantic mistake, because if we aren't very careful, we may end up looking to the work of the devil and his demons for "help." The devil is very "generous" with such help, and it can look good (physical "healing," financial "blessings," "power," for example); he is a liar and a deceiver. That kind of "help" may seem to help for a while, but it is designed to destroy us. God will not permit His children to look to the devil, demons, occult, even if they are cleverly presented as something good. That is no excuse!

In Colossians 2:8 Paul warned against "[being taken] captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ." In verse 4 he said, "I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive arguments." And in verses 16-23 he added quite a few other items to the list. I'll quote COLOSSIANS 2:16-23, "**Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day - (17) things which are a mere shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. (18) Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize** [[The BAGD Greek Lexicon says regarding the Greek verb used here, "katabrabreuo," which is not used anywhere else in the New Testament, " 'decide against' (as umpire), and so 'rob of a prize,' 'condemn' someone...."']] **by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshy mind** [that is, his thinking is not at all in, and by, the Holy Spirit or in line with the Word of God], **(19) and not holding fast to the head** [[the Lord Jesus, in whom "all the fullness of Deity dwells" (Col. 2:9) and "in Him you have been made full" (Col. 2:10); at least the fullness is available to Christians in Christ, and nowhere else (but we must cooperate with, and appropriate, God's grace in Christ on a continuous basis by faith).]], **from whom the entire body** [the body of Christ] **being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.** [The joints and ligaments, through which the body is supplied and held together, probably refers to the ministries that Christ has anointed and placed in the body.] **(20) If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, (21) 'Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!' (22) (which all refer to things destined to perish with use) - in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men** [not of God]? **(23) These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.**" In fact they are manifestations of the flesh (which can include the work of demons). The only place we can find the authority and power to overpower sin (and our sins can be equated with "works of the flesh"; see Gal. 5:19-21) and demons is in Christ and by the Holy Spirit that we receive through Him.

Throughout his writings, very much including the first two chapters of his Epistle to the Colossians, the apostle Paul repeatedly speaks of God the Father and God the Son (who has now been crucified, resurrected, glorified and ascended to the right hand of God the Father) as two distinct Persons. (Paul certainly didn't intend to deny the two distinct Persons of God the Father and God the Son in Col. 2:9.) I'll give a few examples from Colossians chapter 1. Paul mentions both Persons in Col. 1:1, 2, and 3, for example, and in Col. 1:13 he says, "For He [God the Father] rescued [or delivered] us

from the domain [or, better, from the authority] of [the] darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son," referring to the kingdom of His now glorified Son, who is at His right hand. All true Christians are in that kingdom, which is here now in an early form of that kingdom (compare Luke 17:21; Rom. 14:17).

In COLOSSIANS 1:16 the apostle Paul says, "**For by Him** [by God the Son, who existed with the Father before any creating took place (see John 1:1-3, 10, 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:2, 3)] **all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions or rulers or authorities** [[This includes Satan and his extensive kingdom of evil, but it must be understood that he and the ones who followed him in his rebellion were not created evil. Anyway, the Creator has the authority and power to judge and remove beings He has created, which He will do at the proper time. That is the easy part, but God's plan included working things out in a way that He would save a gigantic number of people (the elect) and give a powerful demonstration of the fact that there is no room for rebellion and sin in His world.]] - **all things have been created through Him** [God the Father created all things through God the Son, who existed with Him before any creating took place.] **and for Him** [for God the Son; certainly not for the human nature of Jesus which, according to the oneness point of view, is destined to cease to exist]."

COLOSSIANS 1:17 says, "**He** [God the Son] **is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.**" Obviously "He is before all things" in time, since all things were created "by Him" and "through Him" (Col. 1:16). God the Son is also before all things in His exalted position over them. And Col. 1:17 also informs us that God the Son has been active in holding things together since they were created. We are talking about a Person, God the Son, not a thought, or a word, etc. in the mind of God. These verses that speak of the preexistence of God the Son with the Father should suffice in themselves to show that the oneness view of God is wrong. My article, "The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son: The Name Yahweh and a Listing of Some of the Large Number of Passages in the Hebrew Old Testament Where We Can See God the Son Along with God the Father," gives many examples where we see God the Son existing as a distinct Person along with God the Father and actively engaged in the things that were taking place throughout the Old Testament.

SOME EXCERPTS FROM "A DEFINITIVE LOOK AT ONENESS THEOLOGY: IN THE LIGHT OF BIBLICAL TRINITARIANISM" BY EDWARD L. DALCOUR (3rd edition, revised, updated & expanded; adapted from Ph.D. Thesis from North-West University; copyright © 2011 by North-West University in South Africa; 215 pages). This is one of the books I read in preparing to write this paper. This scholarly work is written from a

biblical, Trinitarian point of view. Edward Dalcour deals with many of the relevant passages of Scripture, with the early Christian teaching, and with several popular oneness writers, including David Bernard. I disagree with Dalcour on several details, but I believe he effectively shows that the oneness viewpoint is wrong, seriously wrong. I'll include several excerpts from this book here, but I believe most of the book is worthy to be excerpted.

"The oneness notion that the interactions between the Father and the Son (and Holy Spirit) were mere interactions among natures or modes severs the biblical teaching of the personal loving interaction between the Persons of the Trinity. [[This is extremely important. For one thing, a key feature of the glory of our salvation is that the VERY SPECIAL LOVE that God the Father has for His unique Son is shared with all true Christians, those who become united with the Lord Jesus through new-covenant salvation (see John 17:20-26 for example).]] However, the Oneness idea that 'natures' can actually love, talk, or pray to each other, or exhibit any kind of emotion toward one another is not only irrational, but also unbiblical.

Only self-aware cognizant persons can engage in personal emotive activities such as giving and receiving love or intellectually communicating with each other - abstract natures cannot. [[Keep in mind that the oneness viewpoint is that the Son doesn't exist until the virgin birth, at which time God the Father takes upon human nature and a physical body. The Son isn't a person; he is the human part of the God-man. Some oneness believers say he is only the physical body. It is totally necessary to understand that God the Son always existed with God the Father, through whom everything that was ever created was created.]] Scripture presents that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit each possess personal attributes and characteristics, which constitute personhood. As shown in subsequent chapters, the three Persons in the Trinity possess personal attributes and personal characteristics such as love, anger, the exercising of the will and mind, etc., which, as stated, constitute personhood" (pages 47, 48).

"...'The expression of love between Father and Son are explained as communication between the divine and human natures of Christ' ("The Oneness of God" by David K. Bernard, 1983, 22 [The quote is not from page 22 of the copy of the book that I have.] Dalcour was quoting from Bernard.) In other words, the 'Father' mode loves the 'Son' mode, or Jesus' human nature loves His own divine nature, and the reverse. ..." (page 75). "In oneness doctrine, the 'Father' and the 'Holy Spirit' are merely names or descriptions of the divine nature of Jesus" (page 76). According to oneness theology the Son mode didn't exist until the time of the virgin birth. On pages 106-108 of "The Oneness of God," under the heading "The ending of the Sonship," Bernard says that the role of the Son will end when Jesus "in His role as Son, and as His final act as Son, will

present the church to Himself in His role as God and Father." He is basing this on 1 Cor. 15:23-28. Revelation chapters 21 and 22 should suffice to show that God the Son will continue to reign with God the Father forever. Revelation 22:5 shows that we will be reigning with them. None of the three Persons of the Trinity can come to an end; They are eternal Persons!

Dalcour has the heading "The Trinitarian Formula [with water baptism] in the Early Church" (pages 110-113). I'll quote a few sentences. "...there has never been a church father (Greek or Latin), recognized Christian theologian, or biblical commentator that has provided a modalistic [oneness] understanding of Matthew 28:19. Despite the...historical evidence, the UPCI vigorously contends that 'the early church Christian leaders in the days immediately following the apostolic age were Oneness' (Bernard ["Oneness of God"], 1983, pages 236-37) and taught that water baptism must be done 'in the name of Jesus' to achieve salvation (cf. Paterson ["The Real Truth About Baptism in Jesus' Name"], 1953, pages 12, 27); Vouga ["Our Gospel Message"; Pentecostal Publishing House], 1967, page 18); Bernard ["The New Birth"....], 1984; pages 132-133; UPCI....). [Dalcour goes on to list some citations from the late first to the late fourth centuries to document that there was a lot of baptizing taking place in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then he says:] It was not until the UPCI/Oneness churches surfaced in the twentieth century that the Jesus' name formulation dogma first emerged (cf. Beisner [" 'Jesus Only' Churches", 1998, page 7; Ankerburg and Weldon ["Encyclopedia of Cults and Religions"], 1999, page 367)."

Dalcour gives page after page of information under the heading "The Doctrine of the Trinity and the Early Church" (pages 170-183). I'm just going to quote part of what Dalcour says as he interacts with some of Bernard's very influential but wrong assertions. There is no doubt in my mind that Bernard had to be extremely biased toward a oneness viewpoint (he certainly will admit that he is totally committed to a oneness viewpoint of God) to come up with some of his summarizing statements that he makes in this excerpt. He teaches that the early church, including the apostles, were oneness and of "the emergence of the trinitarian doctrine in the latter part of the second century."

I agree with Dalcour that Bernard "has yet to establish" (page 171) what he is saying. I'm not attacking Bernard, and I know that he is intelligent and educated and I'll give him the benefit of assuming that he is trying to be honest before God, but, like I said, he must therefore be extremely biased. I would like to be a blessing to Bernard and the large number of people he has influenced and is influencing.

"To maintain the idea that the early church was Oneness is a complicated task for Oneness teachers, for in order to do so, Oneness teachers must revise history. For instance Bernard ("The Oneness of God", 1983, pages 236-37) claims: '1. *As far as we can tell, the early church Christian leaders in the days immediately following the apostolic age were Oneness.* [For one thing, Bernard is wrongly assuming that the apostles were Oneness.] It is certain that they did not teach the doctrine of the trinity as it later developed and as it exists today. [[There are some differences. For one thing, it took some time to come to a balanced viewpoint that incorporates all that the Bible teaches. Also, back in the early church and in the church of our day Christians don't always get every detail right. I have mentioned before in this paper that I believe some Trinitarians are saying more than what God has revealed, which doesn't work for good. However the Trinitarian viewpoint of the early church and of the church today is correct in general, unlike the oneness viewpoint, which is wrong at the foundational level: The three Persons of the Trinity always have, and always will, exist.]] 2. Even after the emergence of the trinitarian doctrine in the latter part of the second century, the doctrine of the trinity did not replace Oneness as the dominant belief until around 300 A.D., and it did not become universally established until in the fourth century. 3.'

(Still quoting Dalcour) As we will see, Oneness teachers routinely practice this kind of historical revisionism in order to substantiate the notion that the early church taught distinctive Oneness doctrines. Bernard's assertion that the Trinity 'did not replace Oneness as the dominant belief until around 300 A.D.' is the very conclusion he has yet to establish. ... Bernard's main assertion ("The Oneness of God," 1983, page 236) that 'The early church Christian leaders in the days immediately following the apostolic age were Oneness' demonstrates his lack of data and/or understanding in the area of church history." I believe the evidence for the Trinitarian viewpoint "in the days following the apostolic age" in Dalcour's book easily suffices to prove what he says here. And the primary evidence for the Trinity is the Bible itself, especially the New Testament.

"Oneness believers reject the doctrine of the Trinity and embrace a Unitarian or unipersonal [one person] view of God mainly because of their *a priori* assumption that monotheism means unipersonalism" (page 191).

SOME EXCERPTS FROM "ONENESS PENTECOSTALS & THE TRINITY" BY GREGORY A. BOYD (Baker Books, 1992, 234 pages). I had read this book several years ago, but I reread it in the process of preparing to write this book. As a teenager Gregory Boyd was a member of a oneness United Pentecostal Church, but within a few years he had left the oneness viewpoint behind and become a Trinitarian. He went on to

earn a PhD from Princeton Theological Seminary. He has made it a priority to write and teach against the oneness viewpoint. He mentioned that when he was with them he "soon internalized the certain *elitist* mentality that largely characterizes many Oneness communities, for we all believed we had a 'truth' possessed by very few others" (page 22).

In Chapter 1, "Understanding Oneness Pentecostalism," on pages 25-48, Boyd "[summarizes] the Oneness Pentecostals' case for their rejection of the Trinity. Then his last two sentences at the end of that chapter are: "Although these arguments [at least some of them] must be taken seriously, they can be soundly refuted. It is to this task, then, that we shall address ourselves throughout the rest of this book."

I don't agree with Boyd on every little detail, but I believe he quite effectively shows that the oneness viewpoint is wrong, seriously wrong. Boyd's Chapter 2 (pages 49-66) is "The Trinity, Truth or Error?" His Chapter 3 is "Is Jesus His Own Father?" I included some important excerpts from the first few pages of this chapter earlier in this paper. Boyd discusses many key passages of the Bible under the heading "Proof texts [used by oneness Christians] for Jesus as the Father" pages 71-84. He discusses Isaiah 9:6; John 14:7-10 ("If You see Me, You See the Father"); John 10:30 ("I and the Father Are One"); John 14:18 ("I Will Not Leave You as Orphans"); the Salutations ("God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"; these salutations are quite important. We see God the Father AND God the Son. Boyd deals with the oneness (wrong) viewpoint that such salutations, which are frequent in the New Testament, should be understood in the sense God the Father EVEN the Lord Jesus Christ. I dealt with this issue earlier in this paper); 1 John 3:1-5 ("Was Jesus God the Father Appearing on Earth?").

The topic of Boyd's Chapter 4, "Did the Son of God Exist Before His Birth? (pages 93-114), is quite important. "In this chapter we complete our defense of the trinitarian view of Jesus by refuting the Oneness argument against the actual preexistence of the Son of God." The oneness viewpoint is that the Son didn't exist before the virgin birth. That is a very significant mistake. Boyd discusses "Christ's Preexistence in the Gospel of John" on pages 94-102; in Paul's Writings on pages 102-109, which includes Col. 1:16-17; 1 Cor. 8:6; and Phil. 2:5-11; and in Hebrews on pages 109-111; and other passages.

I'll quote a sentence from Boyd's conclusion at the end of chapter 4. "The biblical case for the distinct personal preexistence of Jesus Christ is, we have shown, exceedingly strong, while the modalistic arguments against this doctrine are essentially groundless."

Boyd's Chapter 7 (pages 147-162), "Was the Early Church Oneness?," effectively shows that the early Christian church was not oneness. Boyd points out that we must base what we believe on the Bible, but that the teachings of the Christian leaders who followed the apostles are also quite important for this study, especially the leaders who came right after the apostles. And we must understand that these leaders were making it a priority to preserve and pass on what they had been taught, not to come up with new doctrines.

Boyd says the early writings demonstrate that the Oneness Pentecostals are wrong in claiming that "the original apostolic teaching was that Jesus is himself the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For, if the apostles did teach this, it is virtually inconceivable that Christian leaders in the two following generations would have, or could have, intentionally or unintentionally failed to teach this.I shall show that it is indisputable that none of the earliest Fathers were at all close to holding the Oneness Doctrine.

Indeed, what is perhaps even more damaging to the Oneness view is that there is not even a trace of anyone's arguing for or against modalism until the late second or early third century. ... A relatively cursory review of what the early post-apostolic Fathers taught is all that is required to prove that they did not hold the Oneness view. Following the pattern of the New Testament, never is Jesus called 'Father'..." (page 148). Boyd went on to say that his study of the early Fathers at Yale Divinity School was the thing that initially caused him to seriously question his Oneness view of God. He had intended to further prove his Oneness view. The Oneness teachers claim that those early Christian writers were Oneness. This obviously is very important.

Boyd goes on on pages 149-162 to discuss the early Christian writings on this topic and to interact with some Oneness writers. It seems clear to me that Boyd totally proves his point. I won't comment on his Chapter 8, "The Inescapable Trinity" (pages 163-196), but it is packed with important information. I don't agree with him on every detail, but none of those details have anything to do with leaving any room for the Oneness view of God. I disagree with Boyd on quite a few things he says in some of the four Appendices at the end of the book (pages 197-228), but none of them have anything to do with leaving any room for the Oneness view of God.

SOME EXCERPTS FROM "THE FORGOTTEN TRINITY" BY JAMES R. WHITE (Bethany House Publishers, 1998, 224 pages). James White doesn't directly deal much with the Oneness Pentecostal viewpoint in this book (He does refute the modalistic viewpoint in his chapter 11 [pages 153-161]), but his detailed teaching on the Trinity doesn't leave any room whatsoever for the modalistic/oneness viewpoint. White's

primary purpose for writing this book was that Christians would better understand and love the Trinity, not to deal with arguments against the Trinity, but he does some of that.

I'll quote a little from his Chapter 1, "Why the 'Forgotten' Trinity?" He starts the chapter with the words, "I love the Trinity." The more true Christians really understand the Trinity, the more we will love the Trinity. ... So why don't we talk about loving the Trinity? Most Christians do not understand what the term means and have only a vague idea of the reality that it represents. [[I have observed that many or most Christians do "have only a vague idea" regarding the Trinity, and wrong ideas abound. Many who say they believe in the Trinity have no idea of the preexistence of the Son of God, for example, and many who say they believe in the Trinity give little recognition (if any) to the Person of God the Father who has the preeminent role in the Trinity. For many who say they believe in the Trinity essentially everything focuses on Jesus, the Son, including worshipping Him, talking about Him, and praying to Him (not the Father). These are serious problems. See my paper "WHO DO WE WORSHIP? (Oneness/Jesus-only Worship Songs)" on my internet site (Google to Karl Kemp Teaching).]] We don't love things that we consider very complicated, obtuse, or just downright difficult. ... the Trinity is the highest revelation God has made of Himself to His people. It is the capstone, the summit, the brightest star in the firmament of divine truths. ... God revealed this truth about himself most clearly, and most irrefutably, in the Incarnation itself, when Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, took on human flesh and walked among us. ..." (pages 1, 2).

His Chapter 2 is "What is the Trinity?" and his Chapter 3, "God, A Brief Introduction."

White discusses John 1:1-18 in his chapter 4, "A Masterpiece: The Prologue of John" (pages 48-64), with some emphasis on the first verse. I agree with just about everything he says here. In his chapter 5 White argues, and rightly so, for the full deity of the Lord Jesus, God the Son. I don't agree with everything White says here, but he effectively demonstrates the full deity of the Lord Jesus. He discusses the fact that the words "I am *He*" of John 8:24, 58; 13:19; and 18:5, 6 demonstrate the full deity of the Lord Jesus.

White devotes most of his chapter 7 to demonstrate the deity of Christ and the Trinity through the teaching of Col. 1:15-17. In chapter 8 he uses Phil. 2:5-11 in its context to demonstrate the full deity of the Lord Jesus, very much including His eternal preexistence with the Father. It is a super-important passage to demonstrate the full deity of the Lord Jesus, very much including His preexistence. I doubt that White (and others) is right when he interprets the words "did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Phil. 2:6) to mean that there was nothing that the Son could possibly grasp in that He had everything He could possibly have. I believe the apostle Paul was

including the idea that, even though the Son was fully deity with the Father, He could have grasped for more and rebelled against the preeminent role of God the Father and His plan of salvation that involved the incarnation and sacrifice of the Son. Of course Paul didn't leave any room for the possibility that the Son would rebel. **QUITE THE OPPOSITE!** He is using the Lord Jesus here as a perfect illustration of humility (and love for the Father and love for those He will save, etc.).

It seems to me that White (and it isn't just White) thinks it would detract from the full deity of the Son if we left any room for any real eternal subordination of the Son to the Father, who has the preeminent role in the Trinity. I didn't say He was superior or the Son was inferior. For one thing, I believe the eternally subordinate roles (along with the full deity of the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit) makes it a lot easier to dispense with the idea of three God's who are fully alike in every way. Fully God, Yes! Fully Alike (including authority)? I don't think so!

On page 66, White says that "difference in function does not indicate inferiority of nature." He goes on to say that the fact that God the Father creates *through* Jesus Christ does not indicate that He [the Son] is not fully God. I totally agree, but it probably does indicate some subordination of the Son. And I have some rather serious reservations with what he goes on to say in the next paragraph: "Think of it this way, in eternity past the Father, Son, and Spirit *voluntarily and freely chose the roles they would take in bringing about the redemption of God's people.* [[I believe it would be more in line with the Biblical data to say that the Son and the Spirit voluntarily and lovingly submitted to "the roles they would take, in accordance with the will and plan of God the Father, in bringing about the redemption of God's people."]] ... The Father chose to be the fount and source of the entirety of the work; the Son chose to be the Redeemer and to enter into human flesh as one subject to the Father [It seems He always was lovingly subordinate to God the Father, not just during the period He voluntarily and lovingly condescended to become the God-man and perfectly carried out His very difficult mission. This very much included His voluntarily and lovingly submitting to the incarnation before the incarnation.]; and the Spirit chose to be the Sanctifier of the church, the indwelling Testifier of Jesus Christ. Each took different roles of necessity - they could not all take the same role and do the same things."

A primary point I am trying to make here is that it seems that the Son always was subordinate to the preeminent Father. He always was Son to the Father. I don't believe it is necessary or helpful to resist leaving room for the Son to be fully deity but actually subordinate to the Father in His role by virtue of what it meant for Him to always be the Son of the Father. I don't see any reason to deny this eternal subordination. White (and others) are striving to make sure there is no true subordination of the Son with respect

to the Father in their eternal roles, in that it is perceived that this would detract from His full deity and the reality of the Trinity. As I have mentioned I believe the Son and the Spirit totally love and boast in the preeminent role of the Father, and I am confident that this viewpoint better reflects the reality presented in the Bible and is totally reasonable and does not detract from the full deity of the Son (or the Spirit).

I believe this detail is important. In my opinion many Trinitarians, in their noble attempt to emphasize the full deity of the Son (for one thing His deity has been challenged by many) overstate what it means (what is required) for Him to be deity. When we are out of balance in any direction, we invite opposition to what we are saying. If we overstate the eternal role of the Son of God, we leave room, for one thing, for others to hear us speaking of three God's that are so much alike that it sounds like three equal God's with each one having the same authority sitting at a triangular table. I am not suggesting that the error of not leaving room for the eternally subordinate roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (assuming it is an error) is nearly as serious as denying the existence of the three Persons of the Trinity, not at all. But we desperately need the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. Every error hurts, but some are a lot more serious than others. Some errors distort the gospel so much that it cannot save. Denying the deity of the Lord Jesus, for example, certainly qualifies to destroy the heart of the gospel.

In chapter 10 White effectively demonstrates that the Holy Spirit is a Person, not a force, etc. He is sometimes called the third Person of the Trinity. In chapter 11 titled "Three Persons" he briefly deals with modalism (pages 154-161). In chapter 12 White gets into more details defining the Trinity (pages 163-175). Back on page 26 he gave the "basic definition": "Within the one Being that is God, there exists eternally three coequal and coeternally eternal persons, namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." And I'll quote two sentences from his page 27: "Each of the persons is said to be eternal, each is said to be coequal with the others as to their divine nature. ... Each is fully God, coequal with the others, and that eternally." As I have mentioned, it seems to me that although the Son and the Spirit are fully deity with the Father the Bible indicates some eternal subordination of the Son and the Spirit to the Father. And I believe the Son and the Spirit totally love and even boast in the preeminent, eternal role of God the Father. The infinite love the Son and the Spirit have for the Father, along with the perfect unity and harmony that exists in the Trinity, totally overrides any negative concepts of being subordinate.

Maybe I'm missing something, but it is easier for me to believe that it is quite possible, even probable, that some Trinitarian theologians have overstated the sameness of the three Persons of the Trinity (especially in reference to the Holy Spirit). THE ETERNAL

PREEMINENT ROLE OF THE FATHER IN THE TRINITY MEANS SOMETHING! I believe it means a lot!).

The Bible doesn't teach three Gods. For one thing, we don't want to communicate the idea that the three Persons function independently in themselves. Total love, harmony, and unity, but not three independent Persons.

I'm going to quote part of a relevant (long) footnote, #8, from under John 1:1 in my paper on John 1:1-18 and Colossians 1:15-3:17. The footnote was included after the word Father in the two sentences from that paper that I'll quote here: "The orthodox Christian view from the beginning has always been that there is one God, *three* Persons - there are not three Gods. The fact that God the Son (and God the Spirit) is in some ways subordinate to the Father helps explain why the Bible doesn't speak of *three* Gods, even though God the Son is fully deity/God (and the Spirit is fully deity/God too)." In the part of the footnote I am excerpting here, I am quoting from Wayne Grudem under the subheading "The Persons of the Trinity Eternally Existed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" ("Systematic Theology" [Zondervan, 1994], pages 251, 252)." "Finally, it may be said that there are no differences in deity, attributes, or essential nature between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each person is fully God and has all the attributes of God. *The only distinctions between the members of the Trinity are in the ways they relate to each other and to creation* [Grudem put this sentence in italics]. In those relationships they carry out the roles that are appropriate to each person.

[[I'm adding this bracket.) I'm not being dogmatic here, but I feel more comfortable saying that each Person is fully deity/God, without saying more than what I believe God has clearly revealed to us. We cannot know with any assurance details that God has not revealed to us, and especially when commenting on the details regarding the three Persons of the Trinity. When we say more than what God has revealed, we may introduce error, even if what we are saying seems logical and obvious to us. Some details about our universe seemed obvious to scientists before the days of Einstein too, and I suggest that some of the details regarding the Trinity are more mysterious (including the fact that these things have not been fully revealed). The Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit is fully deity with the Father and the Son, but does that demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is fully like the Father in His being? For one thing, I believe it is clear that we will see God the Father and God the Son after we are glorified, but I don't believe it is clear that we will be able to see the Holy Spirit in the same way we will see the Father and the Son.]]

This truth about the Trinity has sometimes been summarized in the phrase 'ontological equality but economic subordination,' where the word *ontological* means 'being.'

[Grudem has a footnote, "See section D.1. above, where *economy* was explained to refer to different activities or roles."] Another way of expressing this more simply would be to say 'equal in being but subordinate in role [referring to the roles of God the Son and God the Spirit].' Both parts of the phrase are necessary to a true doctrine of the Trinity: If we do not have ontological equality, not all the persons are fully God. But if we do not have economic subordination [[Grudem has a footnote, "Economic subordination should be carefully distinguished from the error of 'subordinationism,' which holds that the Son or Holy Spirit are inferior in being to the Father (see section C. 2, above, p. 245)."] It seems clear to me that we are not to think of the Son being inferior to the Father, but I don't believe this means that the Son has to be equal to the Father in every aspect of His being, including authority. As we continue Grudem points out that some Trinitarians insist that the Son was only subordinate in authority during the years he lived on the earth. Grudem believes that the Son was/is eternally subordinate to the Father in authority. We will discuss these things in some detail in my next paper.]], then there is no inherent difference in the way the three persons relate to one another, and consequently we do not have the three distinct persons existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for all eternity. For example, if the Son is not eternally subordinated to the Father in role, then the Father is not eternally 'Father' and the Son is not eternally 'Son.' This would mean that the Trinity has not eternally existed.

... Surprisingly, some recent evangelical writings have denied an eternal subordination in role among the members of the Trinity [Grudem has a footnote here, giving examples. I'll quote one of the three paragraphs he has here: 'Millard Erickson, in his "Christian Theology" (...Baker, 1983-85), pp 338 and 698, is willing only to affirm that Christ had a temporary subordination in function for the period of ministry on earth, but nowhere affirms an eternal subordination in role of the Son to the Father....' (K. Kemp speaking) The viewpoint that Erickson expresses is in line with what I was taught in seminary, but I have always thought that that viewpoint didn't go far enough in acknowledging the eternal subordinate roles (I didn't say inferiority) of the Son and the Spirit.], but it has clearly been part of the church's doctrine of the Trinity (in Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox expressions) at least since Nicea (A.D. 325). [Based on what I have read the Christians before Nicea, and at Nicea didn't have a problem acknowledging the subordinate role of the Son.] So Charles Hodge says: 'The Nicene doctrine includes, (1) the principle of the subordination of the Son to the Father.... But this subordination does not imply inferiority.... The subordination intended is only that which concerns the mode of subsistence [existence] and operation.... ...'."

In chapter 13 White somewhat briefly discusses the Trinitarian viewpoints of three early Christian writers, Clement of Rome (in the first century), Ignatius (who died in 107) and Melito of Sardis (who died around AD 180). And he discusses a few details about the

Council of Nicea. In his last chapter, a short chapter, White deals with the total need to know and worship the true God, the triune God.

VERSE-BY-VERSE INTERPRETATION OF REVELATION CHAPTERS 4 AND 5.

Baxter deals with these chapters in Lesson 2 of his "Revelation Commentary," pages 18-27. I'm going to quote what I said on these chapters in my "Introduction to the Mid-Week Rapture" and introduce some comments in {{ }} to respond to some of the things that Baxter says on these chapters, mostly dealing with oneness. These chapters are discussed in more detail in my paper on Revelation chapters 1-10 on my internet site.

REVELATION 4:1. "**After these things, I looked, and behold, a door *standing open in heaven*, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound of a trumpet speaking with me*, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.'**" The first voice that the apostle John heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with him, refers back to Rev. 1:10, where the Lord Jesus Christ Himself apparently spoke (see Rev. 1:12-20), so He apparently speaks here too. If it wasn't the voice of Christ it undoubtedly was the voice of His angel speaking for Him; His angel is mentioned in Rev. 1:1 and other verses of the book of Revelation.

John was invited to come up to heaven to receive the rest of the revelation that would become the book of Revelation. He was taken to heaven, to the throne room of God, but he didn't remain at that location throughout the rest of the revelation. In Rev. 17:3, for example, he was carried away in the Spirit to a wilderness to receive part of the revelation.

The words, "**what must take place after these things,**" here undoubtedly is the equivalent of "the things which will take place after these things" of Rev. 1:19. I'll read REVELATION 1:19, where John was told, "Write these things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things." The "things which are" of Rev. 1:19 have been completed now that the messages to the seven churches have been delivered in Revelation chapters 2 and 3. Revelation chapters 4 and 5 don't prophesy regarding "the things which will take place after these things" hardly at all, but they set the stage for the detailed revelation regarding those future things. The time setting for the glorious scene pictured in Revelation chapters 4 and 5 is early, apparently right after the resurrection and glorification of the Lamb of God, after He had overcome so as to earn the right to bring to pass the things prophesied in the book of Revelation. This includes His saving all the elect and taking them to the eternal glory of God's new heaven and new earth with its New Jerusalem, and His removing Satan and all who continue to follow him in his rebellion.

Most of the things prophesied in the book of Revelation will not come to pass until the end of this age. Many of those things will come to pass during Daniel's 70th week. Most of the detailed revelation regarding the future is apparently contained in the scroll that the Lord Jesus Christ takes from the hand of God the Father in Revelation chapter 5. (He was the only One found worthy to take the scroll, to break the seven seals and open the scroll, and to bring these things to pass.) We don't receive much in the way of new revelation until He breaks the seventh and last seal at Rev. 8:1; then the scroll can be opened. The first six seals are broken in Revelation chapter 6.

Many who believe that the rapture will take place before Daniel's 70th week begins (the pre-week-rapture viewpoint) teach that the rapture takes place here in Rev. 4:1. It has always seemed obvious to me that John's being called up to heaven to receive further revelation does not refer to the rapture. The fact that this verse is the best they can do to find the rapture in the book of Revelation tends to demonstrate the weakness of that viewpoint. On the other hand, as we have discussed in some detail in these articles (and as we will further discuss soon [but not in this present paper]), it is easy to find the return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the resurrection, glorification, and rapture of the saints in the book of Revelation if we are open to the viewpoint that these things will come to pass in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, at the sounding of the seventh and last trumpet of the book of Revelation.

Those who believe the rapture will take place at the end of Daniel's 70th week (the end-of-the-week rapture viewpoint) also have trouble finding the rapture in the book of Revelation. They typically find the rapture in Rev. 19:11-16, but I don't see the rapture in those verses. Rather, the glorified, raptured saints are already with the Lord Jesus Christ in those verses. There is no resurrection, rapture, trumpet, or clouds mentioned in those verses. We will discuss Revelation chapter 19 later in these articles [in my book "Introduction to the Mid-Week Rapture," but not in this paper dealing with Irvin Baxter's "Revelation Commentary"].

I'm not saying these things to be argumentative, or to insult my brothers and sisters in Christ, not at all. I'm thankful I can say that I have a lot of respect for many of those teaching the pre-week rapture viewpoint and for many of those teaching the end-of-the-week rapture viewpoint, and I have learned from those holding both viewpoints. I also have a lot of respect for many of those holding other viewpoints. But all these viewpoints cannot be right regarding when the rapture will take place (and other details). All Christians must be humble before God and seek Him for the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. One primary reason so many Christians have a hard time seeking God for the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches on this topic (and other topics) is

that so many are so sure that they have the balanced truth already, and they have totally closed their minds.

All end-time viewpoints have what can be considered weak points. I suppose that the primary charge that can be brought against the mid-week rapture viewpoint I am teaching is that it leans heavily on the book of Revelation. However, I don't really consider this to be a weakness. The book of Revelation is God's last word on Bible prophecy, and it isn't surprising to me that we are so dependent on the book of Revelation to understand MANY details regarding God's plans for the end of this age.

THERE ARE MANY VERY IMPORTANT END-TIME DETAILS THAT WE WOULDN'T KNOW WITHOUT THE BOOK OF REVELATION. For example, we wouldn't know about the seven trumpets or the seven bowls of wrath; we wouldn't know about the spectacular ministry, death, resurrection, and rapture of the two witnesses, and it is significant that they will be resurrected, glorified and raptured right in the middle of Daniel's 70th week; we wouldn't know that the devil and his angels will be cast down to the earth in the middle of Daniel's 70th week and that the devil will give Antichrist his power and his throne and great authority at that time, and we wouldn't know many other important details regarding Antichrist (including the fact that he will come back from the dead, that he will be supported by the powerful ministry of the false prophet, and regarding the image of the beast [image of Antichrist] that even speaks, and the mark of the beast [Antichrist], and the number 666); we wouldn't know that the gospel will still be proclaimed after the rapture and that many, including the end-time remnant of Israel, will be converted after the rapture; we wouldn't know about Babylon the great harlot and God's judgment of her (this topic is so important that God devoted some three chapters of the book of Revelation to it); and we wouldn't know about the millennial kingdom and God's salvation plans for the nations, or about His new heaven and new earth with its new Jerusalem. A few of the things just listed could be known to some extent before the book of Revelation was given, but the book of Revelation supplies the details. **THE BOOK OF REVELATION IS A VERY SPECIAL BOOK OF THE BIBLE!**

The most important feature of the book of Revelation that enables us to see that the Lord Jesus Christ will return, and the resurrection, glorification, and rapture will take place right in middle of Daniel's 70th week is the fact that Revelation chapters 11-13 build on the pattern of Daniel's 70th week. Daniel prophesied of that seven-year period, and significantly, he prophesied several times regarding half (the second half) of that seven-year period. Revelation chapters 11-13 don't mention seven years, but they mention one-half of that seven-year period five times. And, as we have discussed in some detail, the first two uses refer to the first half of Daniel's 70th week, and the next three uses refer to the second half of that seven-year period. These chapters enable us

to see that the seventh and last trumpet will sound right in the middle of Daniel's 70th week and that the Lord Jesus Christ will return, and the resurrection, glorification, and rapture will take place at that time. They also enable us to see that the repentant end-time elect remnant of Israel will be converted and become Christians at that time; that the devil and his angels will be cast down to the earth at that time; and that Antichrist will begin his super-evil three and one-half year reign at that time.

The book of Revelation was given about AD 95, some thirty years after the apostle Paul died. I doubt that Paul knew many of the end-time details that were revealed in the book of Revelation. There is no indication that Paul thought in terms of Daniel's 70th week, or that he taught the mid-week rapture. Based on his writings, especially 2 Thess. 1:8-2:12, his teaching fits best with the Lord Jesus Christ returning and the rapture taking place a short while before He destroys Antichrist at the end of the seven years. It is important for me to add that what Paul taught leaves room for the mid-week rapture. (Second Thessalonians 2:1-12 are discussed in some detail in the last chapter of my book, "The Mid-Week Rapture.")

It is important to understand that God's revelation is progressive, supplying more details as time goes on, and sometimes correcting wrong impressions. Sometimes we have to modify what we thought we knew, based on subsequent revelation. The Old Testament prophets and Israel, for example, didn't understand the very important fact that the Messiah was to come twice, with the two comings being very different, and Israel didn't know that Messiah was to be God Himself, that is, God the Son. They didn't know about, and they were very reluctant to make room for, the Person of God the Son. These things could have been known based on the Old Testament, but these things that are so clear to us now were not at all clear in Old Testament days. We must be humble and stay open to God.

Looking at the all-important book of Revelation from the point of view of the mid-week return of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can see the rapture several places. Revelation 7:9-17 don't specifically mention the rapture, but we see the just-raptured saints before the throne of God in these verses. This glorious scene of Rev. 7:9-17 comes, appropriately enough, at the very time judgment day begins. (See Rev. 6:12-17. These verses in Revelation chapter 6 give us an early look at the arrival of judgment day, before the scroll is opened.) As I mentioned we don't receive hardly any new revelation before the seventh and last seal is broken and the scroll is opened at Rev. 8:1. The resurrection and rapture of the two witnesses in the middle of Daniel's 70th week, which is pictured in Rev. 11:11, 12, is quite relevant, because their rapture will just be part of the mid-week rapture of all the saints. (As I have mentioned, their resurrection and rapture may take place a short while before the rest of the saints, maybe a few hours, for example.)

The most important verse for the mid-week rapture is Rev. 12:5, which we have discussed in some detail [but not in this present paper]. Also, we can see the glorified, raptured saints with the Lord Jesus Christ during the second half of Daniel's 70th week in Rev. 13:6; 17:14; and 19:8, 14, and 19, and apparently we can see the saints on the white cloud with the Lord Jesus Christ in Rev. 14:14. Also see Rev. 12:12. All of these verses are discussed in my book, "The Mid-Week Rapture"; many of these verses are discussed in my "Introduction to the Mid-Week Rapture" (which should be read first by most people in that it is easier to read, but "The Mid-Week Rapture" contains much more information); and many of them are discussed in my verse-by-verse studies of the book of Revelation that are located on my internet site.

I'll read REVELATION 4:1 again; then we'll go on to REVELATION 4:2 and 3, "**After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven, and the first voice which I had heard, like *the sound* of a trumpet speaking with me, said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things.'** (2) **Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne** [[As we keep reading, it becomes clear that God the Father is the One sitting on the throne here (see Rev. 5:1 [with 5:2-7]; 5:13; 6:16; and 7:10). For one thing, in Revelation chapter 5 we see the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, come take the scroll from the right hand of God the Father who is sitting on the throne. {{Baxter says "He [the writer of the book of Revelation] says emphatically that there was one throne in heaven and there was one that sat upon the throne. [For Baxter, from his oneness point of view, that "one" is Jesus. There is one Person, not the Father and the Son (and the Spirit).] John is stating the cornerstone of all truth - that there is one God" (page 18). And Baxter refers to Deut. 6:4, which we have discussed in this paper. As I mentioned, I am sure that the One on the throne in Rev. 4: 2, 3 is God the Father. We will discuss this super-important point further as we continue. (I'll discuss Baxter's viewpoint further under Rev. 4:8-11 below.) As we keep reading we see the Son, the Lamb of God on the throne too, with God the Father (see on Rev. 5:6 as we continue). Verses like Rev. 3:21; 7:17; and 22:1, 3 picture the Son/Lamb on the one throne with God the Father. So, one throne two Persons, and three with the Holy Spirit, and God the Father clearly has the preeminent role.}}]] **(3) And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.**" Revelation 21:11 helps us understand that what John saw here was the glory of God. He certainly did not see God the Father Himself in any clear way (see, for example, Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 John 4:12). The time will come, however, when we will see God the Father (see, for example, Matt. 5:8; 1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 22:4). Regarding the rainbow around the throne, see Ezek. 1:27, 28; Rev. 10:1.

REVELATION 4:4. "**Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones / saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads.**" The "**twenty-four elders**" are mentioned quite often in the book of Revelation. I agree with the widespread viewpoint that the twenty-four elders are high-level angelic beings. They can undoubtedly be considered part of "the council of the holy ones" mentioned in Psalm 89:7. Their "thrones" and "crowns" show that they are reigning with God, and under God. At least part of their area of responsibility has to do with the people of God's true Israel (see Rev. 5:5, 9-10; 7:13-17; 11:15-18). "**White garments**" are appropriate for God's angelic beings (see, for example, Matt. 28:3; Mark 16:5; John 20:12; Acts 1:10; and Rev. 15:6).

REVELATION 4:5. "**Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. [Cf. Exod. 19:16; Rev. 8:5; 11:19; and 16:18.] And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God;**" This is a symbolic way to refer to the Holy Spirit, with the number seven symbolizing perfection (Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 5:6; and Zech. 4:10).

REVELATION 4:6. "**and before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal [cf. Exod. 24:10; Ezek. 1:22; and Rev. 15:2]; and in the center [or, "in the middle of the throne"] and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind.** [[These "**four living creatures**" are mentioned quite often in the book of Revelation. The four living creatures are comparable with, but not identical with, the four living beings of Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10, who are called cherubim in Ezekiel chapter 10. The four living creatures are also comparable with, but not identical with, the seraphim of Isaiah chapter 6. (The "im" ending of the words cherubim and seraphim comes from the Hebrew and shows that these nouns are masculine and plural.) The fact that the four living creatures are "**full of eyes in front and behind**" makes it impossible, for one thing, for anyone to sneak up on them. Verse 8 says they "are full of eyes around and within." One function of these high-level beings is to guard access to God, and access to the life that comes from Him (see Gen. 3:24). The four living creatures do more than guard the throne and worship God; they are involved with the events that take place in the book of Revelation (Rev. 5:1-8; 15:7). The four living creatures are pictured being "**around the throne**"; they are inside of the twenty-four elders.

REVELATION 4:7, 8, "**The first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf [or, ox], and the third creature had a face like that of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle. (8) And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night they do not cease to say, 'HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD GOD, THE**

ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.' " The cherubim of the book of Ezekiel had four wings, but the seraphim of Isaiah chapter six had six wings. The first line of what the four living creatures say in worship here in verse 8 is similar to the first line of what the seraphim said in worship in Isa. 6:3. I'll read those words, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD [Yahweh] of hosts." {{Baxter wrongly says that the living creatures of Revelation chapter 4 are the "exact same living creatures" that Ezekiel saw in his chapter 1 and that "they have the exact same description." Later Baxter mentions the difference with the face/faces, but he doesn't mention the difference with the wings.}}

REVELATION 4:9-11. **"And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne [God the Father], to Him who lives forever and ever, (10) the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, (11) 'Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed and were created.'** " God the Father created all things through His Son (cf. John 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:1; and Heb. 1:2). He receives **"glory and honor and power"** in the sense that these things that belong to Him by virtue of who He is and what He has done are ascribed to Him by His worshipers.

On page 24 Baxter wrongly appeals to Rev. 4:8 to show that the Lamb was the One on the one throne. "The one on the throne is the Lord God Almighty - the One which was, which is and is to come." Revelation 1:4-8, which are key verses at the beginning of the book of Revelation, clearly show that these words refer to God the Father, the One who consistently has the preeminent role in the Trinity.

I'll quote REVELATION 1:4-8 (NASB, which is very similar to the KJV here, except for one key word in 1:5; I'll just comment on the points relevant to the oneness issue here, with one important exception; see my paper on Revelation chapters 1-10 for a more detailed discussion on these verses): **"John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from Him who is and who was and who is to come** [[John lists the three Persons of the Trinity here in verses 4-7. God the Father, the One with the preeminent role in the Trinity, is listed first. Also see Rev. 1:8 and 4:8; cf. 11:17 and 16:5. We typically think of the Lord Jesus coming (returning to the earth) at the end of this age. The Father will send Him back to the earth to save and to judge. When the Lord Jesus returns, He will represent the One who sent Him. I believe the Lord Jesus will come right in the middle of the seven years of Daniel's 70th week, but it is clear that the Father is coming in Person too, at the right time(s), and we will see Him face to face

throughout the rest of eternity, which never ends (cf. e.g., Matt. 5:8; 1 Cor. 13:12; Heb. 12:14; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 22:4).

There is widespread agreement that these words "Him who is and who was and who is to come" build on and are related to the name Yahweh, which is the name God chose for Himself in the Old Testament. It refers first and foremost to God the Father in the Old Testament (just like the word "God" is used first and foremost of God the Father in the New Testament), but it is very significant that the name Yahweh is used for God the Son on occasion in the Old Testament and the word "God" is used for God the Son in the New Testament. This in itself proves the deity of the Lord Jesus: It would be blasphemous to use these words for the Lord Jesus if He were not deity with the Father (and the Spirit). He is! (See the first two pages of my paper "The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son" on the name Yahweh. Google to Karl Kemp Teaching.)], **and from the seven spirits who are before the throne** [which is a symbolic way to refer to the Holy Spirit (see Rev. 3:1; 4:5; 5:6; and Zech. 4:10)], **(5) and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of [or, from] the dead** [[It is clear, I believe, that the Trinity is spoken of here in verses 4-7: the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus Christ, the Son. The Lord Jesus was the first man (He was much more than just a man; He was the Son of God who became the God-man) to leave death behind and be born into the fullness of eternal life and glory. All true Christians will be born into the fullness of eternal life and glorified when He returns, and we will begin to reign with Him, but we will not become deity and we will not be worshipped.]], **and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood** [[We were released from our sins with the guilt and penalties (including the major penalties of spiritual death and bondage to sin) through the all-important atoning death of the Lamb of God. This is a whole lot more than being released from the guilt of our sins (being forgiven). The KJV has "washed" instead of "released." The evidence for the Greek reading used by the NASB is very strong.]] - **(6) and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father - to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (7) BEHOLD HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. (8) 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.'** " The Alpha and the Omega refers to God the Father in 1:8 and 21:6, but it refers to God the Son in 22:13. This is one of several places in the book of Revelation where the full deity of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is emphasized. We need to emphasize the full deity of the Lord Jesus, but we also need to understand that He has a subordinate role to God the Father in the Trinity.

Now we come to REVELATION CHAPTER 5. I'll quote REVELATION 5:1. **"I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne [God the Father] a book [or, scroll] written inside and on the back [The NIV has, "with writing on both sides."], sealed up with seven seals."** Apparently the seven seals were along the edge of the scroll in a way that prevented its being opened before all seven seals had been broken. As we continue we will see the sacrificed but now resurrected and ascended Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, come and take the scroll from God the Father. We see the two Persons of God the Father and God the Son here (and we see the Holy Spirit in this chapter too). The seven seals are broken by the Lord Jesus Christ one by one (see Rev. 6:1-12; 8:1). Apparently this same scroll, or part of this same scroll, is seen again at Rev. 10:2; there the scroll had been opened. Ezekiel 2:8-3:4, with its scroll "written on the front and on the back," is an important cross-reference.

REVELATION 5:2-4. **"And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book [scroll] and to break its seals?' (3) And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book [scroll] or to look into it. (4) Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book [scroll] or to look into it;"** Apparently John was weeping greatly because he knew something of the awesome significance of this scroll, and the need to open it. For one thing, to be worthy to take this scroll, to break its seals, and to open it requires someone Worthy (and Able) to bring to pass the things written in the scroll. The Lord Jesus Christ was the only One found worthy. We can probably say that the scroll contains the contents of the book of Revelation, starting at Rev. 6:1; but as I mentioned, there isn't much in the way of new revelation until the seventh and last seal is broken at Rev. 8:1.

REVELATION 5:5. **"and one of the elders [one of the twenty-four elders] said to me, 'Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book [scroll] and its seven seals.' "** Using figurative language, Jesus is a 'Lion' in His authority and power. And Jesus was of the "tribe of Judah," so far as His physical descent was concerned. Jesus was "the Root of David" in that He was a descendant of King David. (See the BAGD Greek Lexicon on the word translated "root" here.) Although the Lord Jesus Christ was a descendant of King David in one sense, David calls Him Lord, and rightly so.

Regarding Jesus' *overcoming*, I'll read REVELATION 3:21, where Jesus said "He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." God the Father was on the throne. Then the Lord Jesus sat down with Him on the throne after His atoning death, resurrection, and ascension. The Lord Jesus overcame by perfectly completing His assignment(s).

Through His atoning death He earned the right to save us, and He defeated Satan and all who continue to follow him. The total overthrow of Satan and his kingdom has not been manifested yet, but the process has been set in motion and it will be manifested step by step, culminating with his being thrown in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10, 14, 15).

REVELATION 5:6. I'll read the first part of the verse, "**And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain....**" As the margin of the *New American Standard Bible* shows, a more literal translation of the Greek would be "**And I saw in the middle of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the middle of the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain....**" The Lamb of God was on the throne, inside of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. The Lamb of God, with God the Father, was the center of attention.

The Lord Jesus Christ is frequently called a/the **Lamb** because of His all-important atoning death. I'll read JOHN 1:29, for an example, "The next day he [John the Baptist] saw Jesus coming to him and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' " Revelation 5:9, 12 (along with many other verses) confirm that the Lord Jesus Christ had actually been slain. He had been slain, bearing our sins with the guilt and the penalties (including the major penalties of spiritual death and bondage to sin), but now He was alive again, being the "first-born from the dead" (see Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5). He was the first man (though He was a whole lot more than just a man; He was the God-man) to leave death behind and be born into the fullness of the eternal life of God's new creation. He had overcome, and now He had earned the right to take the scroll from the right hand of God the Father, to break the seven seals and open the scroll, and to bring to pass the things written in the scroll.

Now I'll read all of REVELATION 5:6, and we'll further discuss this verse. "**And I saw in the middle of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the middle of the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.**" Sometimes "horns" (the horns of animals) serve as a symbol for reigning, power, and dominion (see, for example, 1 Sam. 2:10; Psalm 89:17, 24; Dan. 7:7, 8, 20, 24; Rev. 17:12). The number "**seven**" is used here (and often in the book of Revelation) as a symbolic number for perfection. For the resurrected Lamb to have "**seven horns**" is a symbolic way of saying that he has all authority, power, and dominion. After His resurrection Jesus said "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18; and I listed some other verses); but in the plan of God, this authority, power, and dominion won't be manifested in a full sense until the end of this age, when Jesus returns to save His people and judge the world. His unlimited authority, power, and dominion, which is

symbolized by the seven horns, will be manifested as He brings to pass all the things prophesied in the book of Revelation.

What Is the Time Setting for the Scene Pictured in Revelation Chapters 4 and 5? The revelation that God the Father gave to the Lord Jesus Christ to show to His bond-servants (see Rev. 1:1; we see two Persons here and the often-mentioned preeminent role of God the Father) wasn't given to the apostle John until about AD 95, but the scene pictured here in chapter 5 fits best at a time shortly after the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we'll discuss the last words of this verse, "**and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.**" For the Son of God, who is deity with God the Father (and God the Holy Spirit), to have seven eyes is a symbolic way of saying that He sees (accurately sees and fully sees) everything everywhere. And we are informed that He does this by "**the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth,**" which is a symbolic way to say that He does this by the Holy Spirit (see Rev. 1:4).

REVELATION 5:7. "**And He came and took the book [scroll] out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.**" As we have discussed, the Lord Jesus Christ came and took the scroll out of the right hand of God the Father, who clearly has the preeminent role in the Trinity here, as His preeminent role is so often mentioned throughout the Bible. (On God the Father and God the Son, see "The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son"; "Who Do We Worship?"; "Who Do We Pray To?"; and "More on the Trinity" on my internet site [karlkempteachingministries.com].)

REVELATION 5:8. "**When He had taken the book [scroll], the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.**" It would be quite improper for anyone to fall down before the Lamb to worship if the Lamb were not deity with God the Father! He is deity with God the Father and the Holy Spirit! He has always existed with God the Father and the Holy Spirit! Most agree that it was only "**the twenty-four elders**" ("**the four living creatures**" were not included) who were holding the harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. The fact that our prayers are being kept in golden bowls and are presented before God the Father as incense is interesting and important information. Our prayers that haven't been answered yet, that have been prayed in the will of God and in faith, don't just vanish - they will be answered! Especially relevant in this context are prayers like "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:9). For God's will to be done, including His will being done in our lives, is all that really matters.

We must understand that the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and our great high priest who intercedes for us (see Rom. 8:34, for example), is the One who makes our prayers acceptable before the Father, not **the twenty-four elders**. Also, we pray in His name. It's true, however, that God the Father (with the Son and the Spirit) does give significant authority and responsibility to others, both angelic beings and men. We're not talking about angelic beings or men competing with God or trying to take some of the glory due to Him. We're talking about the fact that God the Father (with the Son and the Spirit) chooses to give important assignments to those under Him, to angelic beings and to men, which they carry out by His grace and for His glory. He didn't create us to be unimportant and to do unimportant things. When we are doing what He wants us to do, IT IS important. On the relationship between prayer and incense, see Rev. 8:3, 4, and I listed some other verses.

REVELATION 5:9. **"And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book [scroll] and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.'**" The fact that we have been purchased for God by the blood of the Lamb is a dominant theme of the New Testament. Every person who has a place in God's new heaven and new earth with its new Jerusalem will have that place through the Lord Jesus Christ and His atoning death (see Rev. 21:27, for example).

REVELATION 5:10. **"You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."** I'll also read the first part of Rev. 1:6, "And He [the Lord Jesus] has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father." These last words "priests to His [the Lord Jesus'] God and Father rather powerfully demonstrate the subordinate role of the Son of God in the Trinity. The wording here ("His God and Father") clearly was influenced by the fact that the Son of God became a man (the God man) and is united with men, but as we have discussed, and as we will further discuss in my next paper, His subordinate role (I didn't say He is inferior) is eternal. (I should point out that the Lord Jesus had been resurrected, ascended, and glorified long before the book of Revelation was written.) As we have also discussed, it is totally necessary to emphasize the full deity of the Son of God.

In a preliminary sense we Christians are in the kingdom now (see, for example, Luke 17:21; Rom. 14:17), and in one sense we are priests now (see Exod. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9). Many verses, however, show that the kingdom will not be here in its full sense until the King returns (when the Lord Jesus is sent by the Father) to establish His kingdom. As we have discussed, many verses show that we will begin to reign with the Lord Jesus Christ when He returns and we are glorified. Revelation 20:6, which speaks of the millennial kingdom, says we will be "priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him

for a thousand years." Revelation 22:5 shows that our reign will continue in the eternal state that follows the millennial kingdom. I assume our priesthood will also continue in the eternal state (see Rev. 22:3-5), but every person or being dwelling in God's eternal kingdom (which excludes those in the lake of fire) will be perfectly submitted to God in a love relationship.

I'll comment briefly on the translations of the *King James Version* and the *New King James Version* here in verse 10. They have "us" instead of "**them**" and "we shall reign" instead of "**they will reign.**" Also, in verse 9 they have "redeemed us" instead of "**purchased men.**" With the translation of the KJV and NKJV, the twenty-four elders would be singing this song about themselves. Those who accept that translation typically believe that the twenty-four elders are human representatives of the church; they don't believe that they are high level angelic beings. I'm confident that the translation of the NASB is correct here. Every other translation I have looked at is in agreement with the NASB here, including the NIV, the *Amplified Bible*, the *New English Bible*, the *New Testament in Modern English* by J. B. Phillips, the *New Living Translation*, the *Contemporary English Version*, the RSV, the NRSV, the *New American Bible*, and the *Jerusalem Bible*. Also, the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (fourth revised edition) has the Greek text followed by the NASB, and they indicate that, from their point of view, that Greek text "is certain." There is widespread agreement that there are several places in the King James and New King James Versions of the book of Revelation where errors in the Greek texts behind those translations led to errors in the translations.

REVELATION 5:11. **"Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,"** The NKJV has, "the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." The word "**myriads**" comes from the Greek "murias, murianos," which was sometimes used of a literal ten thousand, but also was used of a very large number, not limited to a literal ten thousand.

REVELATION 5:12. **"saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches [or, wealth] and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.'**" The BAGD Greek Lexicon and the NIV have "**praise**" here and in verse 13 instead of "**blessing.**" Note that Rev. 4:11 says that God the Father is worthy to receive "glory and honor and power." Also see Rev. 5:13; 7:12. As I commented under Rev. 4:11, things like "glory, honor, and power" already belong to God by virtue of who He is and what He has done, and that certainly includes the "wisdom" mentioned in Rev. 5:12 and 7:12. It's rather obvious that people cannot give

wisdom to God. He receives these things from His worshippers in the sense that they are ascribed to Him. The "blessing (or, praise)" of Rev. 5:12, 13; 7:12 and the "thanksgiving" of Rev. 7:12 are in a different category; such things can truly be given to God by people and angels in worship.

REVELATION 5:13. **"And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne [God the Father], and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.' "** The praise and worship of heaven pictured in Revelation chapters 4 and 5 expands here to include the entire universe. There is some uncertainty whether the devil and his followers are included here. Some say yes, and some say no. I'm not 100% sure, but I'm sure that whichever way this question is answered, it must not be allowed to obscure the fact that the emphasis of this verse is on genuine praise and worship of God the Father and God the Son.

The wording of this verse seems to include all creatures, including the enemies of God. On the other hand, the devil isn't going to worship God in the way His angelic beings and His people worship Him, but the devil will be forced to bow his knee before the Father and the Son and to admit their glory, honor, dominion, etc. I'll read PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11, "For this reason also, God [God the Father] highly exalted Him [the Lord Jesus Christ], and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name [[excluding, of course, the name of God the Father. We see the Persons of God the Father and God the Son here in verses 9-11, as we so often do in the Bible; we are not seeing the divine nature and the human nature of Jesus, which is a oneness point of view.]], (10) so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW [my emphasis], of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

REVELATION 5:14. **"And the four living creatures kept saying 'Amen.' And the elders fell down and worshiped."** The twenty-four elders falling down to worship the Lord Jesus Christ with the Father would be totally inappropriate if He were not deity with the Father and the Spirit - He is! The book of Revelation strongly emphasizes the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. It also clearly shows the distinction of Persons between God the Father and the Son of God (and the Holy Spirit).

A FEW BRIEF EXCERPTS FROM IRVIN BAXTER'S "WHAT DO YOU MEAN BORN AGAIN?" Baxter encourages his readers, viewers, listeners to request this six page article.

"The importance of this subject is shown in what Jesus said, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God' (John 3:3)" (page 1). "Thus, in plain language an individual must repent of his sins, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ by immersion, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (page 3). "When an individual is baptized, he should examine himself to be sure that he is leaving the world behind once for all" (page 4). It is certainly true that when we become Christians we should examine ourselves to be sure that we are leaving the world behind once for all.

Baxter has a section on pages 5 and 6 titled, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." I'll quote a small part of what he says here: "When a sinner hears the true gospel and truly believes, he will obey the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ by repentance, baptism in Jesus name, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost evidenced by speaking with other tongues (see our booklet "Tongues - Devilish or Divine?")." Many Christians believe that speaking with tongues is an important charismatic gift, but there aren't many who agree with Baxter and the UPCI that speaking with tongues is required for salvation. The New Testament puts quite a bit of emphasis on being baptized in water, and it wasn't optional. However, in agreement with most Christians, I don't believe the New Testament teaches that baptism IN JESUS NAME is required for baptism to be valid. (Furthermore, although I believe those who don't baptize in water, like the Salvation Army, are making a mistake, I wouldn't say that they cannot be saved.) As we have discussed in this paper, Matt. 28:19 suffices to demonstrate that Jesus taught baptism in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, and even more important is the fact that the New Testament teaches the three Persons of the Trinity, which is rejected by Baxter and the UPCI. If they didn't wrongly reject the Trinity the issue of being baptized in Jesus' name would lose its significance for them. I'm praying that large numbers of oneness Christians will see the Trinity in the Bible. I believe this is very important! Most Christians need to humble themselves before God and seek Him for the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches.

At the end of this six-page paper the reader is given the e-mail address to a person on staff at Baxter's EndTime Ministries "if you need to find a good Bible-believing church." It is clear that you will be directed to a UPCI church or another church that has the same doctrine. They certainly aren't going to direct you to a church that is (from their point of view) part of the whore of Babylon.

I'LL ALSO GIVE A FEW BRIEF EXCERPTS FROM IRVIN BAXTER'S "WHY SO MANY CHURCHES AND WHICH IS RIGHT?" This seven page pamphlet was sent to me when I requested their chronological chart. On the first five pages Baxter argues that the Roman Catholic Church is Babylon, the great whore of the book of Revelation. Then in the middle of page 5 he has a heading that continues to the end of the pamphlet: "THE

MOTHER OF HARLOTS." These words come from Rev. 17:5. (See my paper on Revelation 14:6-19:21 on my internet site.) I'll quote part of what he says here: "Notice, first of all, that Catholicism was called a harlot. Now God is saying that she is not only a harlot but is also the 'Mother of Harlots.' A harlot is a woman who bears children having no husband.

Throughout the New Testament God's true church has been called the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:1-3 and Rev. 21:2). In order to be in the bride, we must take the name of the bridegroom. The way we can take the name of Jesus is through baptism (Gal. 3:27). Except we be baptized in the name, we cannot be in the bride.

... Until 325 A.D. this formula [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] was never used or recognized as valid. Then in 325 A.D. the Nicean Council was called by what has become the Catholic Church. At this council the mode of Baptism was changed from 'In the name of Jesus Christ' to 'Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' Also at this council the doctrine of the trinity was formulated. [I have demonstrated in this paper that Baxter's "historical" account is far from what actually happened.] This was the founding of the great whore, the 'Mother of Harlots.' [As I demonstrated earlier in this paper, and as the next paragraph verifies, Baxter teaches that the children of the harlot are the Protestants who baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I pray that his eyes will be opened to see that that very serious charge is WRONG!] She became a woman with no husband. She bore no man's name.

... Judgment is coming to Catholicism! Judgment is coming to Protestantism, her daughters. ... Remember, the point on which the entire issue turns is the formula of baptism used. ... The Bible prophesied that there would be many false 'Christian' churches - the Mother harlot and all of her daughter harlots. Their relationship is cemented by their common baptism." Baxter goes on to warn the "many honest-hearted and sincere individuals in these false churches" to come out of these churches, with the understanding that their eternal destiny is at stake; they need to join a church that Baxter's ministry can recommend. I'm confident that Baxter is seriously concerned for the eternal welfare of all the deceived Christians who have not been baptized in Jesus' name and who believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but I'm even more confident that he is wrong. The history of the Christian church demonstrates that it is rather easy to miss the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches.

May God's will be fully accomplished through this paper and His people be edified.

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