

The Godhead

Table of Contents

#1 “Godhead”	4
#2 Three Persons with “Godhood”	5
#3 “One God”	7
#4 God, the Father	8
#5 God, the Son	10
#6 God, the Holy Spirit	11
#7 The Incarnation - God in Human Flesh	12
#8 God in Human Flesh - Could Jesus be Tempted?	14
#9 The Godhead Contrasted with New Age Concepts	15
#10 The Godhead Contrasted with Mormonism	16
#11 The Godhead Contrasted with Jehovah’s Witnesses	18
#12 The Godhead Contrasted with Oneness Pentecostals	19
#13 The Godhead Contrasted with Unitarian Universalist	21
#14 The Godhead Contrasted with Islam (Muslims)	22
#15 The Godhead - Review	23
Addenda - Jehovah Witnesses on Jesus as God	26

References

A&G = Walter Bauer/ William F. Arndt/ F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (The Univ. of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1979)

AHD09 - *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition. Copyright © 2009 by Houghton Mifflin Company. [Dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

ASV - *American Standard Version*

CWM - *The Changing World of Mormonism* by Jerald and Sandra Tanner <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/changecontents.htm>

DCL05 - *The American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, Third Edition. Copyright © 2005 by Houghton Mifflin Company. [Dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

DCOM - Dictionary.com Unabridged. Based on the Random House Dictionary, © Random House, Inc. 2009. [Dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

ESV - *English Standard Version*

Gngrch = *Shorter Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, F. Wilbur Gingrich (The University of Chicago Press, 1973)

KJV - *King James Version*

MW09 - [Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary](http://www.merriam-webster.com). 2009. [Dictionary and Thesaurus - Merriam-Webster Online](http://www.merriam-webster.com)

NAS95 - *New American Standard Version*, 1995 edition

NKJV - *New King James Version*

TH = C. G. Wilke / C. L. Wilibald Grimm / Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Zondervan Pub. House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1962)

1828 Birth of American biblical lexicographer Joseph Henry Thayer. A Congregationalist pastor, Thayer's main interest was New Testament language and in 1886 he published his definitive "Greek_ English Lexicon of the New Testament."

VN = W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, William White, Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Thomas Nelson Pub., 1985)

WNWD05 - *Webster's New World Collegiate Dictionary* Copyright © 2005 by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio. [YourDictionary.com](http://www.yourdictionary.com)

WRUD98 - *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, © 1996, 1998 MICRA, Inc. [Dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)

#1 “Godhead”

I. American Language Definitions

Define the following words using a dictionary of the American Language.

- A. God
- B. Godhead
- C. Godhood
- D. Divine
- E. Deity
- F. Compare the following. Look these up in a dictionary.
 1. maiden**head**
 2. man**hood**
 3. mother**hood**
 4. child**hood**
 5. -**hood**

II. Context

What can be learned about the Godhead from the context of the following scriptures?

- A. **Acts 17:22-31**
- B. **Rom 1:18-25**
- C. **Col 2:8-15**

III. Original Word Definitions

You may wish to look up the following words if you have a *Vine’s Expository Dictionary* or a *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*. These are synonymous terms used to refer to God or the Godhead or Godhood in the New Testament. It is not critical that you look up these words, nor is it valuable to spend a lot of time on them. We are blessed to have excellent translations and will base our study on *context* and *harmony* of the English translations.

- *theos* (#2316) - “god”
- *theios* (#2304) - **Acts 17:29** (KJV, ASV, “godhead”; NAS95, NKJV, “divine nature”; ESV, “divine being”)
- *theiotEs* (#2305) - **Rom 1:20** (KJV, NKJV, “godhead”; NAS95, ESV, “divine nature”; ASV, “divinity”). From *theios*. To be distinguished from *theotEs*. VN
- *theotEs* (#2320) - **Col 2:9** (KJV, NKJV, ASV, “godhead”; NAS95, ESV, “deity”)

#2 Three Persons with “Godhood”

I. Definitions

Define the following words using a dictionary of the American Language.

A. Person

Note that some definitions do not fit our study. Choose the one that does. You will likely find it under the subheading, Theology.

B. Godhood (You do not need to redefine this word if you did so in the last lesson.)

C. Being

II. God, the Father

Note the phrase, “God the Father” in the following: **Jn 6:27; 1Co 8:6; Gal 1:1,3; 2Jn 1:3**
This phrase occurs often.

III. The Son of God

The following scriptures are among many that affirm the deity of Jesus Christ. Make notes relative to how each shows Jesus was and is God.

A. **Jn 1:1-3...14-18**

B. **Jn 5:18-23**

C. **Jn 8:56-59**

D. **Jn 20:28-31**

E. **Rom 9:5**

F. **Col 2:9**

IV. The Spirit of God

The following scriptures show that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person. Make notes relative to how each demonstrates the personality and/or deity of the Spirit.

A. **Gen 1:2**

B. **Mt 28:19; Rom 15:30; 2Co 13:14**

C. **Ac 5:3,4**

D. **1Co 2:10-11**

E. **1Co 12:7f**

V. “Trinity”

While the *word*, “Trinity” does not occur in Scripture, properly defined, the *concept* does.

A. Using a dictionary, define “Trinity”

B. Bible concepts conveyed by non-Biblical words and phrases

Are the following words in the Bible? Properly defined, can they connote Scriptural concepts?

“incarnate”; “universal church”; “local church”; “Bible” (in reference to the 66 books of our Bible)

C. “Three” or “One”? - contradictory?

Charles Dickens wrote in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859). “It was the **best of times**, it was the **worst of times**.” Contradictory? No - for in one sense it could be said to be “the best of times, and in another sense, “the worst of times.”

Likewise, “God” can be viewed as **three—persons**—but **one**—in **essence**, or nature of being.

D. Is “Trinity” the invention of the Council of Nicea in AD 325?

1. The **word** “trinity” is “Middle English *trinite*, from Anglo-French *trinité*, from Late Latin *trinitat-*, *trinitas* state of being threefold, from Latin *trinus* threefold” (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Trinity>). Tertullian (ca. AD 165-220) used the Latin word, *trinitas*, in discussing the “threeness aspect of God” (<https://bible.org/question/where-did-word-“trinity”-originate>). Whether his views were fully correct or not, it shows that the word from which we get “Trinity” did not have its origin in AD 325 with the council of Nicea as sometimes claimed.
2. The **idea** connoted in the word was long before the council of Nicea, revealed in the Scriptures, as seen in this study.

#3 “One God”

I. The Great and Foremost Commandment - Mk 12:28-30

- A. What commandment is most important of all?
- B. This is a quote from **Dt 6:5**. What statement precedes this commandment? (**v4**)

See **Dt 4:9-24...39-40; 6:4-9;18:9f**

II. “One”

- A. “The Lord is one!” (**Dt 6:4**) is set in contrast to what? **Dt 4:15-20, 32-35; 5:6-8; 6:13-14**
See also **Isa 40:18-26, esp. vv. 18,25; 45:5-7, 20-22; 46:5-11.**
- B. Discussing science fiction in comparison to reality one says, “There is only one ‘man!’”
What does he mean?
- C. Look up “one” in a dictionary of the American Language. Notice the varying definitions.
 - 1. Select one that if used in talking about “one God” would lead to confusion.
 - 2. Select one that is the closest to what is meant in the Bible by “one God.”

III. “You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only,” Mt 4:10.

- A. How could Israel be assured that Jehovah was the one and only God? **Ex. 13:14-15; Dt 4:32-35; 6:20-23.**
- B. What did Isaiah appeal to in order to encourage faith in and devotion to Jehovah as the one God?
 - 1. **Isa 40:12-17...18...25, 28-31; 42:5...8**
 - 2. **Isa 41:21-24; 43:8-13; 44:6-8, 24-28; 46:8-11**
 - 3. **Isa 41:8-10; 43:1; 44:1-2,21,24**
- C. David the king and psalmist composed a song in which He gave two reasons for serving the God he did. What are they.
 - 1. **Psa 19:1-6**
 - 2. **Psa 19:7f**
- D. Paul’s sermon in Athens about the one God, **Acts 17:22-31**
 - 1. List some of the differences Paul set forth between this one, true God and the gods of Athens
 - 2. What did Paul say was the “proof” that all men would one day be judged before this God?

#4 God, the Father

I. Divine Person

A. Called, "God the Father"

Jn 6:27; 1Co 8:6; Gal 1:1,3; 2Jn 1:3

B. Note how these scriptures show the characteristics of a person. Add your own notes.

1. **Gen 1:3f** – God said. Compare **Psa 33:6,9; 2Pt 3:4,5** ("promise" compared to "word of God" in creation). All through the Bible God is pictured as a being expressing in human language His will to mankind.
2. **Gen 1:26** – man "in His image" – rational being, capable of moral, ethical, esthetic thoughts. Compare **Acts 17:29-31**. See **Jn 4:24** – God is "spirit" – worship "in spirit"
3. God loves (**Jn 3:16**), has wise thoughts and purposes (**1Co 2:7f**), is full of lovingkindness (**Psa 136** – "mercy" KJV), compassion (**2Ch 36:15**), etc.
4. **Jn 14:8-11** - Jesus is the demonstration of the Father...his words & works (miracles).
5. **Jam 3:9** - Men are in the likeness of God
6. **1Pt 1:14-17** - Men to be holy in thought and conduct as God, our Father, is holy. He will judge us according to our work.

II. Not the Son

- A. "Father - Son" - **2Jn 1:3**, et al. (Note: One person may be both a Father and a Son, but not his *own* father or son.)
- B. **Jn 8:16-18** - How does this show that the Son and the Father are two separate persons?

III. Not the Holy Spirit

- A. **Eph 4:4-6**. How many different things or persons are listed?
- B. **Jn 14:16-17**. Define "another." See also **14:26; 15:26**.
- C. **Eph 2:15-18**. What is here said about
1. The Father?
 2. The Son?
 3. The Holy Spirit? #

IV. The Father's Role

The following reveal various facets about the nature and work of the Father. You can make notes in class as we look at them. (This list is not meant to be exhaustive.)

A. **1Co 8:6**

B. **Jn 3:16**

C. **Mt 11:27**

D. **Jn 5:36-45**

E. **Php 2:9-11**

F. **Jn 14:26; 15:26**

G. **Ac 1:7**

H. **Eph 1:3,9-10**

I. **1Pt 1:2**

J. **Jude 1:1**

K. **1Co 15:24**

#5 God, the Son

I. Pre-incarnate

["incarnate" - "(especially of a deity or spirit) embodied in flesh; in human form" *New Oxford Dict.*, 3rd edit.]

Make notes relative to how these scriptures show the person we know today as the Son of God had existence and deity before he came in flesh as Jesus the Christ.

- A. **Isa 9:6** (See **Lk 1:32-33; 2:11**)
- B. **Isa 40:3-5** (See **Mt 3:1-3; Mk 1:1-4; Lk 3:4-6; Jn 1:19...23**)
- C. **Jn 1:1-3,14**
- D. **Jn 8:23-24**
- E. **Jn 8:56-58**

II. Incarnate

See the scriptures and your notes on the previous lesson, "Three Persons with Godhood," Part III, The Son of God. Scriptures were considered there that affirm the deity of Jesus Christ.

Following are some scriptures sometimes used to deny that Jesus, while in the flesh, possessed Godhood just as the Father. Make notes in class on these as we study these.

- A. **Jn 14: 28** - "the Father is greater than I"
- B. **Php 2:6-7** - "equality with God...emptied himself"
- C. **Rev 3:14** - "beginning of the creation"
- D. **Col 1:15, 18** - "firstborn"
 - 1. "Firstborn" - connotation to *them* - preeminence, **Gen 49:3-4; 27:29,30; Psa 89:27; 2Ch 21:3**
 - 2. Context - "first place in everything"
- E. **Lk 2:52** - "kept increasing in wisdom"
- F. **Heb 5:8**, "he learned obedience"
- G. **Acts 10:38**, "God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power"

In another lesson, we will give attention to some other matters relative to his incarnation and deity.

III. Now

Make notes relative to how the following scriptures demonstrate the Godhood of Jesus now.

- A. **Heb 1:3,8;2:1-3**
- B. **Rev 5:11-14**

#6 God, the Holy Spirit

I. A Biblical Personage

- A. From beginning to end, **Gen 1:2...Rev 22:17**
- B. Vague and erroneous concepts
List some mistaken views about the nature of the Holy Spirit.
- C. Known by revelation - **1Co 14:37,38**
 - 1. Not through creation (**Rom 1:20**)
 - 2. Not through personal experiences

II. “The” “Holy” “Spirit”

- A. “Spirit” - determined by context.
To what does “spirit” refer in the following verses?
 - 1. **Jn 3:8** (first part)
 - 2. **Jam 2:26**
 - 3. **Heb 1:14; Mt 8:16**
 - 4. **Mt 1:18**
- B. “Holy”
“Holy” may include moral qualities, but it is not limited to that.
 - 1. What does it mean in **Isa 8:13,14**?
 - 2. Compare also **Psa 111:9** (see first and last line of the Psalm).
- C. “The”
Definite article. Compare: “The Book” (Bible); “The President”; “The Son of God.” The one, special, unique “Holy Spirit,” the third person in the Godhead.

III. A Divine Person, Interested and Involved in the Salvation of Man

- A. See scriptures in lesson, “Three Persons with Godhood.”
- B. Make notes relative to the rational, volitional attributes or actions of the Holy Spirit referred to in the following.
 - 1. **Jn 16:13**
 - 2. **Ac 15:28**
 - 3. **Ac 16:6**
 - 4. **Rom 15:30**
 - 5. **1Co 2:10-11**
 - 6. **1Co 12:7f**
 - 7. **Eph 4:30**
 - 8. **Heb 10:29**

#7 The Incarnation - God in Human Flesh

I. Definitions

Define the following words.

- A. Incarnation
- B. Human
- C. Spirit (i.e. spirit in man)
- D. Soul (i.e. soul in man)
- E. Man (i. e. as in “mankind,” not “male”)

II. Incarnation

As we discuss these in class, make notes relative to what these scriptures say about the incarnation.

- A. **Mt 1:23**
- B. **Lk 1:26-35**
- C. **Jn 1:1,14-15**
- D. **Jn 6:38-42, 62**
- E. **Jn 8:23-24,58**
- F. **Rom 1:3,4**
- G. **1Tim 3:16**
- H. **Heb 2:14-18**
- I. **Heb 10:5-10**
- J. **1Jn 4:1-3**
- K. **2Jn 7-11**
- L. See notes on these in previous lessons: **Php 2:5-8; Col 2:9.**

III. Spirit of Jesus

Observe in the following passages whether they speak of Jesus having one or two spirits (a human and a divine spirit). Make notes relative to what is said about his spirit/spirits.

Observe in Jesus what we learn about the GOD we serve!

A. **Mk 2:8**

B. **Mk 8:12**

C. **Lk 10:21**

D. **Lk 23:46**

E. **Jn 11:33**

F. **Jn 13:21**

#8 God in Human Flesh - Could Jesus be Tempted?

God “cannot be tempted by evil,” yet Jesus was “tempted in all things as we are.” How then could he be God in human flesh? We will study the following passages in class. Make appropriate notes. Some suggestions for study follow the references.

I. Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-13

Define “tempted.” Note the various possibilities in meaning. Take this into account in these passages and in the ones below.

II. Heb 2:17,18; 4:15

For thought: Compare Gen 29:31; Ex 3:7; 2Ki 20:5; 1Ch 28:9; Psa 139; Isa 40:27,28. Did God know man’s sorrows, intentions, innermost thoughts, before the incarnation?

III. James 1:13-15

Compare “God cannot be tempted” with “it is impossible for God to lie.” Referring to ability or character?

IV. Reminder

You may want to read books and commentaries discussing these passages to promote thinking, *but beware of unfounded assertions in what you read*. Remember: let context and harmony rule any interpretations.

#9 The Godhead Contrasted with New Age Concepts

Summation:

- **Monism** - all is one
 - “1. the doctrine that there is only one ultimate substance or principle, whether mind (idealism), matter (materialism), or some third thing that is the basis of both” WNWD05
 - Contrast **Gen 1:1...3...11...20...26,27.**
- **Pantheism** - since all is one, all is god (*pan-* all; *theos-* god)
 - “the doctrine that God is not a personality, but that all laws, forces, manifestations, etc. of the universe are God; the belief that God and the universe are one and the same” WNWD05
 - Compare **Rom 1:22-23.**
- **You are god** - since all is one, and all is god, then you are god.
 - Compare **Gen 3:5.**
- **Christ** - “Christ” is the consciousness that you are god
 - Note **Mt 24:4,5.**
- **Reincarnation** - It is necessary to be reincarnated to reach higher levels of Christ consciousness, perfection. Man evolves in godhood as he sees himself as god.
 - “3. the doctrine that the soul reappears after death in another and different bodily form” WNWD05
 - Compare **Heb 9:27.**
- **Morals/Salvation** - Since all is god, and you are then god, there is no absolute standard of morals set by an eternal Creator Being. Morals are relative being determined by the god of self. There is then no objective “evil,” no accountability before a rational, eternal, omnipotent God, and thus no need for salvation from sin, i.e. the “gospel.”
 - See **Rom 1:24f; 3:23,24.**
- **Channeling** - seeking guidance by consulting the dead and accessing their knowledge, rather than seeking guidance through the revelation of God’s prophets
 - “n. The act or practice of serving as a medium through which a spirit guide purportedly communicates with living persons.” AHD09
 - See **Dt 18:9-22.**

Note how these ideas progress from one to the other, each building on the previous concept.

We will discuss these in class in light of our previous studies about the Godhead.

#10 The Godhead Contrasted with Mormonism

Quotes below are from <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/changecontents.htm>, *The Changing World of Mormonism* by Jerald and Sandra Tanner. Quotes from this site are indicated by “CWM.”

Summation:

• God the Father

- God the Father was once a man like us and then became God

CWM: By the year 1844 Joseph Smith had completely disregarded the teachings of the *Book of Mormon* [see Alma 11:26-31, “Zeezrom said: Is there more than one God? And he answered, No.” srf], for he declared that God was just an exalted man and that men could become Gods. He stated as follows:

First, **God himself**, who sits enthroned in yonder heavens, **is a man like unto one of yourselves**, that is the great secret.... I am going to tell you **how God came to be God**. We have imagined that God was God from all eternity.... **God himself; the Father of us all dwelt on an earth the same as Jesus Christ himself did.... You have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves....** No man can learn you more than what I have told you (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, pp.613-14). p. 173 [bold mine]

CWM: Apostle LeGrand Richards wrote a letter to Morris L. Reynolds on July, 1966, in which he stated: “There is a statement often repeated in the Church, and while it is not in one of the Standard Church Works, it is accepted as Church doctrine, and this is: ‘**As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become.**’” p. 177 [bold mine]

- God the Father was begotten by His God the Father

CWM: “We were begotten by our Father in Heaven; the person of **our Father in Heaven was begotten on a previous heavenly world by His Father; and again, He was begotten by a still more ancient Father**; and so on, from generation to generation...” (*The Seer*, p.132). p. 175 [bold mine]

- God the Father dwelt on the earth like us

CWM: The Mormon church teaches that God the Father had a Father, and that God’s Father also had a Father, and so on. President Brigham Young claimed: “He [God] is our Father—the Father of our spirits, and **was once a man in mortal flesh as we are, and is now an exalted being**. How many Gods there are, I do not know ... *God has once been a finite being ...* ‘ (Journal of Discourses, vol. 7, p.333).

CWM: Orson Pratt explains further: “**The Gods who dwell in the Heaven ... have been redeemed from the grave in a world which existed before the foundations of this earth were laid**. They and the Heavenly body which they now inhabit were **once in a fallen state ... they were exalted also, from fallen men to Celestial Gods** to inhabit their Heaven forever and ever” (*The Seer*, p.23). p. 175 [bold mine]

- We can become gods like God

CWM: Brigham Young added further statements about men becoming Gods: “The Lord created you and me for the purpose of becoming Gods like himself ... **We are created ... to become Gods like unto our Father in heaven**” (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 3, p.93). p. 175 [bold mine]

- God the Father has a body with parts like hands, eyes, etc.

CWM: Bruce R. McConkie, who is now an Apostle, has also written on this subject: “... God ... is a personal Being, a holy and *exalted man*, a glorified, *resurrected Personage having a tangible body of flesh and bones*, an anthropomorphic Entity ...” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, p.250). p. 177 [bold mine]

- **The Heavenly Mother**

- God has a wife, our “Eternal Mother”

CWM: This *doctrine* that there is a *Mother in Heaven* was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church (Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund) ... they said that "man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents ..." (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, p.516). p. 178

- Man was born of these Heavenly Parents, The Father God and Mother God

CWM: Although the Mormon leaders do not worship God's wife, they teach that she is our “Eternal Mother.” Apostle Bruce R. McConkie made these interesting comments:

“Implicit in the Christian verity that all men are the spirit children of an *Eternal Father* is the usually unspoken truth that they are also the offspring of an *Eternal Mother*. An exalted and glorified Man of Holiness (Moses 6:57) could not be a Father unless a *Woman of like glory, perfection, and holiness was associated with him as a Mother*. The **begetting of children makes a man a father and a woman a mother whether we are dealing with man in his mortal or immortal state. This doctrine that there is a Mother in Heaven was affirmed in plainness by the First Presidency of the Church** (Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund ... they said that “man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of heavenly parents ...” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966,p.516). p. 178 [bold mine]

- **Jesus Christ**

Jesus was conceived in the womb of Mary by a sexual act between her and God the Father, just like all other men are conceived.

CWM: Mormon theology...teaches that God is a man and that **Christ was conceived through a sexual act between Mary and God the Father**. In other words, the birth of Christ is considered a natural, rather than a miraculous occurrence. Joseph Fielding Smith, Jr., said: “The birth of the Savior was a *natural occurrence* unattended with any degree of mysticism, and **the Father God was the literal parent of Jesus in the flesh** as well as in the spirit” (*Religious Truths Defined*, p.44). The late President Joseph Fielding Smith declared: “Christ was begotten of God. He was not born without the aid of Man, and **that Man was God!**” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, vol. 1, p.18). pp. 179-180 [bold mine]

CWM: Apostle Bruce R. McConkie further explains:

“... Christ was begotten by an Immortal Father *in the same way that mortal men are begotten by mortal fathers*” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 1966, pp.546-47). p. 180

CWM: The Mormon writer Carlfred B. Broderick made these comments: ...

In the light of their understanding that **God is a procreating personage of flesh and bone**, latter-day prophets have made it clear that The Savior was fathered by a personage of flesh and bone, ..." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn, 1967, pp.100-101).

President Brigham Young had this to say concerning the birth of Christ: “... **Mary the wife of Joseph had another husband**” (*Deseret News*, October 10, 1866). p. 180 [bold mine]

We will discuss these in class in light of our previous studies about the Godhead.

Note: The Tanners have some excellent material concerning the teachings of Mormonism if you wish to pursue it further. <http://www.utlm.org/>

#11 The Godhead Contrasted with Jehovah's Witnesses

Summation:

- There is only one person rightly called the Almighty God. There are not three persons equally possessing Godhood.

“Never was there a more deceptive doctrine advanced than that of the trinity” (*Reconciliation*, 1928) “...sincere persons who want to know the true God and serve him find it a bit difficult to love and worship a complicated, freakish-looking, three-headed God” (*Let God Be True*, 1946) “Thus, for example, the Bible shows that there is only one God, the Most High, the Almighty. And that the Son, as the First-born, the Only-begotten and ‘the creation by God,’ had a beginning” (*From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*, p. 164).

- Jesus Christ is a created being, and is not God. While on the earth Jesus was a perfect man, but he was not God in the flesh.

In the JW version of the Bible, John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was a god.” [emphasis added] “...that is the Word was a powerful godlike one. Clearly, Jesus is not Almighty God.” (*You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, 1982., p. 40). “...no distinct worship is to be rendered to Jesus Christ now glorified in heaven. Our worship is to go to Jehovah God.” (*The Watchtower*, Jan. 1, 1954, p. 31.)

- The Holy Spirit is a force, not a divine, rational Being.

“But the holy spirit has no personal name. The reason for this is that the holy spirit is not an intelligent person. It is the impersonal, invisible active force that finds its source and reservoir in Jehovah God and that he uses to accomplish his will.” (*Let Your Name Be Sanctified*, p. 269).

- Jesus was Michael the archangel who became a man.

The Watchtower, May 15, 1963, p. 307; *The New World*, 284. “...the Son of God was known as Michael before he came to earth” (*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, p. 218). “It proves that Michael the archangel is no other than the only-begotten Son of God, now Jesus Christ. The very name Michael means ‘Who is like God?’ and indicates that Jehovah God is without like or equal and that Michael his archangel is his great Champion and Vindicator” (*New Heavens and a New Earth*, pp. 30-31).[Note: In the *Watchtower Magazine* of Nov., 1879, they said, “Michael is not the Son of God.” In *Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 7, p. 188 (1917) they said Michael in Rev 12:7 is the pope of Rome. *Index of WatchTower Errors*, David Reed, p. 85.]

Evidently they also teach that after he was resurrected he was Michael the Archangel (?): “Read carefully the following Bible account: ‘War broke out in heaven: Michael [who is the resurrected Jesus Christ] and his angels battled with the dragon’” (*You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, 1982, p. 21).

- Jesus did not rise from the dead in his physical body.

“The King, Christ Jesus, was put to death in the flesh and was resurrected an invisible spirit creature.” *Let God Be True*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, p. 122, Edition 1946. “In His resurrection He was no more human. He was raised as a spirit creature.” *The Kingdom is at Hand*, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, p. 258. “We deny that He was raised in the flesh, and challenge any statement to that effect as being unscriptural.” (*Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 7, p. 57). His fleshly body “was disposed of by Jehovah God, dissolved into its constituent elements or atoms.” (*Watchtower*, 9/1/1953, p. 518). “In order to convince Thomas of who He was, He used a body with wound holes.” (*Live Forever*, p. 145)

We will discuss these in class in light of our previous studies about the Godhead.

See Addenda - Jehovah Witnesses on Jesus as God at end of lessons.

#12 The Godhead Contrasted with Oneness Pentecostals

Summation:

- “One God” means one person, not one godhood.
- “The Father,” “The Son,” and “The Holy Spirit” are three roles or manifestations of God, not three persons. These are titles, or names, for God—the one person is known as “Jesus.”
- “The Son of God,” since that represents God’s humanity, did not exist before the incarnation. Jesus “sonship” began with his birth and will have an end.
- “Person” denotes a human being, with body, soul, and spirit. To say there are three “persons” possessing “Godhood” is a departure from the fundamental biblical doctrine of “one God.”

The following is not from an authorized oneness pentecostal web site. But it does serve to introduce the oneness pentecostal groups. (<http://www.joywell.org/apologetics/oneness.html>)

Those who observe oneness theology are known by several different names. They commonly refer to themselves as “Apostolic” or “Jesus’ name” churches. Most outsiders refer to them as “oneness,” “Jesus-onlys,” “modalists,” “monarchianists,” “Sabellians,” etc. By far, the largest oneness group is the United Pentecostal Church International (UPC, or UPCI) which boasts of over 700,000 members in the United States.

...the oneness pentecostals teach only one person in one God. They believe the Father and the Holy Spirit are merely different “manifestations” or “modes” of the one God, Jesus. This is what is formally called modalism.

As stated above, oneness pentecostals see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as mere “modes” or “manifestations” of God in various activities. During the creation, they see God as being in the “Father” mode; during the incarnation, they see God as being in the “Son” mode; and when working in people, they see God as being in the “Holy Spirit” mode. Any relationship between the Father and the Son is explained as a relationship between the “dual natures” of Jesus, that is between Jesus’ divine “nature” and Jesus’ human “nature.” In other words, when Jesus prays His human “nature” is supposedly speaking to His Divine “nature.” They fail to understand that this would mean He was merely talking to Himself. They claim that because “God is one”; any personal relationship between the “modes” of God is not real, but only apparent.

The following quotes are from: *The Oneness Of God*, by David K. Bernard, J.D. Mr. Bernard is evidently one of their leading apologists and this is therefore a reliable representation of their views.

The second class of true monotheists believes in one God, but further believes that the fulness of the Godhead is manifested in Jesus Christ. They believe that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are manifestations, modes, offices, or relationships that the one God has displayed to man ... In the twentieth century, those who believe in both the indivisible oneness of God and the full deity of Jesus Christ frequently use the term Oneness to describe their belief. They also use the terms One God and Jesus Name as adjectives to label themselves, while opponents sometimes use the misleading or derogatory designations “Jesus Only” and “New Issue.” (The label “Jesus Only” is misleading because to trinitarians it implies a denial of the Father and the Holy Spirit. However, Oneness believers do not deny the Father and Spirit, but rather see Father and Spirit as different roles of the One God who is the Spirit of Jesus.)

(<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/pentecostal/One-Ch1.htm>)

It is clear that the terms *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* cannot imply three separate persons, personalities, wills, or beings. They can only denote different aspects or roles of one Spirit-being - the one God. They describe God’s relationships to man, not persons in a Godhead. We use *Father* to emphasize God’s roles as Creator, Father of spirits, Father of the born-again believers, and Father of

the humanity of Jesus Christ. We use *Son* to mean both the humanity of Jesus Christ and God as He manifested Himself in the flesh for the purpose of man's salvation. We use *Holy Ghost* to emphasize God's active power in the world and among men, particularly His work in regeneration.
(<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/pentecostal/One-Ch6.htm>)

The Sonship - or the role of the Son - began with the child conceived in the womb of Mary... From all of these verses, it is easy to see that the Son is not eternal, but was begotten by God almost 2000 years ago ...

Not only did the Sonship have a beginning, but it will, in at least one sense, have an ending. ...

After Satan is cast into the lake of fire and all sin is judged at the last judgment (Revelation 20), there will be no further need for the Son to exercise the throne of power. Jesus Christ will cease acting in His Sonship role and will be God forever.

(<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/pentecostal/One-Ch5.htm>)

Speaking of God as a person does not do justice to Him. The word *person* connotes a human being with a human personality - an individual with body, soul, and spirit. Thus, we limit our conception of God if we describe Him as a person. For this reason, this book has never said there is one person in the Godhead or God is one person. The most we have said is that Jesus Christ is one person, because Jesus was God manifested in flesh as a human person.

(<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/pentecostal/One-Ch12.htm>)

#13 The Godhead Contrasted with Unitarian Universalist

Note: “Biblical Unitarians” are different in belief.

Summation:

Belief varies widely - there is no standard of what you should believe. Following are some examples of Unitarian belief. It would be a mistake to attribute any one of these to every Unitarian—each is “free” to believe what they wish. Note: they may describe themselves attaching “Christian.”

- Some believe in God; some do not and are atheists. A Unitarian “may identify with Atheism, Agnosticism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Humanism, Judaism, Paganism, Wicca or with other philosophical or religious traditions and hold wide-ranging opinions on topics like the afterlife, God, and scripture.” Thus, you can believe anything you wish, or not believe whatever you wish.
- Some equate God with a “force,” and some call it “love,” mystery,, “spirit of life,” etc.
- Some view God as having feminine aspects and use goddess imagery.
- Some see God as subjective senses and experiences.
- Jesus is not the Son of God.
- The gospel story of Jesus is not literal history.

#14 The Godhead Contrasted with Islam (Muslims)

Islam is monotheistic, believing in one God, Allah — but *the Allah of of Islam is NOT the same God as the God of the Bible.*

- Islam denies there are other beings that are God (i.e. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit).

“91. No son did Allah beget, nor is there any god along with Him. (If there were many gods), behold, each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have lorded it over others! Glory to Allah! (He is free) from the (sort of) things they attribute to Him!” Sura 23:91

“Christ Jesus the son of Mary was a Messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His Messengers. Do not Say “Trinity” : desist: it will be better for you: for Allah is One God” Sura 4:171

“...the Christians call Christ the Son of Allah. That is a saying from their mouth; (in this) they but imitate what the Unbelievers of old used to say. Allah’s curse be on them. How they are deluded away from the Truth!” Sura 9:30

- Allah, the God of Islam, is not the one God of the Bible, for Allah can have no son.

“88. They say: “(Allah) Most Gracious has begotten a son!” 89. Indeed you have put forth a thing most monstrous! 90. At it the skies are ready to burst, the earth to split asunder, and the mountains to fall down in utter ruin. 91. That they should invoke a son for (Allah) Most Gracious.92. For it is not consonant (appropriate) with the majesty of (Allah) Most Gracious that He should beget a son.” Sura 19:88-91

“101. ... how can He have a son when He has no consort?” Sura 6:101 [Mistakenly assume “son” implies God must have a “consort” to have a son, i.e., they believe “son” connotes God must have sexual intercourse with a woman. They do believe God created Jesus in Mary, just like he created Adam from the earth—a “virgin birth”—but do not believe he is the Son of God.]

- Deny the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus

“157. That they said (in boast), “We killed Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah”;- but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they did not kill him” Sura 4:157.

“Islamic tradition says someone else died in the place of Jesus, perhaps Judas Iscariot, or Simon, who carried the cross.” Mark Mayberry, *Islam: A Study Of The Muslim Religion The Quran VS The Bible*

“Ahmad Dedat is one of the leading public defenders of Islam. He claims the following:

Throughout the length and breadth of the 27 books of the New Testament, there is not a single statement made by Jesus Christ that ‘I was dead, and I have come back from the dead;’ The Christian has [wrongly] been belaboring the word resurrection. Again and again, by repetition, it is conveyed that it [the resurrection] is proving a fact... [But] Jesus Christ never uttered the word that ‘I have come back from the dead,’ in the 27 books of the New Testament, not once.” Josh McDowell and John Gilchrist, *The Islam Debate*, (San Bernadino, CA: Here’s Life Publishers, 1983), p. 172. (https://jashow.org/articles/what-does-islam-teach-about-salvation-part-1/#cite_note-10)

- Jesus is but a prophet like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, not an eternal, Divine being

“We believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma’il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord, we make no difference between one and another of them: and we bow to Allah (in Islam).” Sura 2:136

- Deny Jesus’ sacrifice is necessary to be saved, yet this is the core of the gospel

They do say Allah forgives, but it is not based on the atoning death of Jesus Christ, the core of the gospel. “They say: “Become Jews or Christians if you would be guided (to salvation).” You say: “Nay! (I would rather) the Religion of Abraham the True, and he joined not gods with Allah.” Sura 2:135

#15 The Godhead - Review

1. "Godhead" refers to
 - a. The Father, as the "head" of Christ
 - b. Godhood
 - c. Divine authority
 - d. The role Jesus was in when he created the world
2. "Godhood" refers to
 - a. The quality or state of being God
 - b. What men can attain when they come to know themselves fully
 - c. God conceived apart from his body
 - d. The mystery of the gospel
3. The one "God" the Bible reveals is
 - a. A supernatural, all-powerful, male deity
 - b. The world and all in it, including ourselves
 - c. One person, Jesus, known by the different titles, "Father," "Son, and "Holy Spirit"
 - d. None of the above
4. "The Lord our God is one Lord" means
 - a. There is only person in the Godhead
 - b. God is one with the world
 - c. The Lord God of the Hebrew nation is unique among gods—He is the only one who can rightly be called "God"
 - d. None of the above
5. One reason it is so important to recognize the Lord is our God is the one God
 - a. We will then fear Him only and keep His commandments
 - b. It is Church of Christ doctrine
 - c. Those who do not recognize this are morons
 - d. It is not that important. It is a personal choice without serious consequences
6. In evidence that the Lord revealed in the Scriptures is the one God is/are
 - a. Fulfilled prophecy
 - b. The vastness, complexity, and order of the created universe
 - c. The resurrection of Jesus from the grave
 - d. All of the above
7. God, the Father is
 - a. A Divine Person
 - b. Not the Son of God
 - c. Not the Holy Spirit
 - d. All of the above

8. God, the Son
 - a. Became God after the Father created him
 - b. Is eternal, was always God, was God in his fleshly state, and is God now
 - c. God, the Father, is the only Almighty, eternal God. The Son is not God, but a highly exalted, created being
 - d. Is not a person, but a mode of the one person, Jesus

9. God, the Holy Spirit
 - a. Is not a person, but the force by which God executes His will
 - b. Is not a person, but a mode Jesus employed to work within people
 - c. Is the Bible
 - d. Is the third person of the Godhead, equally eternal, powerful, and wise with the Father and the Son

10. In His incarnate state
 - a. Jesus was not God
 - b. Was "Christ" because he recognized, that he, like all of us, have the potential to be god
 - c. Was both God and man—God in human flesh
 - d. Gave up his divine nature

11. Jesus was human
 - a. In that he inhabited a human body and experienced all that entails
 - b. In every sense of the word "human"
 - c. Because he had a human spirit in addition to His divine spirit
 - d. All of the above

12. Jesus was the Son of God
 - a. In that he perfectly reflected the nature, will, love, and purpose of God, the Father, in his redemptive work for mankind
 - b. Because the Father had a sexual relationship with Mary through which Jesus was conceived
 - c. Because he was born of a virgin
 - d. None of the above

13. Jesus
 - a. Did not know he was God
 - b. Knew he was God, exercised the prerogatives of deity, and received worship
 - c. Became God when he became Christ
 - d. Claimed to be God, but showed no evidences that he was

14. True or False? Who teaches this (Use letters to answer: B=Bible; NA=New Age; M=Mormonism; JW=Jehovah's Witnesses; OP=Oneness Pentecostals; I=Islam)?
 - a. Jesus possesses Godhood and is worthy of worship. T/F
 - b. There is nothing that is not God. T/F
 - c. The Father was once a man like us and became God. T/F
 - d. The Godhead consists of three persons. T/F

- e. "Person" denotes a human being, with body, soul, and spirit. T/F
- f. The Holy Spirit is a force, not a divine, rational being. T/F
- g. While on the earth, Jesus was a perfect man, but not God in the flesh. T/F
- h. There is one God, but Jesus is not His Divine Son T/F [I](#)
- i. God has a wife, our "Heavenly Mother." T/F
- j. "One God" means one person. T/F
- k. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three rational, divine beings, worthy of man's worship and service. T/F
- l. Jesus was a prophet, but was not crucified as an atonement for the sins of men T/F

Addenda - Jehovah Witnesses on Jesus as God

John 1:1

“the Word was God”—a clear statement that Jesus (“the Word” v14) is God.

◆ New World Trans. - “Word was a god.”

Justification: Definite article used with *theon* in **Jn 1:1e** and not with *theos* in **Jn 1:1d**, therefore a difference - in one case refers to Jehovah and in the other to Jesus Christ, another, inferior, and lesser god.

● Inconsistent

This does not follow, for in some verses and even same sentences the article is used with one occurrence of *theos* and not with another form when it is clear the same God is spoken of. Even the New World Trans. makes no distinction in these other verses. E.g....

Jn 3:2a, no article; 2b, article - both times NWT translates, “God”

Jn 13:3a, no article; 3b, article - both times NWT translates, “God”

[NW or NWT = New World Translation, the Jehovah Witnesses’ translation)

● Other translations

KJV, ASV, NKJV, NASV, NIV, RSV, NRSV - “the Word was God.”

◆ New World Trans. Appendix, p. 776b

Says rendering is correct because “all the doctrine of sacred scriptures bears out the correctness of this rendering.” HERE is the reason they so translated - because of THEIR DOCTRINE - NOT because the text or the syntax demanded it. But, this doctrine is the very thing at issue!

◆ Thayer

JWs cite Thayer’s Lexicon on *theos*:

“2. **Whether Christ is called *God* must be determined** from John 1:1; 20:28; 1 John 5:20; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8f, etc.; **the matter is still in dispute among theologians** cf. *Grimm*, *Institutio theologiae dogmaticae*, edition 2, p. 228ff (and the discussion (on 958 Romans 9:5) by Professors Dwight and Abbot in the *Journal of the Society for Biblical Literature*, etc. as above, especially, pp. 42ff, 113ff).” [bold mine]

Commentary

- TH is both a lexicon AND a *commentary* (see preface, p. vii). The *italicized* words are definitions; the rest is either Grimm or Thayer’s comments. The ONLY italicized word in this quote is “God” (and *Grimm*, who is simply cited). TH points out that the word itself, *theos*, is used of “*a god, a goddess*” but sometimes “spoken of *the only and true GOD*.”
- According to the publisher’s preface in the Thayer published by Baker Book House, Thayer was a Unitarian and considered Christ a mere man and the Holy Spirit an impersonal force.

"A word of caution is necessary. Thayer was a Unitarian, and the errors of this sect occasionally come through in the explanatory notes. The reader should be alert for both subtle and blatant denials of such doctrines as the Trinity (Thayer regarded Christ as a mere man and the Holy Spirit as an impersonal force emanating from God), the inherent and total depravity of fallen human nature, the eternal punishment of the wicked, and Biblical inerrancy.” (Joseph Henry Thayer: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, Publishers Introduction, page VII, Baker Book House)

◆ Mantey

JWs cite Julius Mantey, a distinguished Greek scholar, as supporting their translation, “a god,” in **Jn 1:1**. Following is Mantey’s reponse ... (<<http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/doctrine/deity10.htm>>)

This study is written by George Zeller (introductory comments) and by Julius Mantey (main article). It provides some help with respect to the erroneous teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses. Jehovah's Witnesses deny that the Lord Jesus Christ is God and they deny that He is Jehovah. They teach instead that He is a mere creature, an exalted angel that God created. They wrongly teach that He was the first creature that God created, and then God, through Him, created everything else. This article deals with their mistranslation of John 1:1, a verse which clearly declares that Jesus Christ is God.

Jehovah's Witnesses wrongly translate John 1:1 as follows: "Originally the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god" (New World Translation, 1960 edition, emphasis mine). In their Appendix they have an article explaining why they translate it this way and they quote from A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament by Dana and Mantey to justify their translation.

Julius Mantey, upon learning that he had been quoted, wrote a two page article showing that it is not proper to translate this verse as the Jehovah Witnesses had done. He entitled his article A Grossly Misleading Translation. Mantey skillfully explains the grammar of this verse and the significance of the absence of the Greek article in the last phrase of verse 1. Dr. Mantey's article is reproduced below in full:

A GROSSLY MISLEADING TRANSLATION

John 1:1 which reads "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," is shockingly mistranslated, "Originally the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god," in a New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures, published under the auspices of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Since my name is used and our Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament is quoted on page 744 to seek to justify their translation, I am making this statement.

The translation suggested in our Grammar for the disputed passage is, "the Word was deity." Moffatt's rendering is "the Word was divine." Williams' translation is, "the Word was God himself." Each translation reflects the dominant idea in the Greek, For, whenever an article does not precede a noun in Greek, that noun can either be considered as emphasizing the character, nature, essence or quality of a person or thing, as *theos* (God) does in John 1:1, or it can be translated in certain contexts as indefinite, as they have done.

If the Greek article occurred with both Word and God in John 1:1 the implication would be that they are one and the same person, absolutely identical. But John affirmed that "the Word was with (the) God" (the definite article preceding each noun), and in so writing he indicated his belief that they were distinct and separate personalities. Then John next stated that the Word was God, i.e., of the same family or essence that characterizes the Creator. Or, in other words, that both are of the same nature, and that nature is the highest in existence, namely, divine.

Examples where the noun in the predicate does not have an article, as in the above verse, are: John 4:24, "God is spirit" (not a spirit; 1 John 4:16, "God is love" (not a love); and Matthew 13:39, "the reapers are angels," i.e., they are the type of beings known as angels. In each instance the noun in the predicate was used to describe some quality or characteristic of the subject, whether as to nature or type.

The apostle John in the context of the introduction to his gospel is pulling all the stops out of language to portray not only the deity of Christ but also His equality with the Father. He states that the Word was in the beginning, that He was with God, that He was God and that all creation came into existence through Him and that not even one thing exists which was not created by Christ. What else could be said that John did not say? In John 1:18 he explained that Christ has been so intimate with the Father that He was in His bosom and that He came to earth to exhibit or portray God. But if we had no other statement from John except that which is found in John 14:9, "He that has seen me has seen the Father," that would be enough to satisfy the seeking soul that Christ and God are the same in essence and that both are divine and equal in nature.

Besides, the whole tenor of New Testament revelation points in this direction. Compare Paul's declaration in Colossians 1:19 for instance: "That all the divine fullness should dwell in Him," or the statement in Hebrews 1:3, "He is the reflection of God's glory and the perfect representation of His being, and continues to uphold the universe by His mighty word" (Williams' translation). And note the sweeping, cosmic claim recorded in Matthew 28:19, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth."

And, if we contrast with that the belittling implication that Christ was only a god, do we not at once detect the discord? Does not such a conception conflict with the New Testament message

both in whole and in part? Why, if John, in the midst of the idolatry of his day, had made such a statement would not the first century hearers and readers have gotten a totally inadequate picture of Christ who we believe is the Creator of the universe and the only Redeemer of humanity?

Julius Robert Mantey, A.B., Th.D., Ph.D., D.D.
Professor of Greek and New Testament
Northern Baptist Theological Seminary
Chicago, Illinois

◆ “a god”?

What do JW's mean by “a god”?

"So the text is not saying that the Word (Jesus) was the same as the God *with whom* he was, but, rather that the Word was godlike, divine, a god" *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, p.212; italics in original.

“a god” like Moses - “you will be as God to him” **Ex 4:16**; “I will make you as God to Pharaoh” **Ex 7:1**

Both these texts have in view the Moses-Aaron relationship, Aaron being “your prophet” *as if* Moses was God. Deity was never attributed to Moses as it was to Jesus.

In the same way “in which powerful men, judges were addressed as ‘gods’” (John 10:34,35, *RS*; Ps. 82:1-6)” *Reasoning*, p. 213.

- The rulers were called “gods” in Psa 82 in view of their role as protectors & providers of the people (see cntxt), but this did not mean they were to be worshipped (**9:38**), or claim equality with God (**5:18f**), etc., as Jesus did.
- In this very context he was making claims that implied equality with God—perfect unity in knowledge, will, and power, **vv. 15,29-30**; ability to raise himself from the dead, **v. 18**; give eternal life, **v. 28**. The Jews understood the implications of what he was saying! **v. 33**. If they were mistaken, it would have been simple simply to correct their views that he was claiming deity—he didn’t, but rather continued in the vein that led to their strong opposition.
- Jesus points to the fact that they accepted the psalmist calling the civil rulers “gods.” Why? They believed “the word of God came” (used of divine revelation, **Gen 15:1**; **Jer 1:2,11**; **13:8**, etc.) to them “and the Scripture cannot be broken.” If they accepted the psalmist *on this basis*, how can they now say Jesus is blaspheming by calling himself “The Son of God,” when “the Father sanctified him and sent him into the world” and he evidenced his claims by the “works” (miracles) he performed (**ch.9**; see **10:19-21**)?

◆ “No one has seen God”

JW's argue that since no one has seen God, but people did see Jesus, therefore Jesus is not God.

“What did the apostle John mean when he wrote John 1:1” Did he mean that Jesus is himself God or perhaps that Jesus is one God with the Father? In the same chapter, verse 18, John wrote: ‘No one [‘no man,’ *KJ, Dy*] has ever seen God; the only Son [‘the only-begotten god.’ *NW*]. who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.’ (*RS*) Had any human seen Jesus Christ, the Son? Of course! So, then, was John saying that Jesus was God? Obviously not.” *Reasonings*, pp. 212-213

- Jesus also said men HAD “seen the Father”! **Jn 14:9**. Explain what Jesus meant in **Jn 14:9** and that serves to explain what is meant in **Jn 1:18**.
- “Seen” is sometimes used in the sense of “known” - e.g. **Jn 3:32**; **8:38**; **1Jn 3:6** (see KJV, ASV, “not (*ou*) seen him, neither (*oude*) known him”; **3Jn 11**. “Seeing” God literally with the human eyes (as JW's want to make this mean) would not result in understanding, or knowing, God, any more so than seeing another person causes one to know him.
- Context of **Jn 1:18** is the revelation of the true grace of God, **vv. 14-18**. “No one has seen God at any time,” i.e. so as to know the true, full grace of God, but Jesus, “who is in the bosom of the Father” (literally?), He has **explained** Him.” NWT, “the only-begotten god who is in the bosom [position] with the Father is the one that has **explained** him.” “explained” is put in contrast to “no one has seen.”

◆ “Son of God”

JW's make “Son of God” mean that he was *not* God. In discussing John 1:1, they say...

“So, then, was John saying that Jesus was God? Obviously not. Toward the end of his Gospel, John summarized matters, saying: ‘These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, [not God, but] the Son of God.’—John 20:31, *RS*.” *Reasonings*, p. 213.

In fact, the “Father-Son” relationship between Jesus and the Father was used to imply his equality with God ...

- He “explained” God, manifesting in fullness the glory of God’s true grace, **Jn 1:14,16-18**. This is in the context beginning with affirmation of his eternity, creative power, and deity, **vv. 1-3**.
- The Son had the power and authority to do whatever the Father did so that men should honor him “even as” they honor the Father, **Jn 5:17-23**. Note: The Jews took these claims as “making himself equal with God” and he not only did not deny it, but affirmed it, “Truly, truly...”!
- After Thomas confessed him as “My Lord and my God.” John said this was written so that men may believe Jesus is the Christ, the “Son of God.” **Jn 20:27,31**.
- His claim to be the “Son of God” was viewed as blasphemy by the Jews—“you, being a man, make yourself out to be God.” **Jn 10:33,36**. When the high priest asked Jesus if he was “the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One,” and Jesus answered, “I am,” the high priest accused him of “blasphemy.” **Mk 14:61-64**. The Jews did not believe the Messiah would be divine, and the fact that Jesus claimed such was one of the reasons they desired to kill him. So, what made the high priest accuse him of “blasphemy”—is it not his claim to be “the Son of God”? See **Jn 19:7**.
- John the Baptist said that “the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit” “is the Son of God.” **Jn 1:33-34**. Could any but a Divine Being “baptize in the Holy Spirit”?
- The demons believed that he, the “Son of God,” had power, not only to cast them out, but to “torment” them “before the time.” **Mt 8:29**. While men were given power to cast out demons, does it point to a prerogative of Deity to be able to “torment” them in a manner they expect to receive in judgment (“before the time” - cmpr **2Pt 2:4; Jude 6**)? Interestingly, James wrote, “You believe God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.” **Jam 2:19**.
- **1Jn 5:20**, “the Son of God...we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” Jesus Christ is the one John has associated with “eternal life” throughout this epistle, and here, if not exclusively, certainly, inclusively, he refers to the “Son of God” as “the true God and eternal life.”
- In **Rev 2:18**, “The Son of God” has “eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze.” In **1:15**, these terms are used to describe the one who claims, “I am the first and the last” (v. 17)—the only other three times these phrase is found are in **Isa 41:4; 44:6; 48:12**, where clearly applied to Jehovah God.

Jn 20:28

Thomas confessed Jesus to be “My Lord and my God!”

JWs claim this *not* prove Jesus is truly God...

◆ a god

- If Thomas was referring to Jesus as God, JWs say that would be OK if using “god” as it was used to refer to rulers in **Psa 82, Jn 10**. See notes above on this concept.
- In the same paragraph (? - this looks like a different argument), they say **Isa 9:6** “describes Jesus as ‘Mighty God,’ but not as the Almighty God” and that this is in harmony with Jesus “being described as ‘a god,’ or ‘divine.’ at John 1:1 (*NW, AT*).” *Reasonings*, p. 213. (*NW* = New World Translation; *AT* = American Translation by Goodspeed). See notes above on “a god” in **Jn 1:1**. As for Jesus being a “Mighty God” according to **Isa 9:6**, is there *more than one* “Mighty God”? Isaiah identifies the “mighty God” as Jehovah (“LORD”) in **10:20-21**.

◆ Exclamation

Another JW attempt to evade the force of this statement by Thomas is to say this was an unmeaning exclamation directed to no one like one might make today when surprised, “Oh, my God!”

- To impose a 20-21st century idiomatic exclamation in a first century setting is purely an arbitrary meaning imposed upon the text based on *current* practice and not on *biblical* precedent.
- If Thomas exclamation used “my Lord and my God” lightly and without meaning, would Jesus have reproved him or commended him as he did, **v. 29**?
- The KJV, NKJV, NAS95, ASV, NIV, and even the NWT indicate Thomas said this “to him,” i.e. to Jesus—it was *not* a statement directed to no one.
- Jesus commended Thomas for his faith as expressed in Thomas exclamation and John said believing this is essential to have life, **vv. 29-31**.

Mt 4:10

Then Jesus *said to him, “Begone, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’” (“worship” here = 4352 προσκυνεω *proskuneO*)

JWs use this to argue we are not to worship Jesus, but only Jehovah.

◆ **Jesus received worship**

- **Mt 2:2,11** - wise men “worshipped” Jesus - JWs argue ignorant pagans
- But, Jesus himself accepted “worship” (*proskuneO*) - **Mt 9:18** (ruler); **Mt 14:33** (apostles, as the Son of God); **Mt 28:9,17** (women disciples; apostles); etc.
- Angels worshipped (*proskuneO*) Him - **Heb 1:6** (as *higher* than the angels, **v. 5**; in contrast to angels as God, **vv. 7-8**, “But of the Son He says...”)
- “Every created thing” worship (*proskuneO*) Jesus - **Rev 5:13-14**.

◆ **JWs - “relative” worship**

JWs may try to avoid the force of the above passages by saying this “worship” is “only of a relative kind.”

“If the rendering ‘worship’ is preferred, then it must be understood that such ‘worship’ is only of a relative kind.” (*The Watchtower*, Nov. ’15, 1970, p. 704)

But, “relative worship” is forbidden...

“Bowling before men or angels as ‘relative’ worship forbidden.” (*Make Sure of All Things*, p. 178)

The scriptures above are in the context of worshipping Jesus as Deity.

◆ **JWs change on worshipping Jesus**

Used to teach it was proper to worship Jesus ...

“*Question* ... Was he *really* worshipped, or is the translation faulty? *Answer*. Yes, we believe our Lord while on earth was really worshipped, and properly so... It was proper for our Lord to receive worship...” (*Watch Tower Reprints*, III, July 15, 1898, p. 2337)

“He was the object of unreprieved worship even when a babe, by the wise men who came to see the newborn king... He never reprieved any for acts of worship offered to Himself.” (*Watch Tower Reprints*, I, Oct. 1880, p. 144)

Watchtower Society founded to worship Jesus ...

“The purposes of this Society are: ... public Christian worship of Almighty God and Jesus Christ to arrange for and hold local and world assemblies for such worship...” Article II of the Charter of the Watch Tower Society of Pennsylvania

Now, NOT to worship Jesus ...

... no distinct worship is to be rendered to Jesus Christ now glorified in heaven. Our worship is to go to Jehovah God.“ (*The Watchtower*, Jan. 1, 1954, p. 31)

The problem with the Watchtower publications changing their views is that they claim the Watchtower organization is God’s prophet.