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The Trinity Doctrine: Biblical Truth or Hellenic Philosophy?

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Preamble

Due to the title and effectively the nature of this Bible study, it will be split up into various headings with a table of contents linking the parts and sections being discussed. This topic is extremely touchy because it's a belief that has been held by Christians, even had Christians murdered over its unbelief for so many centuries. Due to this reason, it was felt that a lot of the history as well as the scriptural and philosophical discussions surrounding this doctrine needed to be discussed, allowing people to get a full understanding of just how this doctrine came about while looking at whether it is actually Biblical or not.

The Christian churches the world over have generally and consistently just accepted the doctrinal belief without even questioning whether the doctrine is Biblically or Scripturally accurate, no matter what denomination they may be, and those that have questioned its Biblical and Scriptural legitimacy are generally harassed, abused, attacked or insulted on a constant basis. This harassment has even at times caused some christian denominations to change their beliefs just to be accepted.

The main question of why this doctrine should be questioned however is to see if there is any real scriptural justification for actually believing in it, if there are none, then the question needs to be asked, as scripture says:

2 Timothy 3:15-17 NJB

15. and how, ever since you were a child, you have known the holy scriptures, from these you can learn the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

16. All scripture is inspired by God and useful for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be upright.

17. This is how someone who is dedicated to God becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work.

2 Timothy 3:16 KJV

16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness

Through this Bible Study of the Doctrine of the Trinity, you will see that its creation was never based on any evidence from Scripture, but based purely on Hellenic / Greek Philosophical reasoning. There are many sources, both modern, and old, which confirm that there is no justification for the concept of the Doctrine of the Trinity in Scripture. This requires us to fully investigate what it is, what it says and how it came about, with so-called scriptural references added to justify the doctrine later on. When placed under direct investigation of Scripture itself, you will find the doctrine does not hold up as a Biblically inspired concept. It should be kept clearly in mind throughout this Bible Study what the Bible clearly tells us about Philosophy.

1 Corinthians 2:2-6 NJB

2. I was resolved that the only knowledge I would have while I was with you was knowledge of Jesus, and of him as the crucified Christ.

3. I came among you in weakness, in fear and great trembling

4. and what I spoke and proclaimed was not meant to convince you by philosophical argument, but to demonstrate the convincing power of the Spirit,

5. so that your faith should depend not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

6. But still, to those who have reached maturity, we do talk of a wisdom, not, it is true, a philosophy of this age or of the rulers of this age, who will not last long now.

1 Corinthians 2:13 NJB

13. And these are what we speak of, not in the terms learnt from human philosophy, but in terms learnt from the Spirit, fitting spiritual language to spiritual things.

Colossians 2:5-10 NJB

Live according to the true faith in Christ, not according to false teaching

8. Make sure that no one captivates you with the empty lure of a "philosophy" of the kind that human beings hand on, based on the principles of this world and not on Christ.

2 Timothy 2:16-18 NJB

16. Have nothing to do with godless philosophical discussions -- they only lead further and further away from true religion.

17. Talk of this kind spreads corruption like gangrene, as in the case of Hymenaeus and Philetus,
18. the men who have gone astray from the truth, claiming that the resurrection has already taken place. They are upsetting some people's faith.

The Bible warns us of listening to philosophical discussions, acknowledging them as the truth and confusing them for the truth, yet telling us specifically that they are wrong. All doctrines should be checked against scripture, no matter how long ago they may have been created and dictated, for in many cases, doctrines were created using philosophical concepts rather than allowing the Truth of the Bible to speak for itself.

There is no specific requirement for each person to read this whole Bible study, but it is certainly recommended, to ensure they gain a better and fuller understanding of why this doctrine has so many problems with it, not just biblically and scripturally, but historically as well as how the doctrine developed out of a contamination of Hellenic Greek philosophy, which the Bible actually warns against regularly as has been seen.

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Pagan Trinity Influences

One of the first major issues that comes to Christian's after reading the Bible in full, especially after reading the Old Covenant (*Old Testament*) is the huge understanding that Yahweh God **DOES NOT** want the Hebrews worshipping Him in a similar way the pagans worship their gods. He outlines very different and specific concepts, information, ways of worshipping him, the practices he expects and the understanding he wants them to have of him on a personal level. This is very clear in comparison to the way the other peoples around them worship and interact with their own gods; something Yahweh God makes very clear to them that they are not to involve themselves in these "pagan" gentiles' religious practices and issues. This became very clear through the Old Covenant and the Hebrews soon learnt that allowing gentile practices into their Worship of Yahweh soon bought strict punishment.

Any Christian, no matter how religious denominationally, even after reading the New Covenant (*New Testament*) should understand that when Christ Jesus gave us the Biblical Word and told Paul to go forth and give the Good News of the Truth to the gentiles, that there was going to be some form of issue regarding the gentiles beliefs in the Truth that Christ Jesus had the Apostles teaching. One of the major issues that nearly every country and their religions had at the time was the concept of a Triune deity; something Christians would have a horror of if we found that our own Churches adopted something as unscriptural as this.

Unfortunately this is exactly what has occurred with Christianity. This section of the Study we wanted to show you the number of different civilizations that had "**Triune Godheads**" allocated to them. We know what you're thinking, but even if you do, 'none will be a three in one'. Re-evaluate that thought for yourself after reading the historical evidence presented in this section, for now, we wanted to show you the pagan influence of a triune godhead from other civilizations and their religions. Following are some comments and references to pagan triune godheads in other civilisations and their pagan religions. Leading into this section however I will leave you with the words of Marie Sinclair, Countess of Caithness:

*"It is generally, although erroneously, supposed that the doctrine of the Trinity is of Christian origin. Nearly every nation of antiquity possessed a similar doctrine. St. Jerome testifies unequivocally, 'All the ancient nations believed in the Trinity.'*¹"

India:

"The Puranas, one of the Hindoo Bibles of more than 3,000 years ago, contain the following passage: 'O ye three Lords! know that I recognise only one God. Inform me, therefore, which of you is the true divinity, that I may address to him alone my adorations.'" The three gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, becoming manifest to him, replied, "Learn, O devotee, that there is no real distinction between us. What to you appears such is only the semblance. The single being appears under three forms by the acts of creation, preservation, and destruction, but he is one.'

*'Hence the triangle was adopted by all the ancient nations as a symbol of the Deity, embracing in Himself the three stages of time-past, present, and future. Three was considered among all the pagan nations as the chief of the mystical numbers, because, as Aristotle remarks, it contains within itself a beginning, a middle, and an end. Hence we find it designating some of the attributes of almost all the pagan gods.'*²"

¹ Countess of Caithness Marie Sinclair, *Old Truths in a New Light, or, an Earnest Endeavour to Reconcile Material Science with Spiritual Science, and with Scripture* (New York Public Library: Chapman and Hall, 1876). p. 381

² Ibid. pp. 381-382

Babylonia:

“The ancient Babylonians recognised the doctrine of a trinity, or three persons in one god - as appears from a composite god with three heads forming part of the mythology, and the use of the equilateral triangle, also, as an emblem of such trinity in unity.”³

These are just two examples of triune deities from other civilizations and their religions, there are several more examples, including Sumeria and also Egypt, yet we want to show you one more example of how the concept of a triune godhead made sense in the 4th century with the creep of Greek philosophy before we go further into that concept. Here are two examples of ancient Greek / Hellenic philosophers that commented regarding the concept of triune or 3 in one deity concepts:

Greece:

*“In the Fourth Century B.C. **Aristotle** wrote: ‘All things are three, and thrice is all: and let us use this number in the worship of the gods; for, as the Pythagoreans say, everything and all things are bounded by threes, for the end, the middle and the beginning have this number in everything, and these compose the number of the Trinity’⁴”*

*“No writer ever avowed or taught a belief in any tenet of religious faith more fully or plainly than **Plato** sets forth the doctrine of the Trinity in his *Phaedon*, written four hundred years B.C. His first term for the Trinity was in Greek: 1, Agathon, the Supreme God or Father; 2, the Logos, which is the Greek term for the Word; and 3, Psyche, which the Greek Lexicon defines to mean ‘soul, spirit, or ghost.’ **In this exposition of the Trinity adopted by the Greeks, and published four hundred years B.C., we have the identical doctrine of the Christian Church.** In the Platonic or Grecian Trinity, the first person was considered the planner of the work of creation, the second person the Creator, and the third person the Spirit, which moved upon the face of the waters in the first chapter of Genesis, and infused life into the mighty deep at creation; who presided at the baptism of Christ as it had done at his conception or generation, and as it does at the incarnation and re-incarnation of all men.”⁵*

It should be noted here in this last quote, that the doctrine of the Trinity which mainstream Christian churches and denominations have was actually written in the 4th Century A.D. by those claiming to be members of the True Church, but actually written by a Greek Philosopher published in 400 B.C., that’s 400 years even before Christ was born. What makes it worse is that this Greek Philosophical concept was drawn into the Christian Church, turning the church away from the true teachings of the Bible and Scripture by those who studied Greek Philosophy, as will be seen in the next topic of Greek and Hellenic Philosophy.

Even Arthur Weigall commented on the concept of the Trinity doctrine and its implementation into the Christian Church being a pagan belief and not mentioned in the Bible, he states:

*“It must not be forgotten that Jesus Christ never mentioned such a phenomenon [the Trinity], and nowhere in the New Testament does the word ‘trinity’ appear. The idea was only adopted by the Church three hundred years after the death of our Lord; **and the origin of the conception is entirely pagan ...**”*

*“The early Christians, however, **did not at first think of applying the idea to their own faith.** They paid their devotions to God the Father and to Jesus Christ, the Son of God and they recognised the mysterious and undefined existence of the Holy Spirit; **but there was no thought of these three being an actual Trinity, co-equal and united in One ...**”*

³ Thomas Dennis Rock, *The Mystical Woman and the Cities of the Nations : Or Papal Rome and Her Secular Satellites* (London: William Macintosh, 1867). pp. 22-23

⁴ Arthur Weigall, *Paganism in Our Christianity* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928). pp. 197-198

⁵ Marie Sinclair, *Old Truths in a New Light, or, an Earnest Endeavour to Reconcile Material Science with Spiritual Science, and with Scripture.* p. 383

“The application of this old pagan conception of a Trinity to Christian theology **was made possible by the recognition of the Holy Spirit as the required third ‘Person,’ co-equal with the other ‘Persons’...**”

“The idea of the Spirit being co-equal with God **was not generally recognised until the second half of the Fourth Century A.D.** ... In the year 381 the Council of Constantinople added to the earlier Nicene Creed a description of the Holy Spirit as ‘the Lord, and giver of life, who proceedth from the Father, who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified.’ ...

“Thus, the Athanasian creed, which is a later composition but reflects the general conceptions of Athanasius and his school, formulated the conception of a co-equal Trinity wherein the Holy Spirit was the third ‘Person’; and **so it was made a dogma of the faith, and belief in the Three in One and One in Three became a paramount doctrine of Christianity,** though not without terrible riots and bloodshed...⁶”

This is interesting when a person understands the Philosophical School of thought that Athanasius belonged to and was trained with:

“It is an undoubted fact that **more or less all over the world the deities are in triads.** This rule applies to eastern and western hemispheres, to north and south ... in some mystical way, the triad of three persons in one. The first is as the second or third, the second as first or third, the third as first or second; in fact, they are each other, one and the same individual being. **The definition of Athanasius, who lived in Egypt, applies to the trinities of all heathen religions.**”⁷

As can be seen, older authors regarding this topic, even though most were Trinitarian themselves, all accept that the concept of the Trinity is purely and fully pagan in origin and not Christian, but was adopted by Christianity to align with Pagan religious concepts, ideals and Philosophies.

It could be asked why the True Church believers allowed this, the answer is simple, by the late first century, we can see from the bible in **3 John 9-10** that conditions for the Church had become so bad that false teachers, apostles and deceitful workers” (**2 Corinthians 11:13**) had popped up, and some openly refused to acknowledge or receive representatives of the Apostle John and were excommunicating true Christians from the Church.

This leads us to the concepts of Greek / Hellenic Philosophy that caused the move and turning of true worship and understanding away from factual scriptural understanding and into a classical philosophical debate for what was thought, incorrectly, as accurate “understanding”.

Greek and Hellenic Philosophy

As was shown in the first section of this Bible Study, under the heading of “Greece” we saw how the Philosophical concept of a Trinity was first created by Plato 400 Years before Christ’s birth. The full concept was outlined by him in the way it was set and how it represented God in a triune form. This was picked up and used by other philosophers and their schools of philosophical thought years and centuries after Plato’s death.

Later Greek philosophers refined on Plato’s concepts and referred to them as three “substances” - the supreme God or “the One,” from which came “mind” or “thought” and a “spirit” or “soul”, all effectively being different divine “substances” or aspects of the same God. It should be noted that such metaphysical thinking was common among the Greeks and this carried over strongly into the Roman civilisation of the New Testament period and succeeding centuries.

⁶ Weigall, *Paganism in Our Christianity*. pp. 197-202

⁷ James Bonwick, *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought* (Indian Hills, Colo.: Falcon's Wing Press, 1878). p. 396.

After the death of Jesus and the apostles, much of the true Church kept to itself, using only Scripture to correct itself and operate, was rarely seen outside of their own areas and resisted the infiltration of Philosophical incursion into their Scriptural understandings as best as they could. They did not enter into full philosophical discussions and debates, so there was in fact 2 churches, one true to the plain and simple teachings of scripture and the other increasingly compromised by pagan thought and practices adopted from Greek and Roman philosophical thought.

With the swell of debate occurring over the nature of God, it should be understood that many of the church leaders who formulated the doctrine of the Trinity were steeped in Greek and Platonic philosophy, this influenced their religious views and teachings. This can be seen clearly by the language they used in describing and defining the Trinity, and is in fact, taken directly from Platonic and Greek Philosophy.

Interestingly enough, Jedin comments regarding this directly:

“The Alexandria catechetical school, which revered Clement of Alexandria and Origen, the greatest theologians of the Greek Church, as its heads, applied the allegorical method to the explanation of Scripture. **Its thought was influenced by Plato: its strong point was [pagan] theological speculations. Athanasius and the three Cappadocians [the men whose Trinitarian views were adopted by the Catholic Church at the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople] had been included among its members⁸”**

It should be noted here the last statement in the above quoted text. Both these people, Athanasius and the three Cappadocians, had strong input into the creation of both the original Nicaean Creed and the final Constantinople Creed, which entrenched the concept of Yawveh God being a Trinity. We will look at the History and arguments of the Nicaean Council next.

Early Christian Church Politics and Philosophy

To understand the argument and how things occurred, one needs a basic understanding of what effectively became the two main arguments leading up to the Nicaean Council and its decree or creed. One important factor that needs to be understood is the role that Emperor Constantine, as the Emperor of the Roman Empire in Constantinople which is modern day Istanbul played in this creed’s creation through this whole history.

Emperor Constantine, sometimes referred to as Constantine the Great, was espoused by many Christian denominations as the first Christian Roman Emperor, which is factually incorrect, at the time of the Nicaean issue, he was still a pagan worshipping emperor and never understood Christian Doctrine, theology or scripture and only converted to Christianity on his Death bed. What he did have however was the fact that he was the Emperor, and wanted stability within his empire, something the Christian’s could bring, if they would all agree with each other, unfortunately while there were many strains of belief and thought, there were two main streams of theological and philosophical thought around at the time. The main argument contributors with contending views were Arius and Athanasius, their views and perspectives very different.

It should be pointed out here for argument sake that many accuse Arius of holding the Greek Philosophical view point, however that is incorrect. Arius actually held a closely related Hebraic Viewpoint on the issue being discussed; it was actually Athanasius who held the strongly Greek Philosophical view point in this argument. We will now share some information on each of their perspectives.

Arius
Arius was a very ascetic man; he rejected many of the pleasures of the world and from what historical accounts we have, was a very devout man with sincere motives. A prominent priest in Alexandria, Egypt, he

⁸ Hubert Jedin, *Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church: An Historical Outline* (Herder and Herder, 1960). p. 28

received his religious training in Antioch, the first location of the early assembly. He was taught by Lucian of Antioch, a well-known teacher and martyr of the early church. It should be noted here that Antioch Christian society and teachings were of a Hebraic nature and view, holding to a strict monotheistic interpretation of Scripture.

Arius' beliefs and those of many others was that the Father and Son were distinct from one another, with the Father being superior to the Son. He maintained that the Son was the first directly created being of God the Father before the rest of creation. A better summation of Arius' beliefs as well as we can know them, is as follows:

"[T]he Son was at one point created by God the Father and that before that time the Son did not exist, nor did the Holy Spirit, but the Father only. Thus, though the Son is a heavenly being who existed before the rest of creation and who is far greater than all the rest of creation, he is still not equal to the Father in all his attributes--he may even be said to be 'like the Father' or 'similar to the Father' in his nature, but he cannot be said to be 'of the same nature' as the Father."⁹

This is in fact the Hebraic and 2nd Century Christian view, the Biblical references to this being accurate are many, however these we will discuss later in the Bible Study. For now, we will look at Athanasius views, who was opposed to Arius understanding.

Athanasius

Records about Athanasius, indicate that he was born in Alexandria and mentored in Alexandria under Alexander the Bishop of Alexandria. Alexandria was well known for its Greek philosophical viewpoints and discussions. Athanasius showed such promise that he was an ordained deacon in the Roman church before he was 30 years of age.

While by no means the sole person, Athanasius was the most influential at influencing those at the most important council of the Church. The difference between Arius and Athanasius understanding between the Father and Son was that Athanasius beliefs were clouded by Greek Philosophical concepts, and he believed that the Father and Son were co-equal and of the same 'substance'. He "insisted that Christ had existed from all eternity with the Father and was of the same essence (homoousios) as the Father, although He was a distinct personality. He insisted upon these things because he believed that, if Christ were less than He had stated Him to be, He could not be the Saviour of men. The question of man's eternal salvation was involved in the relationship of the Father and the son according to Athanasius. He held that Christ was coequal, coeternal and consubstantial with the Father...¹⁰".

It should be noted here, that it is believed that the main well spring of Greek Philosophy into the Alexandrian Church and directly relating to Clement of Alexandria and Origen was Philo (20 B.C. to 50 A.D). This Jewish thinker and exegete, born in Alexandria, wrote extensively and became one of the "most influential Hellenistic Jews of his time."¹¹

Hardon claims that Philo's influence had much to do with the start of Arianism, yet the understanding of Athanasius beliefs and the amount of Greek / Hellenic Philosophy included in Athanasius argument and belief holds far more philosophical terms and relationships than does the Arian concepts and relationships. Hardon's explanation that Clement of Alexander and Origen used him freely, only points more directly to Athanasius philosophical beliefs about God and the Son; this can be seen in the following statement:

⁹ Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, (Bits & Bytes, 2015), <https://www.olivetree.com/store/product.php?productid=17503>.

¹⁰ Earle E. Cairns, Christianity through the Centuries, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan,, 1996),

<http://www.monergismbooks.com/pdfs/christianitythroughcenturies.pdf>.

¹¹ Fr. John a. Hardon S.J, "Historical Christology - Chapter V - Arianism and the Council of Nicea," in *Institute on Religious Life* (Chicago, Illinois: Real Presence Eucharistic Education and Adoration Association, 2004). p. 1

“Philo’s main achievement was his **development of the allegorical interpretation of the Bible, which enabled him to find much of Greek Philosophy in the Old Testament, and to combine respect of his religion for the Pentateuch with his own penchant for a more spiritual understanding of the Word of God.**¹²”

We should clarify something for the reader of this Bible study however before moving on, these facts can be checked and should be of course, however some clarification of words from the above need to be done.

From the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary:

allegorical

- 1 : of, relating to, or having the characteristics of allegory
- 2 : **having hidden spiritual meaning that transcends the literal sense of a sacred text**

If **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine”**, then how can anything anybody comes up with that finds a **“hidden spiritual meaning that transcends the literal sense of a sacred text”** be considered as correct? Even the Doctrine of the Trinity is seen as having its hidden spiritual meaning revealed, yet still a mystery

Hence Athanasius and the Alexandrian school of Philosophical thought regarding the nature or essence (homoousios) of the Word (Son), leading them to a serious issue with regard to the concept when matched against the Scriptural and Hebraic views of Arius and those of Antioch. These disagreements of doctrinal concepts are not the only issue however for the time, it was the interference of the Emperor Constantine and successive Emperors , for purely political reasons, which caused many problems as well.

Political Unity over Scriptural Accuracy

For three centuries after the death of the last Apostle, Christianity was a banned and persecuted religion within the Roman Empire. This changed during the reigns of Constantine and Licinius under the Edict of Milan. The edict read:

“When we, Constantine and Licinius, Emperors, met at Milan in conference concerning the welfare and security of the realm, we decided that of the things that are of profit to all mankind, the worship of God ought rightly to be our first and chiefest care . . .¹³”

Some claim that this was done as a concession to Constantine who they claim was a Christian but not baptised. This is false, Constantine was not a Christian and had no care to be one, in fact he was never baptised until he lay on his death bed, and of all people, by Eusebius who was transferred to Constantinople in 339 A.D. and was an ardent Arian with much influence with the Imperial Family. Suffice to say that the proof that Constantine was not a Christian in his heart or otherwise and held his Pagan allegiance still very much in tact, comes to the fore not long after, when Licinius “started a pagan reaction, which Constantine repulsed by defeating his rival in 324. After this, while his proclamations were even more favoured to the Christians, he officially instituted “state recognition of Sunday as a ‘festal day on which to fulfil petitions of special urgency.’¹⁴”

Sunday was already the “festal day’ but of the Sun for Sun worshippers. Constantine was not interested in the Theological and Scriptural debate, he was more interested in securing his Empire and fixing this dispute was the best way to do that, for him, he could not see the difference or why there was such a major contention regarding the debate, political unity is all he wanted. He tried to solve the ongoing dispute between the 2 parties by sending identical conciliatory letters to both Arius and Athanasius. This letter contained a

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid. p. 5

¹⁴ Ibid.

statement that showed that as in Greek Theological debates, differences were actually inconsequential; in doing this Constantine was saying that doctrine was not critical. This however was incorrect, as the theological impact of the two views was enormous, as Athanasius contended that “the Father and Son were of the same substance, co-eternal and co-equal” while Arius contended that “the Father and Son were distinct with the Son being neither co-eternal nor co-equal with His Father” which had led to many violent and bloody conflicts.

The Council of the Orient in Antioch saw the introduction of a new Church practice of issuing a creedal statement and saw the Hebraic view of God and the Son condemned and the introduction of a creed similar to the Alexandrian Creed, which saw 3 Bishops excommunicated until the Council of Nicaea for refusing to agree with the teaching.

At this time, the Emperor Constantine stepped in, hoping to stop the fighting and specifically to discuss and come to an agreement on the topic, he called for a general council of the Church at Nicaea in Bithynia. The idea that a political figure such as the Emperor would call this type of theological council for any other reason but political is inescapable, however not strange considering the nature and timeframe within the Hellenistic thought as he “was given by God supreme power in things material and spiritual.”¹⁵

In 325 the Council took place and with the Emperor watching on. Athanasius put forth his belief that Christ had to be coequal, coeternal and consubstantial with the Father because he had to have existed from all eternity with the Father and be of the same essence (homoousios) while being a distinct personality, because “He” believed that if Christ was less than he had stated, then he could not be the Saviour of men¹⁶. What is interesting in this is that one mans “personal” philosophical belief about whether Christ’s substance made a difference to our salvation, is what decided whether he could or could not be the saviour when scripture clearly indicates he was, irrespective of what the philosophical view of his substance was.

Constantine was presiding over this council and greatly influencing the results. After much debate about how to word the Creed and in an endeavour to ensure that all were covered and happy with it, attempts were made to construct a creed using only scriptural terms, but they proved insufficient to exclude the Arian position and eventually a Syro-Palestinian creed used as the basis. When the creed was finished, eighteen Bishops were still vehemently opposed to it and refused to sign it, at this time Constantine himself intervened and threatened exile of anybody who refused to sign, only two Libyan Bishops and Arius still refused to accept the creed and were exiled by Constantine.

The Nicaean Creeds Wording

The finished creed read:

“We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance (ousia) of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of the same substance (homoousios) with the Father, through whom all things were made both in heaven and on earth. . . Those who say: ‘There was a time when He was not, and He was not before He was begotten;’ and that ‘He was made out of nothing;’ or who maintain that ‘He is of another hypostasis or another substance,’ or that ‘the Son of God is created, or mutable, or subject to change,’ the Catholic Church anathematizes.”¹⁷

Scripture as we shall see later in this article, in the King James (KJ) and New King James (NKJ) versions of the Bible states that Christ Jesus the Son of God was the “only begotten Son”. While other Bibles use various terms, the NJB states for example:

¹⁵ Leo D. Davis SJ, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology (Theology and Life Series 21)* (Michael Glazier, 1988). p. 56.

¹⁶ Cairns, *Christianity through the Centuries*. pp. 142 - 143

¹⁷ Henri Leclercq, "Councils of Nicæa," in *Catholic Encyclopedia (1913)* (1913).

John 3:16 KJV

For God so loved the world, that he **gave his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16 NJB

For this is how God loved the world: **he gave his only Son**, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

As Arius and Athanasius contended over this, it must have been written in the Greek NT Scriptures at the time this was going on, even in the more Hebraic area of Antioch. For the Nicæan Creed to use the words "begotten not made" makes no sense what so ever and for anybody to contemplate the idea that adding 'not' to change the meaning of language simply shows how desperate Athanasius and the others were to be seen as "right" more than being Scripturally accurate. Their philosophical belief could not be proved accurate through scripture hence not creating a creed that was scriptural, and it could not say the Son of God was not "begotten" as Scripture obviously used the term, so in an attempt make themselves believable, they introduced the term and tried to make it "not" by adding the complete opposite of what the word means after it. To see what is meant by this statement, here is the meaning of "begotten" from the dictionary:

begotten

past participle of **beget**.

beget

1. (especially of a man) bring (a child) into existence by the process of reproduction.
2. cause; bring about.

It should be obvious to anybody that God himself obviously did not have sexual relations with Mary, so definition 1. Obviously does not apply in this case, so definition 2. must apply. If we take the definition of bring about and do a search for its meaning we come up with the following:

bring about

to cause to take place : effect

Synonyms that can be used in place of the words "bring about" include the following.

Synonyms

beget, create, breed, generate, induce, invoke, make, produce¹⁸

It therefore makes it extremely possible using correct definitions that God did in fact create the Son. You can replace the words "**bring about**" with "**create**" and for Athanasius to place in the Nicæan Creed "**begotten not made**" in an attempt to make it untrue doesn't work. If you "create" something then you "make it" so you can't change the meaning by adding words that say the opposite of that word.

The Nicæan creed was not well accepted and bitter contests continued over the wording of the Nicæan Creed for years to come, sometimes the Emperors favoured the Arian theological belief and sometimes the Athanasian version. Until ultimately in the end the last Emperor, Emperor Theodosius I who in 380 A.D. outlawed Arianism and in 381 A.D. convoked a regional Council at Constantinople, with the first canon from this council stating that "the faith of the 318 fathers who assembled at Nicæa in Bithynia is not to be made

¹⁸ Merriam-Webster, "Definition of Bring About," (Merriam-Webster).

void, but shall continue to be established¹⁹” made by Royal Decree rather than by theological debate and “sealed the final adoption of the faith of Nicaea by the entire Church”²⁰ whether Scriptural or not, this previously unheard of orthodoxy has remained for centuries.

Scriptural Evidence The Son is not Equal to His Father

The Bible tells us time and time again, sometimes even in Christ Jesus’ own words, that God, our Father, is greater than he. So if Yahweh God is greater than he, how can they be “co-equal” as the doctrine of the trinity states? Nowhere does Jesus proclaim himself co-equal or even equal to the Father. In many places he tells us in the Bible that God is greater, or that he does nothing he has not seen the Father do or that the Father has not sent him to do and even that authority was “given” to him by Yahweh God. This is neither “equality” nor “co-equality”, it’s a servant of his Father and Master as Christ Jesus states himself in scripture:

John 14:28 NJB

28. You heard me say: I am going away and shall return. **If you loved me you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.**

John 10:29 NJB

29. **The Father, for what he has given me, is greater than anyone,** and no one can steal anything from the Father's hand.

1 Corinthians 11:3 NJB

3. But I should like you to understand that the **head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.**

In all of these verses, Christ Jesus proclaims quite clearly that he is not co-equal to the Father, but that the Father is “**Greater**” than even himself. How therefore, can the doctrine of the trinity, claim that Christ is co-equal with Yahweh God the Father? The Philosophy of the Doctrine does not match the Scriptures. In this case, scripture always trumps philosophical concepts, for the Bible tells us quite clearly that we should “**test everything and hold on to what is good and shun every form of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 NJB)**” and what is good is what is from Scripture and that which is not in scripture is evil for “**All scripture is inspired by God and useful for refuting error, for guiding people's lives and teaching them to be upright. This is how someone who is dedicated to God becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17 NJB)**”.

In other verses we find that Christ Jesus admits to all openly that Yahweh God, His God and Our God is superior in knowledge to Him. If the Father and Son were truly co-equal, then he would know the answer to these scriptural verses:

Matthew 24:36 NJB

36. **But as for that day and hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, no one but the Father alone.**

Mark 13:32 NJB

32. **'But as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father.**

Again in the following scripture it shows that Christ Jesus is not co-equal or even equal with Yahweh God as the doctrine of the trinity proclaims:

¹⁹ Davis SJ, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology (Theology and Life Series 21)*. p. 126.

²⁰ Leclercq, "Councils of Nicæa."

Matthew 20:20-23 NJB

20. Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came with her sons to make a request of him, and bowed low;
21. and he said to her, 'What is it you want?' She said to him, 'Promise that these two sons of mine may sit one at your right hand and the other at your left in your kingdom.'
22. Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?' They replied, 'We can.'
23. **He said to them, 'Very well; you shall drink my cup, but as for seats at my right hand and my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted by my Father.'**

Even when the Jews believed that Christ Jesus was proclaiming himself equal to God, Jesus corrects them and states himself quite clearly that he can do nothing by himself, that he can only do what he sees the Father doing.

John 5:18-23 NJB

18. **But that only made the Jews even more intent on killing him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he spoke of God as his own Father and so made himself God's equal.**
19. **To this Jesus replied: In all truth I tell you, by himself the Son can do nothing; he can do only what he sees the Father doing: and whatever the Father does the Son does too.**
20. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he himself does, and he will show him even greater things than these, works that will astonish you.
21. Thus, as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son gives life to anyone he chooses;
22. for the Father judges no one; **he has entrusted all judgement to the Son,**
23. so that all may honour the Son as they honour the Father. Whoever refuses honour to the Son refuses honour to the Father who sent him.

With all this scriptural evidence to test the doctrine of the trinity with, just on the equality or co-equality of the Son with the Father, the doctrine fails terribly. The following verses show even more how wrong the doctrine of the trinity is according to scripture:

John 5:36-38 NJB

36. But my testimony is greater than John's: **the deeds my Father has given me to perform, these same deeds of mine testify that the Father has sent me.**
37. **Besides, the Father who sent me bears witness to me himself.** You have never heard his voice, you have never seen his shape,
38. and his word finds no home in you because you do not believe in the one whom he has sent.

John 8:26-29 NJB

26. About you I have much to say and much to judge; **but the one who sent me is true, and what I declare to the world I have learnt from him.**
27. They did not recognise that he was talking to them about the Father.
28. **So Jesus said: When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you will know that I am He and that I do nothing of my own accord. What I say is what the Father has taught me;**
29. **he who sent me is with me, and has not left me to myself, for I always do what pleases him.**

John 8:53-55 NJB

53. Are you greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? The prophets are dead too. Who are you claiming to be?'
54. Jesus answered: **If I were to seek my own glory my glory would be worth nothing; in fact, my glory is conferred by the Father, by the one of whom you say, 'He is our God,'**
55. although you do not know him. But I know him, and if I were to say, 'I do not know him,' I should be a liar, as you yourselves are. But I do know him, and I keep his word.

John 10:25-38 NJB

25. Jesus replied: I have told you, but you do not believe. **The works I do in my Father's name are my witness;**
26. **but you do not believe, because you are no sheep of mine.**
27. The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me.
28. I give them eternal life; they will never be lost and no one will ever steal them from my hand.
29. **The Father, for what he has given me, is greater than anyone, and no one can steal anything from the Father's hand.**
30. **The Father and I are one.**
31. **The Jews fetched stones to stone him,**
32. **so Jesus said to them, 'I have shown you many good works from my Father; for which of these are you stoning me?'**
33. **The Jews answered him, 'We are stoning you, not for doing a good work, but for blasphemy; though you are only a man, you claim to be God.'**
34. **Jesus answered: Is it not written in your Law: I said, you are gods?**
35. **So it uses the word 'gods' of those people to whom the word of God was addressed -- and scripture cannot be set aside.**
36. **Yet to someone whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world you say, 'You are blaspheming' because I said, 'I am Son of God.'**
37. If I am not doing my Father's work, there is no need to believe me;
38. but if I am doing it, then even if you refuse to believe in me, at least believe in the work I do; then you will know for certain that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

John 14:23-31 NJB

23. **Jesus replied: Anyone who loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make a home in him.**
24. **Anyone who does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not my own: it is the word of the Father who sent me.**
25. I have said these things to you while still with you;
26. but the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you.
27. Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace which the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.
28. **You heard me say: I am going away and shall return. If you loved me you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.**
29. I have told you this now, before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe.
30. I shall not talk to you much longer, because the prince of this world is on his way. He has no power over me,
31. **but the world must recognise that I love the Father and that I act just as the Father commanded.** Come now, let us go.

It is clear from these Scriptures and many others that Jesus never saw or believed that he was Equal or Co-Equal to God his Father, so how can the doctrine of the Trinity and those that believe in it honestly accept it after reading scripture and testing the doctrine by scripture which we Christians are told to do anyway when judging error. Let us now look at scripture regarding the doctrines claim that Jesus is co-eternal.

Scriptural Evidence The Son is not Co-Eternal with His Father

Besides looking at this properly, one of the hardest issues in relation to it is what an individual's definition of eternity is. When did eternity begin or did it begin at all. If there is a beginning of eternity what exactly is that for an individual. From the perspective of the Bible one can only take that God is eternal in the sense that he has always been here before anything else was created or made. So in effect eternity begins before he creates anything. The issue is, what was the thing that he first created. This is where we find ourselves with the Bible and what it says about Christ.

One of the major issues that we as people need to deal with is that at some point God was alone being an eternal and immortal being. We know God is immortal because the Bible tells us so in very strong words from Paul, the following verses also tell us quite specifically that we have created all kinds of ideas and images to worship yet none of them are correct because throughout the Bible he has laid down how we should see things by looking at his own creation:

Romans 1:18-25 NJB

18. The retribution of God from heaven is being revealed against the ungodliness and injustice of human beings who in their injustice hold back the truth.

19. For what can be known about God is perfectly plain to them, since God has made it plain to them:

20. ever since the creation of the world, the invisible existence of God and his everlasting power have been clearly seen by the mind's understanding of created things. And so these people have no excuse:

21. they knew God and yet they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but their arguments became futile and their uncomprehending minds were darkened.

22. While they claimed to be wise, in fact they were growing so stupid

23. that they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for an imitation, for the image of a mortal human being, or of birds, or animals, or crawling things.

24. That is why God abandoned them in their inmost cravings to filthy practices of dishonouring their own bodies-

25. because they exchanged God's truth for a lie and have worshipped and served the creature instead of the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

These verse make is extremely clear, especially **verse 19 and 20**, the God has made himself known plainly simply by our minds understanding of the created world he made and how it works, yet for some reason a philosophical mystery needs to be fabricated because they refuse to understand the nature of God and Christ Jesus from the natural Order of creation that is seen. The following scripture that indicates that Yahweh God himself is Immortal:

1 Timothy 6:13-16 NJB

13. Now, before God, the source of all life, and before Jesus Christ, who witnessed to his noble profession of faith before Pontius Pilate, I charge you

14. to do all that you have been told, with no faults or failures, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15. who at the due time will be revealed by God, the blessed and only Ruler of all, the King of kings and the Lord of lords,

16. who alone is immortal, whose home is in inaccessible light, whom no human being has seen or is able to see: to him be honour and everlasting power. Amen.

This may seem unusual to you, but it is what nearly every Christian denomination does when it accepts the doctrine of the Trinity. It proclaims Christ Jesus God and worships him in the way that only God should be worshipped. The English language is bad in its response but the Bias in translation because of the greek philosophical doctrine makes it worse, because when the translators translate the Greek into English, they add the Trinitarian bias to what the verses are saying. Take for example the concept of Worship. The word "Worship" in English has 2 types of worship mentioned in the Bible. One of them, the main one and the ONLY one attributed to Christ Jesus is the Greek word "**proskuneo**" which while translated often as "Worship" should more correctly be translated as "**prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence)**" much as we would do to a King or Queen or somebody of high rank or an official. The second Greek word translated into English which is ONLY given to God and mentioned by Christ Jesus himself is "**latreuo**" which literally means "**render, religious homage: –serve, do the service, worship**". Jesus mentions and uses both Greek terms in the worship of God in the following verse:

Matthew 4:10 NJB

10. Then Jesus replied, "Away with you, Satan! For scripture says: The Lord your God is the one to whom you must do **homage (proskuneo)**, **him alone you must serve (latreuo)**."

You can read more about this in our Bible Study titled: ["Worship" - The Different Biblical Types](#)

Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the term "**Begotten**" must have been used in the Bible during the time of the creation of the Nicene Creed. We know this because both contending sides used the term, and both sides understood it differently and in fact Athanasius has included in the Creed the following comment:

"begotten not made . . . Those who say: 'There was a time when He was not, and He was not before He was begotten'"

We have already seen what the word begotten means and that you can't change its meaning by stating that something "is but is not" as the first part of the above quote of the Creed tries to do. Begotten means what it means and Arius in effect was probably more scripturally accurate than Athanasius, in that Christ was created out of nothing and the first creation of God. We can see this idea being born out in the following scriptures:

Colossians 1:15-16 NJB

15. **He is the image of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation,**

16. for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible, thrones, ruling forces, sovereignties, powers, all things were created through him and for him.

17. **He exists before all things and in him all things hold together,**

In verse 15 you can see that it does not say that Christ Jesus is Yahweh God, it says that he is the image of the **UNSEEN GOD**, that God is Yahweh God. Another interesting point to take note of in verse 15 is this: "**the first-born of all creation**", It is interesting to note that the verse refers to Christ Jesus as the first-born of all creation, as Christ wasn't the first born on earth, then it must mean that he was a creation, and the first creation of Yahweh God and in fact the first thing that Yahweh God created that was actually born on the Earth. If Christ Jesus was co-eternal with God the Father, then why does this verse not read something along the lines of "first-born of all eternity"? That would make much more sense if the doctrine of the Trinity creed was accurate about Christ's co-eternal nature. Another interesting Biblical scripture is the one below, indicating scriptural evidence for Arius understanding of scripture over that of the philosophical beliefs of Athanasius.

Revelation 3:14 RSV

14. "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, **the beginning of God's creation.**'"

We know that this verse is referring to Christ Jesus, as we know that Jesus is the Amen, the faithful and true witness. This verse clearly states from the Bible that Christ Jesus could not have been co-eternal with Yahweh God the Father, because he was in fact the "**Beginning of God's creation**". To be the Beginning of God's creation, he had to be the very first thing that God created and therefore had a beginning. Scripture once again proves that the doctrine of the Trinity is nothing more than Greek Philosophical beliefs with no scriptural evidence to support it. How do we know that he was created before everything else that was made, simple, everything that has ever been made has been made through Christ (Him) for Christ (Him) as per **Colossians 1:16**. Many may deny this truth, but then the Truth is always hard to accept for people that stop searching for it.

We shall now cover briefly the Scriptural evidence and information about the Holy Spirit. The information regarding the Holy Spirit is fairly self-explanatory in relation to whether it is a "person" or not.

Scriptural Evidence about the Holy Spirit

The Nicaean and more so the Constantinopolitan Creed with the Greek philosophical belief put forth by Plato 400 years before Christ's birth, included the Holy Spirit as the third person of the pagan philosophical view of all gods having a triune nature. The problem with this is that the Holy Spirit, while seeming to have some form of personhood throughout scripture, really has none and is purely the spirit of Yahweh God as an inanimate power, whom he directs to do his will and after Christ Jesus resurrection, even "gave authority" for Christ Jesus to direct the Holy Spirit to people.

Notice however the commentary by Alvan Lamson regarding the greek philosophical view that places the Holy Spirit into the Trinity or triune God concept:

"... we must look, not to the Jewish Scriptures, nor to the teachings of Jesus and his apostles, but to Philo and the Alexandrian Platonists. In consistency with this view, we maintain that the doctrine of the Trinity was of gradual and comparatively late formation; that it had its origin in a source entirely foreign from that of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures; that it grew up, and was ingrafted on Christianity, through the hands of the Platonizing Fathers; that in the time of Justin, and long after, the distinct nature and inferiority of the Son were universally taught; and that only the first shadowy outline of the Trinity had then become visible."²¹

This in itself shows once again the move by Athanasius, who studied Platonian Philosophy as we have already seen, simply applied their Greek Philosophical views and beliefs onto the Holy Scriptures to create something that was not supported, nor even taught by the Apostles or early Christians. As witnessed earlier in this Bible Study, philosophy should be ignored at all times as it is manmade and not of God. All things should be judged by scripture before accepting them as right or wrong, something clearly shown in this Bible study that Athanasius and those that supported the philosophical concept of the doctrine of the Trinity did not do, for we know that they could not even write the original Nicaean Creed from a scriptural perspective.

Regarding the Holy Spirit, had they started in the Old Covenant (OT) of the Bible to see what it states, they would have found the following:

Gen 1:1-3 NJB

1. In the beginning God created heaven and earth.
2. Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, with **a divine wind** sweeping over the waters.
3. God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light.

The King James Version uses the word Spirit instead of "divine wind" however look at the meaning of the Hebrew word for Spirit.

Gen 1:2 KJV

2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the **Spirit (H7307) of God** moved upon the face of the waters.

רוּחַ

rûach

roo'-akh

From H7306; wind; by resemblance breath, that is, a sensible (or even violent) exhalation; figuratively life, anger, unsubstantiality

²¹ Alvan Lamson, *The Church of the First Three Centuries: Or, Notices of the Lives and Opinions of the Early Fathers, with Special Reference to the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Digitized Version ed. (Boston: Walker, Wise and Company, 1860), Digital.

In both these verses it is clear that the Holy Spirit, which is a “divine wind” or the “Spirit of God”, is not a person. It is a power that emanates from God himself and does his will as part of creation, at least in this example. It does of course have other abilities, but none of which it grants of its own will, all are granted by Gods will as with Gifts of God (*see our Scriptural Article: [Gifts of God](#)*). We also see Jesus breathing out the Spirit himself and commanding it in the following verses:

John 20:19-22 NJB

19. In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,'
20. and, after saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord,
21. **and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'**
22. **After saying this he breathed on them and said: Receive the Holy Spirit.**

How can the Holy Spirit be a person when we read comments like the ones below with God “anointing” Jesus with the Holy Spirit, how do you anoint somebody with a person?

Acts 10:38 NJB

38. **God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit** and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil.

Or how do you take a “share” of a person as is pointed out in John below where he states “he has given us a share in his Spirit.”

1 John 4:13 NJB

13. This is the proof that we remain in him and he in us, that **he has given us a share in his Spirit.**

There is also this verse, where the Holy Spirit comes down on many people and poured out on gentiles as well, so how can the Holy Spirit be anything but an impersonal force emanating from God, commanded by God and also Christ Jesus after his death and Resurrection?

Act 10:44-45 NJB

44. While Peter was still speaking the **Holy Spirit came down on all the listeners.**
45. Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were all **astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on gentiles too,**

Conclusion

Throughout this Bible Study we have produced a large amount of information. We have shown you the historical documented evidence for the creation of the Doctrine of the Trinity or Trinity Doctrine, which was effectively created through the institution of the Nicæan Creed and then the Constantinople Creed. We have shown you the contended arguments going at the time, effectively 300 years after Christs death and 200 years after the death of the last apostle. We have shown you the production of the Trinity Doctrine produced and presented by Plato 400 years even before the Birth of Christ and the exact same philosophical concept being used by Athanasius and those within his greek philosophical sphere to create an orthodox christian doctrine which has nothing to do with scripture but everything to do with greek philosophy and pagan religions.

The question arises to regarding this period in history, ‘Was Arius right or Athanasius after all?’. The answer to that question is not easy. There is very little left written about Arius or his beliefs, but judging from the little we have regarding his beliefs and the Arian position, even though Arius seems to have delved into philosophical discussions himself, he appears to simply have followed on the Early Christian beliefs through the Hebraic understanding that he was taught and learnt in Antioch. He seems to have entered into

Philosophical discussions and debates only because he was drawn into them under threats of not being allowed to continue to preach the Truth of Jesus Christ as he was taught and understood using Scripture if he did not. Looking at this study, it is clearly shown that nearly everything Arius believed and espoused, at least in what we can find left written about his beliefs, were in fact scripturally supported, and that Arius and his followers practiced what God tells us to do and as mentioned in the beginning of this study, that being:

2 Timothy 3:16 KJV

16. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness

We believe that this is what Arius tried to do and as has been seen from this Study certainly had the scriptural evidence to support his reproof of Athanasius philosophical beliefs and doctrines. With the evidence supplied from Scripture, and the little we know, we would have to support that Arius doctrines were correct, Athanasius was wrong and that the Doctrine of the Trinity as espoused by many Christian denominations since its creation in 381 A.D. is a Greek Philosophical belief and not a Biblical or scriptural one held by Christ Jesus, the Apostles and the early true Christians.

PLEASE, now that you have read this article, do not just take our word for it. Get your Bible, look at it and read the Scriptures for yourself, and feel free to get our Book of Bible Articles or look at our articles website for further Bible Studies and Articles:

Website: <http://www.ytnj.org>

Bible Study Site: <http://www.ytnj.org/articles.html>

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