

To The Jehovah's Witnesses Who Cared Enough To Come To My Door

**A COMPASSIONATE BIBLE STUDY ON WHETHER JESUS
IS THE ANGEL MICHAEL, AND OTHER RELATED TOPICS.**

By Chaplain Bart Larson

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INTRODUCTION

There was a man in a mental institution, named George, so the story goes, who believed he was dead. No matter what anyone would say or do they could not convince him he was alive. One day a young mental case-worker had an idea. He said, “Tell me, George, do dead men bleed?” George thought for a minute and said, “No, dead men don’t bleed.” The caseworker took a needle, pricked George’s finger, and squeezed. A small drop of blood appeared. George’s eyes grew big as he saw the blood and he said, “Well, what do you know. Dead men do bleed!”

Like George, no matter how much evidence I present, I cannot convince you of anything against your will—nor will I try. I only ask that you keep an open and prayerful mind as I discuss whether the angel Michael is really Jesus, and several other important questions. I am not asking you to be open to me, but rather to the things of God. I too love God with all my heart, and what I share, to the best of my knowledge, is truth founded in love. Your own translation says, “Make sure of all things; hold fast to what is fine.” (I Thessalonians 5:21). Most translations read, “Test all things, hold fast that which is true.” The thoughts are basically the same.—God’s word commands us to “test” or “make sure” what we believe. You are not sinning to check out the facts upon which your faith is built. Quite the contrary; the Bible commands you to test your beliefs.

If you will take the time to test the truthfulness of what I say, you will either come out a stronger Jehovah’s Witness, or you will be led by the Holy Spirit into an even deeper understanding of God and His great love for you. Either way, you should come out a better person. Satan, on the other hand, does not want you to test your beliefs. Don’t yield to fear or insecurity. The Bible says that God has not given us a spirit of fear (II Tim. 1:7). Be brave of heart.

WHAT ARE THE ISSUES?

Is Jesus the archangel Michael, as Jehovah’s Witnesses teach, or did God write Himself into His own story, so to speak, and became a man in the person of Jesus Christ? From the writings of the early church fathers until now, virtually all churches for the last two thousand years have taught that Jesus was/is God incarnate. To my knowl-

edge, correct me if I am wrong, no historical church writings have ever been found which teach the Jehovah's Witness position that Jesus is the archangel Michael.

That doesn't mean you are wrong, only that there is no non-biblical historical evidence to support your position. Think with me. If Jesus were not God, but a lower created being, such as the angel Michael, we might feel gratitude for His life, death, and teachings, but if we worshiped Him as God we would be guilty of idolatry. Jesus would be no more than an idol occupying the place of God. The Bible is clear about idolatry. God says that He will not give His glory to another (Isaiah 42:8; 48:11), that there are no other gods (or Gods) beside Himself (Isaiah 45:5, 21-22; Jeremiah 10:6; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6), and that we are to worship God alone (Deuteronomy 6:13,-14; Matthew 4:10). In essence, Protestants, Catholics, and all other churches who teach the deity of Christ have been guilty of idolatry for centuries if Jesus is not God.

On the other hand, if Jesus were God in the form of a man, as I personally believe, then He, as no other human being in history, should be listened to, revered, and even worshiped. It would mean that the God who created the galaxies, nebulae, and quasars, who cast billions of stars into the heavens, that God became a man, lived and walked on this earth, and died in submission to His own creation. His death would be infinitely more than the death of a good man or even an angel. It would be the supreme sacrifice of all time, a manifestation of unfathomable love. To treat Jesus as a *god*, or an angel, would be blasphemy. To fail to adjust your life to His teaching would be to miss life itself.

So, either Jesus is God, or He is not. To believe in Jesus wrongly is a form of either blasphemy or idolatry. As much as we both profess to love God (and I believe we each do), one of us is wrong. Paul spoke of Jews who had a zeal for God, but it was not based on knowledge (Romans 10:2). One of us is guilty of misguided sincerity, of being sincerely wrong. The issue before us is truth, not sincerity or even personal preference.—So, who is Jesus, really?

I trust you believe as I do that the Bible is our final authority. I know you put a lot of stake in the writings of such people as Charles Russell and Joseph Rutherford. But, are we in agreement that if these men's teachings ever went contrary to the Bible, that you would have to accept what the Bible says? To hold these men's writings above the Bible would again be idolatry.—Question: *is it possible that these men were wrong concerning the deity of Christ, just as they, and subsequent church leaders, were each sincerely wrong numerous times concerning when Christ was going to return and how many would go to Heaven?* —For example, Russell first taught that Christ would invisibly return in 1874, and then the world was to end in 1914. That was later changed to 1915, then to 1918, then to 1925, then to 1942, then to 1946, and more recently to 1975. Millions of pieces of literature were handed out door-to-door by sincere members of your church teaching what was false about Christ's return. The Jehovah's Witnesses used to teach that they were the 144,000 chosen of Revelation chapter 7, and that only they were going to Heaven. When Jehovah's Witness membership grew past that number, church doctrine was again changed. [As a side note, you might observe that the 144,000 of Revelation chapter 7 are really *Jews*: 12,000 each from the 12 tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:5-8). Actually, the number of saints in Heaven far exceeds 144,000. The next verse says that, besides the 144,000, there was "*a great crowd, which no man was able to number; out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb . . .*"]

Since the true identity of Jesus is such an important topic, and because I believe that Satan would love to deceive us, will you pray the following prayer (or one like it)?

"Dear Jehovah God. I do love You and want to be Your faithful witness. I ask now that as I study Your word, and test what this booklet has to say, that You will guard my heart and my mind from all deception and lies of the evil one. Grant me the faith and courage to follow You, and to obey You at all cost. I commit this time of study to You. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I pray.—Amen."

FACTS UPON WHICH WE AGREE

Before I proceed with this study, there are a few foundational beliefs which I assume we agree upon:

1. I think we are in agreement that only God should be worshiped; just as Jesus told Satan, "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service" (Matthew 4:10). Angels are not to be worshiped, only God.

2. The archangel Michael is mentioned by name 5 times in the Bible; three times in the Old Testament (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1) and twice in the New Testament (Jude 9; and Revelation 12:7). The name Jesus, however, is mentioned hundreds of times in the New Testament, and is referred to prophetically well over 100 times in the Old Testament. Even though I know you believe Jesus to be the incarnation of Michael, Jesus is never clearly identified as Michael.—Correct?
3. We are both awaiting the return of Christ to set up His earthly kingdom.
4. We both agree that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world (John 3:16, etc.).
5. I trust you believe that Jehovah is the creator of the universe (Genesis 1:1).
6. I assume you accept the fact that angels are not omnipresent. God can be everywhere at once, but angels can only be at one place at one time.
7. I believe you agree with me that we are to pray only to God, not to angels or saints?
8. Lastly, as mentioned earlier, I trust that we both believe the Bible to be the inspired word of God, and that scripture should determine our beliefs and behaviors (II Timothy 3:16,17).

I hope you are in agreement with me on these points. As you read further, even though I know it will take you some extra time, may I suggest you look up the Bible verses I mention in this booklet. That way, God's word will have final say on any given point, not me. You may not trust me, but I know you have faith in the Bible.

ARE WE TO WORSHIP JESUS?

I have spoken with numerous Jehovah's Witnesses, and when I ask them whether it is alright to worship Jesus they basically say, "We worship God. We do not worship Jesus."

Few subjects are spoken of in Scripture with more clarity than the subject of worship. Both the Old and New Testaments emphasize that God alone should receive worship. Jesus told Satan, "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service." (Matthew 4:10; Luke 4:8). No man or angel was ever to receive worship (See: Matthew 4:10; Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9). God will not give his "glory" to another (Isaiah 42:8).

A question you must ask as you read this section is, "If only God deserves worship, and He will not give His glory to another, then why is Jesus worshiped and given 'glory' in scripture?"

The New Testament uses primarily one word for worship, the Greek word *proskuneo*. It is the word Jesus used to tell Satan that God alone is worthy of worship (Matthew 4:10). *Proskuneo* is used more than any other word in describing worship of God (e.g., John 4:24; Revelation 5:14; 7:11; 11:16: etc.). Are you aware of the fact that *proskuneo* is used of Jesus numerous times in the New Testament?

After Jesus healed a man, the Bible says the man "worshiped [past tense form of *proskuneo*] Jesus." (John 9:38) [Note: the NWT translates the word as "obeisance." However, if you check a Greek interlinear Bible you will see that the word is the same word Jesus used in Matthew 4:10.—A Greek interlinear is a New Testament in Greek, with the literal English word rendering underneath each Greek word.]

Proskuneo is again used in Matthew 14:33, when the disciples worshiped Jesus after seeing Him walk on water. After the resurrection the disciples fell at His feet and worshiped (*proskuneo*) Jesus (Matthew 28:9, 17). Thus, before and after the resurrection, Jesus received worship. In each of these instances, the same Jesus who had rebuked Satan for tempting Jesus to worship wrongly, did not recoil in horror when the disciples worshiped Him. He didn't say, "Only God is to be worshiped." Instead, He received the worship as His due.

It is important to grasp this last point. Jesus never stopped people from worshiping him. Some have said that just because people worshiped Him does not mean He approved of it. I think He did approve. In other places in scripture, where people tried to worship an angel (Revelation 22:8-9), or even an apostle (Acts 14:10-15), they were sternly rebuked, and their worship was redirected to God. There is not the slightest hint of that from Jesus.—Jesus received peoples' worship. Why else would the writers of scripture include these accounts unless they were instructional?

Not only did Jesus receive worship from men, but in Hebrews 1:6 the angels of God are told to "worship" (*proskuneo*) Jesus. [Note: The NWT translates it *obeisance*, but, again, in Greek the word is clearly *worship*.] Ask your-

self, is it permissible for angels to worship another angel? The answer is no (Revelation 22:8,9).

In Revelation 5:8-14, a whole section of praise and worship is devoted to Jesus the “Lamb” and to God. In a powerful passage, Paul stated that at “*the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground, and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father.*” (Philippians 2:10-11).

In John 20:28, following the resurrection, Thomas fell at Jesus’ feet and cried, “My Lord and my God.”

In Mark 5:6 a man possessed of a demon fell at Jesus’ feet and worshiped [*proskuneo*] him.

Conclusion: despite how the NWT translates *worship*, the Greek New Testament shows that Jesus received worship identical to God.

IS IT OK TO PRAY TO JESUS?

Please think with me. If the New Testament were to teach that it is alright to pray to Jesus, wouldn’t that mean that Jesus is omnipresent (everywhere at once), and able to receive people’s prayers from all around the world? Since angels are not omnipresent (everywhere at once), wouldn’t it prove that Jesus is God, because only God is omnipresent?

So, the question is, “Did Jesus receive prayer?” The answer is “Yes.” In Acts 7:59 as Stephen was being stoned he looked to heaven and prayed “Lord Jesus receive my spirit.” [Note: the footnote in the NWT says “prayer.”]

I Corinthians 1:2 says, “. . . *together with all who everywhere are calling upon the name of Lord, Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours.*”—Saints everywhere were praying to Jesus. In the Old Testament and Jewish culture, “name” implied presence. (For example, when the Jews went into battle in the “name” of Jehovah, it was implied that Jehovah’s presence was there.) To call upon the “name” of Jesus is to invoke His presence.

Since angels are not omnipresent (everywhere at once), then Jesus must be God because He received prayer.

IS JESUS THE CREATOR?

The first verse in the Bible reads, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” (Genesis 1:1). Jehovah God is plainly identified as *creator*. To have said anything different would have been blasphemy to the Jews. Time after time God is said to have created the world (Psalm 95:5-6; 102:25; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Isaiah 40:28, etc.).

On this point we are in partial agreement. You believe that God created Jesus and that God created everything else through Jesus. I personally do not believe Jesus was created [more on that later]. I do, however, agree with you that Jesus created the heavens and the earth. It is important to note that Jesus and the Father coequally share the same title: Creator.

For clarity sake, let’s look at some passages which teach that Jesus is Creator.

“***This one [Jesus] was in [the] beginning with God. All things came into existence through Him; and apart from Him not even one thing came into existence . . . He was in the world, and the world came into existence through Him, but the world did not know Him.***” (John 1:2-3, 10; emphasis mine).—The string of connected pronouns make clear that the person being spoken of is Jesus.

Paul expressed the same thought:

“*. . . because by means of him [Jesus] all [other] things were **created** in the heavens and upon the earth. . . All [other] things have been **created through him and for him**. Also, he is before all [other] things and **by means of him all [other] things were made to exist**, and he is the head of the body, the congregation. He is the **beginning, the firstborn from the dead.**”* (Colossians 1:16-18, emphasis mine).

The text indicates that Paul was writing about Jesus. The connected pronouns refer to only *one* person, Jesus. They speak of Jesus through whom “*all things were created,*” who is “*head of the congregation*” in the “*beginning,*” and is the “*firstborn from the dead.*” According to Ephesians 5:23; John 1:1; and Colossians 1:18, Jesus was all of these things.

The writer of Hebrews underscores the same point: “*God . . . has at the end of these days spoken to us by means of a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the systems of things.*” (Hebrews 1:1-2). [Note: the Greek word which the NWT translates as “the system of things” is the Greek word, “*aion,*” normally translated ages or world.] In this same chapter, as Jesus is being addressed as the “*Son*” (v.8), the writer states,

“You at [the]beginning, O Lord, laid the foundations of the earth itself, and the heavens are [the] works of your hands.” (Hebrews 1:10). Jesus is Creator.

WHO IS THE ALPHA & THE OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST?

The terms Alpha and Omega give a beautiful, awesome description of Jehovah. Long before the stars filled the heavens and our universe existed, God was. He is from everlasting to everlasting. Genesis 1:1 says, “*In the beginning God. . .*” God alone deserves the titles Alpha (the first) and Omega (the last) .

Thus, these names express the eternal nature of God. He is the source and goal of all creation. No created being could ever rightfully claim to be the first and last of all that is. Don't you agree?

Did you know that both Jesus and God are called the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, in Scripture?

Jehovah As The Alpha & Omega

Isaiah 44:6 “*I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.*” (See also, Isaiah 48:12.)

Revelation 1:8 “*I am the Alpha and the Omega, says Jehovah God.*” (See also Revelation 21:6-7.) According to this verse, who is the Alpha and Omega?—Jehovah.

Jesus As The Alpha & Omega

Revelation 2:8 “*These are the things that he says, the First and the Last, who became dead and came to life [again].*” —Who is the First and Last who came to life again?—Jesus.

Revelation 1:17-18 “*And when I saw him, I fell as dead at his feet. And he laid his right hand upon me and said: ‘Do not be fearful. I am the First and the Last, and the living one; and I became dead, but look! I am living forever and ever.’*”

Revelation 22:12-20 “*I am coming quickly. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. . . I, Jesus, sent my angel to bear witness to you people of these things.*”

The significance of the above passages cannot be underestimated. They are some of the strongest and clearest examples of Christ's claim to deity. How can there be two firsts and two lasts, and two Alphas and two Omegas?

IS JESUS AN ANGEL?

If Jesus was a pre-existent being who came from Heaven to earth (as we both agree), there are only two possibilities that can remotely have any support from scripture. He was either an angel, or else God chose to become a man.

About the only scriptural passages where it can be argued that Jesus was possibly an angel are in the Old Testament appearances of the “*Angel of the Lord.*” Part of the confusion is cleared up once we understand that the word “*angel*” means “*messenger.*” It can mean an angelic being; or a person who was acting as a messenger could also be called an *angel*.

In several Old Testament passages the term “*Angel of the Lord*” and “*Jehovah*” (LORD) were used interchangeably.

For example, in Genesis 16:7-13 the angel of the Lord said, “*I shall greatly multiply your seed. . .*” Then Sarah called to the name of the Lord (Jehovah) who spoke to her, “*You are a God of sight. . .*”

Other examples where God (or the pre-incarnate Christ) appears as the “*angel of the Lord*” can be found in Genesis 22:15-16; 31:11-13; 48:15-16; Exodus 4:2-4 (cf., 3:2); I Chronicles 21:15-19; and Psalm 34:6-7. In each instance the “*angel of the Lord*” is also identified as “*God*” or “*Jehovah.*” In such instances God acts as His own messenger; which is what I believe God did in the incarnation.

A question to consider is this: “**If I can prove beyond reasonable scriptural doubt that Jesus is not a created angel, will you then accept the fact that He is God?**”

Here are some Biblical reasons Jesus could *not* have been a created angel:

1. He bore the name, “*THE Son of God.*” Angels were referred to as “*sons of God*” (e.g., Job 1:6; 38:7). Jesus was always set apart. He is referred to as “*the only begotten from the Father*” (John 1:14). John 1:18 even goes so far as to call Jesus the “*only begotten God*” [Note: The NWT translates it as “*only begotten god.*” If you check

the Greek you will see it is the word “*theos*,” which the NWT consistently translates as *God* in other passages.]

Hebrews 1:5 reads, “. . . to which of the angels did He (God) ever say, ‘You are my Son, today, I have become your father’?” This is a rhetorical question. The obvious answer is, “None of the angels.” The implication is that Jesus is not an angel, but is in a category by Himself.

Note too that in Hebrews 1:5 Jesus was *begotten*, not “created.” Angels are *created*, not *begotten* (e.g., Ezekiel 28:13). God does not beget angels.

C. S. Lewis illustrates the meaning of “begotten” when he writes:

One of the creeds says that Christ is the Son of God “begotten, not created”; and it adds “begotten by his Father before all worlds.” Will you please get it quite clear that this has nothing to do with the fact that when Christ was born on earth as a man, that man was the son of a virgin? We are not now thinking about the virgin Birth. We are thinking about something that happened before Nature was created at all, before time began, “Before all worlds” Christ is begotten, not created. What does it mean?

*We don't use the words begetting or begotten much in modern English, but everyone still knows what they mean. To beget is to become the father of, to create is to make. And the difference is this. **When you beget, you beget something of the same kind as yourself.** A man begets human babies, a beaver begets little beavers and a bird begets eggs which turn into little birds. But when you make, you make something of a different kind from yourself. A bird makes a nest, a beaver builds a dam, a man makes a wireless set—or he may make something more like himself than a wireless set: say, a statue. If he is a clever enough carver he may make a statue which is very like a man indeed. But, of course, it is not a real man; it only looks like one. It cannot breathe or think. It is not alive.*

*Now that is the first thing to get clear. **What God begets is God; just as what man begets is man.** What God creates is not God; just as what man makes is not man. [emphasis mine]*

The rest of Hebrews chapter 1 clearly shows that Jesus is not an angel. In fact, there is one chapter in scripture which proves Jesus is not an angel. It is Hebrews, chapter 1.—Does Hebrews 1 teach that Jesus is an angel? Judge for yourself.

a. Hebrews 1:2 and 10 both refer to Jesus as creator: “. . . in His Son . . . through whom He (Jesus) made the systems of things.” (verse 2). And, continuing with the same thought begun in verse 8 addressed to the “Son,” the writer of Hebrews says, “You at [the] beginning, O Lord, laid the foundations of the earth itself, and the heavens are [the] works of your hands.” As we know, God, not angels, created the world. According to Hebrews 1:2 and 10 the Son of God was clearly involved in that process. Further, the use of the connected pronouns in verse 2 and the conjunction “and” (*kai* in Greek) in verse 10 shows that Jesus is the One being referred to both times as creator.

b. Hebrews 1:3-4 says that Jesus is “*the reflection of [his—Jehovah's] glory and the exact representation of his very being, and he sustains all things by the word of his power.*”—Do you believe an angels sustains the universe? No. God does, and yet this verse says Jesus is the one who *sustains all things*.

The angels are far lower in nature than God. Jesus, you recall, unlike the angels, was in a position of “equality” with God prior to His coming to earth (Philippians 2:6-7). Jesus is not a cheap xerox copy of the original, but God become man (Philippians 2:6-7). Within the bounds of human limitation, to look at Jesus was the same as looking at God (John 14:6-9). They have the same nature (Romans 1:2-4).

Hebrews 1:3b-4 records, “. . . and after **he** had made a purification for our sins **he** sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in lofty places. So **he** has become **better than the angels** . . .” (emphasis mine). This verse says that Christ is “*better than the angels*,” and that His name is superior to the angels. Question: how could Jesus be superior to angels if He is an angel?

To illustrate this, could a dog ever be *better* than a dog? Take Lassie, for example. Could it be said of Lassie, “You have become much better than dogs?”—No. Why not?—Because Lassie *is* a dog. She might be a wonderful, superior dog, but she is still a dog. The reason it can be said of Jesus that He is superior to the angels, is because He is *not* an angel, which means He could not be the angel Michael.

It has been argued that because Jesus *inherited* a name better than the angels, it means He did not always have that name and, therefore, He could not be God. The answer to this, of course, is that Jesus had two natures: God and man (Philippians 2:6,7). When He became a man, through the work He did on earth, He could inherit such a

name.

c. Hebrews 1:6 reads, “*And let all God’s angels do obeisance to Him (Jesus)*” (cf., Psalm 2:7,11-12). As noted before, the Greek word translated obeisance in the NWT is the same Greek word for *worship* which Jesus used in Matthew 4:10 when He told Satan to “worship only God.” Further, while *all* the angels and every creature in Heaven and on earth gives glory and worship to God, nowhere does it say Jesus worshiped God in Heaven. Isn’t it strange that everyone in Heaven is said to worship God except Jesus? Why is this so?—Because He is the second Person of the Trinity, and is Himself worshiped as God.

d. Hebrews 1:8 reads, “*But with reference to the Son (Jesus): ‘God, is your throne forever...’*” [Note: Jesus is clearly called God (theos) in this passage, not a “god.”] The reference is to the throne of the eternal God. Would an angel occupy the throne of God? Not hardly, but Jesus does (see Revelation 22:1). In Revelation 22:1 the word “throne” is singular. Jesus and God occupy *one* throne, not two thrones.

e. Hebrews 2:1-7 continues to expound upon the theme that Jesus is superior to the angels. His message is superior (verses 1-3), and though He was made “lower than angels” (in coming to earth as a man), He is now exalted to a place higher than the angels where “all things” (even angels) are subject to Him (cf., Ephesians 1:20-23).

2. In scripture Jesus does not bear the names or titles of an angel. Jesus, for example is called “the Son of God,” not “the Son of an angel.” Why? Because that which was conceived in the womb of Mary was of the seed of the Holy Spirit of God, not an angel. Isaiah 7:14 speak of the Christ child whose name means “Immanuel,” God with us. This passage does not say, “angel with us.” Isaiah says that Jesus will rightly be called: “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty **God**, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6, emphasis mine).

These names are consistent with what the Bible teaches. **Virtually every major name and attribute ascribed to Jehovah in the Old Testament is applied to Jesus in the New Testament.** For example, check out these names, titles and attributes. **PLEASE, for the sake of knowing the truth, look up each reference I list here.**

Jehovah: John 8:58 [In the Greek, the words “I AM” are present tense, not “I was” as the NWT translates it.

For example, the NWT translates the exact same words as “I am” in John 9:9, just 10 verses later. The NWT Bible’s footnote for John 8:58 says the Greek words *ego eimi* are to be translated as “I was.” This is not so. For example, the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, translates “I AM” in Exodus 3:14 as *ego eimi*. Exodus 3:14, you recall, is where God declares His name to be “**I AM**” [translated Yahweh, or Jehovah]. Also, **the NWT translates *ego eimi* as “I am”** in the following passages where Jesus says, “**I am** the bread of life,” “**I am** the living water,” “**I am** the door of the Sheep,” “Unless you believe **I am** he . . .,” “**I am** he,” etc. See: **Mark 14:62, John 6:35, 48; 8:24; 10:7; 18:5.**]

God: Hebrews 1:8, II Peter 1:1 [In Greek, both God and Savior modify Jesus Christ], John 1:1 [cf. verse 14], Titus 2:13; Acts 20:28.

Alpha and Omega: Revelation 22:13 [cf. v. 16],

First and Last: Revelation 2:8 [cf. Isaiah 44:6]

Lord: Philippians 2:10-11 [and many, many other times in the New Testament, *Lord* is used of Jesus in the divine sense.]

Savior: Isaiah 43:10 vs. Titus 2:3, 13,

King: Revelations 19:16,

Judge: John 5:22,

Holy One: Acts 3:14,

Light: John 8:12,

Rock: I Corinthians 10:3,4,

Redeemer: Psalm 49:7; 130:7-8; Acts 20:28,

Shepherd: I Peter 5:4,

Healer: Acts 9:34,

Creator: Hebrews 1:1,2; John 1:3,10; Colossians 1:15-18,

Giver of Life: I Corinthians 15:45; John 17:2,

Forgiver of Sins: Mark 2:7-11,

Omnipresent: Matthew 28:20,

Immutable (unchanging): Hebrews 13:8,

Eternal: Isaiah 9:6,

Spoke as God: Matthew 23:34-37, and

Was worshiped as God: Hebrews 1:6, John 9:38; Matthew 28:17 [In each instance, it is the same Greek root word as Matthew 4:10, where Jesus told Satan that only God is to be *worshiped*. The NWT Bible translates the same Greek word as *worship* in Revelation 5:14. Question: why do you suppose the NWT changes the word *worship* to *obesance* in passages related to Jesus, and yet translates the same Greek word as *worship* in passages referring to God?]

Question: “How could an angel, no matter how great, deserve all of these titles?” Answer: “No angel could, only the Son of God.”

Rebecca Pippert, in her excellent book, *Out of the Saltshaker and into the World*, wrote, “. . . He [Jesus] said ‘I and the Father are one’ (John 10:30). He informed people that knowing him was the same as knowing God (John 8:19), seeing him was the same as seeing God (John 12:45), believing in him was the same as believing in God (John 12:44) and receiving him was the same as receiving God (Mark 9:37) . . . Let us suppose that I made the kind of claims that Jesus did and people began to say, ‘Isn’t Becky terrific?! I mean, the way she forgive sins . . . And her moral ethics are so brilliant and impeccable. . . And what a superb teacher! . . . not to mention her perfect sinless life. There is one little problem. She does seem to be a little confused about her deity. But other than that, she really has it all together!’—No one is a little confused about his own deity and sane.”

3. In John 17:8 Jesus said He “**came**” from Thee (God), not an angel.

4. Jesus **has His own angels** (e.g., Matthew 24:31). Do angels have angels? In Revelation 22:16 Jesus said it was His own angel who had given the message of Revelation to the apostle John.

5. Are angels omnipresent? Can they be everywhere at the same time? No, but Jesus is **omnipresent** (John 14:20; Galatians 2:20; II Corinthians 13:5, etc.). He indwells and lives in the hearts of believers everywhere.

6. Are angels to be the **object of our faith**? No, but Jesus is (Revelation 14:12; Galatians 2:16; Colossians 2:5; Romans 3:22).

7. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit will be given in the name of Jesus (John 14:26). Does God ever promise to give His Holy Spirit in the name of an angel? No.

8. Do angels have the **authority to give or send the Spirit of the living God**? No, they are servants of God. However, Jesus claimed the authority to send the Holy Spirit (John 15:26; 16:7). In the trinitarian formula (Matthew 28:19), listing the “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,” the Son’s name precedes God the Holy Spirit’s name. Would an angel’s name be listed ahead of God’s name? Jesus’ name was.

9. Could an angel purchase eternal redemption, and establish an eternal covenant with the eternal Spirit? Jesus, who is *the same yesterday, today and forever*, did (Hebrews 13:8).

10. If Jesus is a pre-existent heavenly being, and He isn’t an angel, and He goes by the names ‘God,’ ‘Son of God,’ and ‘Lord of glory,’ then who is He?” To me there is only one answer, *God*.

SOME COMMON OBJECTIONS TO THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Most of the objections to the deity of Christ stem from a misunderstanding of Philippians 2:6,7 where Paul states the fact that Jesus first existed in a state of “*equality*” with God the Father, that Jesus was in the very “*form*” or “*nature*” of God. Although Jesus first existed in a state of equality, Jesus then “*lowered*” or “*humbled*” himself, being “*made in the likeness of men*.” The Bible says he assumed a second “*form*” or “*nature*.” In his humbled state as a man, of course inequalities can be found between he and God the Father. Such arguments ignore the fact that Jesus first had the equality, before he took the servant role. A proper understanding of Philippians 2:6,7 will resolve most arguments which make him out to be less than God or unequal to God. As a man, of course he God tired and had human limitations. However, those were self-imposed. Prior to limiting himself he *existed* in glorious *equality* with God.

1. No Man Can See God And Live.

Some argue that Jesus could not be God because the Bible says, “no man can see Me [God] and live,” “no man has seen God at any time,” “whom no man has seen or can see” (referring to God) (Exodus 33:20; John 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 4:12, etc.).

No one could see the totality of God in all His power and splendor and live, that is true. Even the presence of angelic beings caused godly individuals overwhelming fear and awe, almost to the point of death (eg., Daniel 10:5-11).

Yet God has been “seen.” When Moses asked to see God, God replied. “No man can see Me and live.” But, God went on, He would place Moses in the cleft of the rock and put His hand over him. Then His “glory” would pass by. After His glory passed, God said, “Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen” (Exodus 33:23). So Moses saw God, though only to a degree he could handle. There are other instances, too, in which God has been “seen.” After Jacob had wrestled with a “man,” a physical manifestation of God, Scripture says he had “striven with God” (Genesis 32:28 compare Hosea 12:3-4). Jacob said, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved” (Genesis 32:30). Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, along with seventy elders of Israel, “saw the God of Israel . . . and they beheld God” (Exodus 24:9-11). Samson’s father exclaimed, “we shall surely die, for we have seen God” (Judges 13:22). After a heavenly vision of God, Isaiah said, “I saw the Lord . . . my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts” (Isaiah 6:1-3, 5).

So the picture Scripture gives is that human beings cannot see the total glory and power of God and live.

Yet, God has been “seen” to the degree that our earthly capacities allow us to see him.

2. If Jesus Is God’s Son, How Can He Be God?

The word *Son* was used of Jesus in at least four ways: Son of Mary, Son of David, Son of Man, Son of God. Those four terms describe the natural relationship of Jesus to the Father and to humanity. Except for the first one, the Son of Mary, the other three uses of the word, *Son*, are used figuratively, and are not to be understood in a literal sense. Let me briefly define the four usages:

Son Of Mary

According to His human nature, Jesus had one parent, Mary. In this sense, Jesus of Nazareth was literally and physically a “son.” The man Jesus had no literal earthly, biological father. He was virgin born. The only real “Father” the man Jesus had was God. The seed implanted in Mary was from God’s Holy Spirit (not an angel or some alien from outer space).

Son of David

In this instance, Son of David is figurative because Jesus was not a literal first generation descendant of David (see Matthew 22:42-45). The term does show that Jesus is a descendant and heir of David. It is clearly the figurative use of the word *son*.

Son of Man

The term son of man is distinctly Jewish and was first used in the Old Testament. The word “man” is plural, referring to *mankind*, not to any one man. The word “son,” as used in the phrase *son of man*, is clearly figurative. The term, “Son of Man” links Jesus to all mankind. It shows the humanity of Jesus.

At His trial before the Sanhedrin and the high priest Caiaphas, Jesus identified Himself as the Messianic “Son of Man” referred to in the book of Daniel. Daniel 7:13, 14 reads: “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him . . .”

Caiaphas asked Jesus, “‘Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?’ ‘I am,’ said Jesus. ‘And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.’” (Mark 14:61-62). In saying this, Jesus made a powerful assertion about His coming return with great glory to judge and rule over the earth. In that encounter with Caiaphas it is significant that Jesus accepted simultaneously the titles “Son of Man”

and “Son of the Blessed One (God).”

Son of God

The term “*Son of God*” implies the full deity of Christ [that Jesus is God become man], just as the term “*Son of Man*,” as discussed earlier, implied His full humanity.

Son of Man = Fully Man

Son of God = Fully God

If the term Son of Man means that Christ is fully man, then the term Son of God means that Christ is God.

The New Testament clearly teaches that Jesus, before becoming a man, existed in the “form” of God (Philippians 2:6), and that He took a second “form” (nature) when He became a man (Philippians 2:6-7). Thus, Jesus’ two natures: as *God* [*Son of God*] and *man* [*Son of Man*].

3. “The Father Is Greater than I”

“*Jesus said, ‘... the Father is greater than I’*” (John 14:28). Does this demonstrate that Christ’s position is somehow lesser than God?

It is true that in His role as bond-servant while on earth, Jesus occupied a lower rank than the Father. Such a rank, however, does not deny His divine nature. In that same passage, Jesus told Philip, “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, ‘Show us the Father?’*” (John 14:8-9). That statement makes clear that Jesus and the Father are one in nature. To have seen one was to have seen the other (compare John 12:44, 45). Therefore, Jesus’ words that the Father was greater referred to His temporary *position*, not to His *being*.

4. Jesus Was Called the First-Born of Creation

Some people get confused over the word *first-born*, thinking it must mean “*first-created*.” That would imply that Jesus was only a created being, not pre-existent, or eternal, or God.

“*First-born*,” however, does not mean “*first-created*.” When Paul stated that Christ was “*the firstborn of all creation*” (Colossians 1:15), he used the Greek word *prototokos* which meant “*heir, first in rank*.” Had he intended to say *first-created*, he would have used the Greek word for first-created, *protoktistos*. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that God “*created*” Jesus.

5. “No One Except God Is Good”

A man once approached Jesus and said, “*Good Teacher ...*” Jesus interrupted Him: “*Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.*” (Mark 10:17-18). At first glance it may seem that Jesus was denying His divinity. He was not. Rather, He was underscoring that God alone was good. Scripture is clear. Jesus was “*sinless*,” “*holy*,” “*innocent*,” “*righteous*,” “*separate from sinners*,” and “*undefiled*” (Acts 3:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5). By all standards of goodness, Jesus was truly “*good*.” Thus, Jesus shared an attribute of God: goodness.

The evidence is inescapable. Scripturally, Jesus Christ is God incarnate [God in the flesh]. The question is: What do you plan to do about it?

IS THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY TRUE, AND IS THE HOLY SPIRIT GOD?

While the term “*Trinity*” is never used in scripture, there is overwhelming evidence to support this doctrine. My goal is not to explain the Trinity (I can’t), but rather to show that it is Biblical. This topic could easily be another book/booklet in itself, therefore, I have chosen to follow an outline format with little elaboration. I encourage you to look up the scriptures for yourself. Before you reject what I have to say, “test” to see whether it is really truth.

I define the doctrine of the Trinity (the triunity of God) as follows: The one, eternal, creator God has eternally existed as three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each member of the Godhead bears the name “God” (as we shall see). They stand in an I-Thou relationship (i.e., there is love and communication between the mem-

bers of the Godhead). Each one bears all the attributes of Deity, including personality, feelings, omniscience, eternalness, etc.

If you haven't already done so, get out your Bible, with some paper and a pencil, and study this for yourself. If in doubt, check the NWT against a Greek interlinear New Testament.

BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR TRINITY

1. Grammatical:

A. Plural Pronouns Used For God

1. *Elohim* is the Hebrew word for God. It comes from two Hebrew words, *El* (or *Eloah*), which is the word translated "god." "*Im*" is the plural ending. For example, in Genesis 1:1 it says, "In the beginning God (plural) created (singular verb) the heavens and the earth."
2. The terms *us* or *our* are sometimes used by God when referring to Himself (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8).
3. In Ecclesiastes 12:1 the word *creator* is actually plural in Hebrew. In Isaiah 54:5 the word *maker* is plural in Hebrew. This is consistent with the concept of the Trinity, as **all three members of the Godhead are said to be creator(s)**.

Father: Genesis 1:1; Psalm 95:5-6

Son: John 1:2-3,10; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 1:2,10.

Holy Spirit: Genesis 1:2; Psalm 104:30.

4. Deuteronomy 6:4 is one of the premier verses in all of scripture expressing the oneness of God. What is not often realized is how the plurality of God is shown in this verse. The verse reads "Hear, O Israel: The LORD (Yahweh, singular) is our God (elohim, plural). The LORD (Yahweh, singular) is one (**plural**)."[We are used to thinking of the word "*one*" as singular. In this case it is plural; just as man and woman become *one* when they get married.]
5. In the New Testament, Matthew 28:19 gives one of the clearest evidences for the doctrine of the Trinity. Jesus said we are to "... baptize in **the name** (singular) of the **Father, Son and Holy Spirit**" (emphasis mine). This verse shows that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit comprise one name, not three names.
6. In numerous places in the Old Testament two Yahweh's or two elohim's are mentioned: Genesis 19:24; Psalms 45:6-7; Isaiah 44:6; Hosea 1:7; Zechariah 1:12-14; 2:8-9.

B. Other Places In The Bible Where The Trinity Is Indicated: II Samuel 23:2,3; Isaiah 48:16-17; 59:20-21; 63:8-16.

C. Places In The New Testament Where The Trinity Is Shown: Matthew 3:16-17; 22:43-45; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 1:35; 3:21-22; John 3:34-36; 14:26; 16:13-15; Acts 2:32-33,38-39; 20:21-23; Romans 15:16,30; I Corinthians 12:4-6; II Corinthians 3:4-6; 13:14 (cf., Numbers 6:24-26); Ephesians 1:3-14 (vv. 3-6 = **Father**, vv. 4-12 = **Son**, vv. 13,14 = **Holy Spirit**); Ephesians 2:18-22; 3:14-17; 4:4-6; II Thessalonians 2:13-14; I Timothy 3:15-16; Hebrews 9:14; 10:7-15; I Peter 1:2.

D. The Interpersonal Relationships Between The Father, Son and Holy Spirit Are Clearly Shown:

1. Between The Father And Son:

- a. **They are one:** John 8:19; 10:28-30; 12:45; 13:20; 14:7-9; II Corinthians 1:21; Colossians 1:15.
- b. **They are distinct:** Psalms 2:7,11-12; 110:1; Daniel 7:13; Matthew 11:27; Luke 3:22; John 3:16-17; 5:17,23,26; 14:23; 15:1; 17:5; 18, 21,23; Hebrews 12:23-24.

2. Between Jesus And The Holy Spirit

- a. **They are one:** John 7:37-19; Acts 16:6,7; Romans 8:9-11; Galatians 4:6 (cf., 3:5,14); I Peter 1:11; I John 5:7 (cf., John 14:6); Revelation 19:10.

b. They are distinct: John 14:16,-17; 16:7,14; Romans 8:26-27,34; I Corinthians 12:3.

3. The Father And The Holy Spirit

a. They are one: I Corinthians 12:3; Matthew 10:20; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 2:22; Hebrews 10:15-16 (cf. Jeremiah 31:33).

b. They are distinct: Isaiah 48:16; John 14:26; I Corinthians 2:10,11.

D. The Deity Of God The Father And The Son: Jesus and the Father coequally share the same names and attributes. They each are referred to as eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, worthy of worship, etc.

E. The Deity Of The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is not an *it*, or some impersonal energy force. As you will see, the **Holy Spirit bears the attributes of deity**. Compare what the Bible says versus Jehovah's Witness doctrine.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God Himself.—He is not an “it.” The Holy Spirit is a personal being, part of God.

1. God: I John 4:2,3; I Corinthians 2:4-5,10-16; II Corinthians 3:17; Matthew 10:20; John 4:24; Acts 28:25-28.

2. Jehovah (Yahweh): Hebrews 3:7-11 (cf. 4:4); 10:15,16; Numbers 11:29.

3. Most High: Luke 1:35.

4. Speaks: II Samuel 23:2-3; Mark 13:11; Acts 1:16, 13:2; 20:23; I Corinthians 12:3.

5. Teaches [implying intelligence]: Nehemiah 9:20; Luke 12:12.

6. Omnipresent: Psalm 139:7.

7. Referred to with personal pronouns: John 16:14; Acts 13:2 (there are many, many more verses).

8. Was lied to: Acts 5:3,4.

9. Performs miracles: I Corinthians 12:9-10.

10. Is Christ's Spirit: Romans 8:9.

11. Commands: Acts 8:29; 13:2-4.

12. Gives life: John 6:63 (cf., Psalm 36:9 [Father], John 5:21 [Son]) and II Corinthians 3:6.

13. Can be blasphemed (a clear sign of deity!—One does not blaspheme an “*it*.”): Mark 3:29.

14. Thinks and is intelligent beyond belief: Romans 8:27.

15. Bestows eternal life: Galatians 6:8.

16. Has emotions: Romans 14:17; Ephesians 4:30.

17. Omniscient: I Corinthians 2:11; 12:8

18. Eternal: Hebrews 9:14

19. Intercedes: Romans 8:26 (Note: An impersonal force cannot pray. As part of the Godhead, the Spirit prays.)
... and the list could go on and on.

G. Conclusion: Is the term Trinity used in scripture? No. Is the concept clearly taught. Yes. This is not a doctrine of Satan, as your church teaches.

WHAT WILL YOUR RESPONSE BE?

In love, while I believe you are probably a very kind, sensitive person, I would guess that you too may have been brainwashed into believing some untruths. I also believe there is a spiritual battle being waged for your soul. Paul spoke of Satan blinding the minds of people. Please pray that if your eyes have in any way been blinded by Satan that God will open them to the truth. The things I am about to share with you are incredibly important. Paul said, “... if we or an angel out of heaven were to declare to you as good news something beyond what we declared to you as good news, let him be accursed . . .” [Galatians 1:8]. Paraphrasing what Paul said, he said that if someone preaches a different gospel than the one he preached, let him go to hell. Those are hard words. The question is, “Do Jehovah's Witnesses preach a different

gospel?”

Let me explain, as best I can, what I believe the New Testament says the gospel (good news) really is. Most who call themselves Christians will agree with what I am about to share. The differences between most Christian denominations are over minor doctrines (e.g., modes of baptism, styles of worship, etc.), not these major truths. Please look up each verse, and let God speak to your heart.

Spiritual Law #1: God is a God of love. He loves you, and has a wonderful plan for your life [I John 4:16; John 3:16; 10:10, Ephesians 2:10]. What God wants for your life is awesome beyond belief [Ephesians 3:14-21].

Spiritual Law #2: So, what went wrong? Why aren't more people experiencing what God intended? It is because our sin separates us from a holy God [Isaiah 59:2; Romans 6:23]. Sin is active or passive rebellion against God. It is not listening to God, but “*doing our own thing.*” Because God is “holy,” totally without sin or wrongdoing, we cannot just hop into God's presence [Isaiah 6:1-5, I John 1:5]. Just as you wouldn't be allowed to walk on someone's expensive white carpet if you had oily, muddy shoes, neither will God tolerate sin in Heaven. If we went to Heaven without a basic change in who we are, we would corrupt and pollute Heaven, just as we have the earth.

We all fall short of God's standard of perfection. If we lined up in front of the Grand Canyon, and tried to jump across it, some might jump further than others; but the point is, we would all fall short. [Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:23]. Because Adam and Eve chose to sin, the Bible teaches that this sin nature got passed on to all mankind; the same way a leopard inherits its spots from its parents [Genesis 3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-21].

According to the Bible, sin is more than murder, stealing, or adultery. From God's perspective sin is such things as boasting in our own achievements. Sex outside of marriage is sin. Lying, gossip, slander, cheating, cowardice, yielding to fear, not trusting God, coveting what others possess, not acting in faith, being disrespectful, putting worldly success or money before God, unforgiveness, lack of prayer, not keeping our promises, looking lustfully at someone, swearing, not acting in love, and a bunch of other things, are sin [Exodus 20; James 4:16; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8; Romans 1:18-32; 14:23; Matthew 5,6; etc.].

According to the Bible, we all stand guilty before God, no matter whether we have sinned a little or a lot [James 2:10].—It is like the man who said, “*But, Judge, look at all the people I didn't kill.*”—The point? None of us deserves to go to Heaven. We have all sinned against an eternal God and committed eternal sins.—Stating it bluntly, unless God forgives us, by God's standard we're deserving of Hell. As a just and righteous judge, God cannot just sweep our sins under the carpet.

Spiritual Law #3: Christ is the only way to God. He died to pay the penalty for our sin. By his death, Jesus bridged the gap between a holy God and sinful man. Either we go to God by way of Jesus, or we do not get to God [II Thessalonians 1:8-9; John 3:16; Romans 5:8, Acts 20:28; I Timothy 2:5].

The story is told of a young woman who received a phone call from the emergency room of a hospital stating that her dad was deathly ill, that he may have only hours to live. Because she lived a couple hundred miles away, she got in her car and began frantically driving to see her father. As she was going through a small southern town, she looked in her rear view mirror, and there was a police car chasing her. Because she was going so fast, the officer didn't merely give her a ticket, he arrested her. The next day she appeared before the local county judge who told her that for going 50 miles per hour above the speed limit, her fine would be \$300 or three days in jail.

She pleaded with the judge. “*Your honor, you don't understand. I don't have \$300 with me, and I can't spend three days in jail. I must go to see my father who is dying.*” The judge said, “*I'm sorry, young lady, but the law says you must pay \$300 or spend three days in jail.*”

She began to weep, and the old judge was moved with compassion. To the surprise of everyone in the court, he stood up, stepped down from the bench, walked over, took off his robe, put on his sports coat, walked around in front of the bench, pulled out his checkbook, wrote a check for \$300, and laid it on the bench. Then he walked back around, took off his sports coat, put back on his robe, and resumed his seat. He said, “*Young lady, the law says you must pay \$300 or spend three days in jail, but I see someone has paid the fine for you. Case dismissed!*”

In essence, that is what God did for us. The Bible says that the penalty for sin is death [Romans 6:23]. When we stood condemned, without hope, God took off his robe of deity, put on a robe of humanity, became a man in the person of Jesus Christ, and died for us. God did for us what we could never do for ourselves [Romans 5:6]. According to scripture, Jesus is both God and man. He has two natures: one human, the other divine [Philippians 2:6,7 and Romans 1:3,4]. If we accept his offer of forgiveness, when we stand before God as Judge, we will be standing before the One who loved us and paid the fine for us: “Case dismissed!”

Spiritual Law #4: Knowing the first three laws is not enough. It takes a response on our part. While we cannot earn salvation, it is nonetheless a *gift* which must be received [Isaiah 64:6; Ephesians 2:8-9]. John 1:12 says, “*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*”—How do we *receive* the gift of salvation?

First, we are asked to *believe* several wonderful truths: (1) that Jesus loves us, (2) that he died for our sins [past, present and future], and (3) that he arose from the dead [John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 10:9; I Corinthians 15:3-5].

Since it is our sins which have been keeping us from God, we must be willing to turn from our sin [Mark 1:14,15]. The Bible calls this *repentance*, which simply means to *turn around*.—For example, if you are on the wrong bus heading away from God, you need to change buses, and get on board with Christ. Or, putting it another way, if you have been driving your own bus, it means being willing to get out of the driver's seat, and inviting Jesus to take over as your bus driver. He can turn your life around, and get you going in the right direction.

The tale is told of a man who tightrope walked across Niagara Falls with a 200 pound sack of sand on his back. Upon successfully completing his feat he turned to a spectator and asked, “*Do you believe I could do that again?*” The person said “*Sure!*” The tightrope walker tossed down the sand and said, “*Then climb on my back.*”—Real believing is more than giving mental assent to the claims of Christ. God asks you to “climb on board,” and commit yourself to him. It is more than believing something to be true in your head. It is a commitment of the heart.

If you confess your sins to God, and ask him to forgive you, the Bible promises you will be forgiven. No matter how big, or how awful, your sins are, God is more than willing to forgive you [Isaiah 1:18; I John 1:9]. And, more incredible still, is the fact that these sins will *never* be held against you [Romans 4:7,8; 8:1].

Because we are weak and rather powerless when it comes to sin, God places his Holy Spirit in each person who receives Christ in order to help them keep from sinning. In other words, if you allow him, the Holy Spirit will power your bus [Acts 1:8; Ephesians 1:7-14, Galatians 2:20; I Corinthians 10:13; Philippians 4:13]. With God's Spirit living in and through you, you can also begin to experience God's peace and joy [John 14:27; Galatians 2:20, 5:22; Romans 7:14-8:11].

And last, but not least, if you receive Christ into your life, you become a child of God, part of God's family.—Let me share a simple illustration. Would you go to a stranger's funeral and ask the family of the deceased for a share of the inheritance? You could tell them, “I'm a *good person*, and I do nice things for others.”—Would that impress them? No. They'd say, “I'm sorry, but the inheritance is for family members only. We don't even know you.”

Well, the same is true with God. You must be born into God's family if you expect to *inherit* what is God's. His inheritance is for his children, for those who *know* him. That is why Jesus said unless a person is *born again*, he or she will never see the Kingdom of Heaven [John 3:3-18]. The moment you *believe* in Christ, you are legally adopted into God's family. You inherit eternal life, and glory beyond your wildest imagination awaits you [I Corinthians 2:9; 3:21-23; Ephesians 1:3; Romans 8:31,32; John 14:1,2; Revelation 21:1-4].

When you die, how can you be sure you will go to Heaven to be with God? The Bible says, “*And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may KNOW you have eternal life.*” [I John 5:11-13, emphasis mine]—How can you *know* you have eternal life? Does it depend on how you feel, or upon circumstances? No. It depends on God's promise. God promises that if you *believe* in Christ, and commit your life to him, you can *know* you have eternal

life.

Scripture also says that if you ask *anything* according to God's will, God will hear and answer you [I John 5:14].—So, is it God's will that you *believe* in Jesus and *receive* him? Yes [II Peter 3:9]. Therefore, if you sincerely pray to God, and invite Jesus into your heart, you can do so with confidence *knowing* that God will hear and answer your prayer. This is where *faith* comes in: believing that what God tells you is true.

Speaking for myself, I entered into a relationship with Jesus when I was 14 years old. At a youth meeting I prayed and invited Jesus Christ to come into my life and forgive me of my sins.—And he did. It was that simple. To my amazement, it worked. God's peace flooded through me. Old feelings of guilt were gone. As I read the Bible, it finally began to make sense. God became very real to me. I also began seeing God answer specific prayers, which surprised and delighted me no end. While being a Christian has been downright hard at times, I wouldn't trade the joy of knowing Christ for anything in the world.

A TIME OF DECISION

Christianity isn't merely a religion; it is a love-relationship with the living God. God is the lover of your soul, and he has proposed marriage to you. The question before you is whether you will say, "I do."

If you have felt the Spirit of God speaking to you, and you have become convinced in your heart and mind that what I have written is true, then you must decide what you will do with Jesus.

No matter how much evidence I give, the final step is still one of faith, even though there is solid evidence upon which to base that faith. For example, I can't *prove* that George Washington lived, but I can show overwhelming evidence that he did. By *faith*, I believe George Washington lived, and by *faith*, I believe Christianity is true, based on evidence, and the fact that it works. Jesus Christ has changed my life. By his grace, I am not the person I used to be.

A simple way for you to test the truthfulness of what I've said is for you to actively, honestly, seek God on His terms [as best you understand], with a willingness to follow the truth, whatever that is. Not to honestly seek God with all of your heart, is to gamble with your soul. Choosing not to decide is a decision. To do nothing is the same as saying "No."

To start with, you may want to pray something like this: "*Dear Lord God, if you're there, and what this booklet says is true about Jesus, then I want to know. Please show me the truth.*"—Praying this prayer will not make you a Christian, but it is an honest first step in turning to God.

Secondly, read.—Read the Bible. Don't just rely on what you have heard. Study it for yourself. Look up the Bible verses I've shown you. *Think* with your mind; *listen* with your heart. Allow God to speak to you.—Read some of the books I have made reference to in this booklet. There are well thought-out answers to virtually any question you can ask.

Some day you will stand before God, either forgiven or unforgiven. Hell is one of those horrible doctrines most Christians, myself included, don't like to discuss. However, Jesus talked about Hell more than all the other Bible writers put together. Not to choose God, and accept his offer of forgiveness, is to choose a life of eternal separation from Him [Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:11-15; II Thessalonians 1:8-9; Matthew 13:40-43]. God is serious when it comes to sin. God hates and judges sin. If you refuse his forgiveness, and you hang on to your sin, you will die with your sin, like a person refusing to get off the Titanic. If there were any other way, Jesus would not have had to die. There is no other payment for sin acceptable to God other than the death of Jesus on the cross. Scripture says, "*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved*" [Acts 4:12].

This may be a hard decision for you. Much is at stake. If you receive Jesus as Lord, it will cost you. It has cost me. You may be misunderstood. Friends and family members may reject you.—Welcome to the club. Jesus was also misunderstood and rejected. He was willing to die for you. Are you willing to live for him?

No one has a deciding vote in this decision but you. God votes for you. Satan, who is also very real, votes against you. I pray that you will cast your deciding vote before it is too late. According to scripture, there are no second chances in another life [Hebrews 9:27].

What will you do with Jesus? He stands at the door of your heart knocking. Will you open the door and let

him in? [Revelation 3:20]

If you become convinced that what I have said is true, and if you are ready to open the door of your heart to him, then find a quiet place and invite him in. Don't procrastinate. What greater joy could you have than to know your sins are forgiven, that you have been given eternal life, and that you are prepared to meet your Lord. His return could be very soon [Zechariah 14:1-9; I John 3:1-3].

When you are ready, may I suggest the following prayer, or one like it: "*Dear Jesus, I thank you for loving me. I am sorry for the ways that I have sinned against you. I believe you died on the cross for my sin. As best as I know how, right now, I invite you to come into my life. Please forgive me, and cleanse me from all my sin. Make me the person you want me to be. I need you. I willingly yield my life to you. Thank you for hearing my prayer. Amen.*"

These words are not magical. The important thing is that you mean them. Once you have invited Jesus Christ to be a part of your life, I encourage you to find a loving church where the Bible is both honored and taught. Make public your commitment to Christ by getting baptized [Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 10:47, 48a]. Visit several churches before you pick a church. Pray about it, and listen to your heart. God can lead you. It is sort of like trying on a new pair of shoes. You don't necessarily want to buy the first pair you try on.

Continue to pray, read scripture, and allow God to speak to you. If you're a student in high school, check out such groups as Campus Life, Young Life, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, K-Life, etc. If you are in college, there are some wonderful college ministries such as Campus Crusade For Christ, the Navigators, Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, etc. Groups such as these are a great way to begin to grow and to find support throughout the week. Even if you are not a student, call one of these groups and ask them to suggest some good churches in your area.

The story is told of a native witch doctor who had done much evil in his life, causing much needless suffering through his witchcraft. As a result of the love and work of some Christian missionaries, he yielded his heart to Christ. Later, he called a tribal meeting to share with his village the transformation that had occurred in his life. He said that before he came to know Christ, it was as though there was an evil dog in him that made him do cruel, hateful things. When he repented, and asked Christ into his life, he said it was as though a powerful dog of love and peace came to live in him.

As he spoke, a small lad sitting at his feet grew more and more absorbed with what he was saying. When the lad couldn't take the suspense any longer, he blurted out, "*Did the bad dog leave?*" The former witch doctor paused and said, "*No, son, he still hangs around.*" The boy asked "*How do the two dogs get along?*" The old man replied, "*They fight all the time!*" The little boy, with great concern in his voice said, "*Well, which one wins?*" The old man, with a smile and a twinkle in his eyes said, "*The one I feed the most.*"—How true.

There are spiritual battles that will go on in your life. Just as God and angels are real, Satan and his demons are also real. The New Testament has much to say about them. Beside the books I've mentioned thus far, there are three books I highly recommend to help you gain and maintain spiritual victory in your life. The first two are written by Dr. Neil Anderson; *Victory Over the Darkness* and *The Bondage Breaker*. The third book is, *Search For Significance* by Robert McGee. I also recommend such Christian writers as Charles Swindoll, Josh McDowell, and Max Lucado as profound, yet readable authors. If you like somewhat heavier reading, try C.S. Lewis [e.g., *Mere Christianity*, *The Weight Of Glory*, *The Screwtape Letters*], or Peter Kreeft [e.g., *Making Sense Out Of Suffering*].

To grow as a new Christian, I suggest you contact any of the following Christian organizations for their assistance and literature. Check your local phone book, inquire at a Christian bookstore, or access them over the internet.

Billy Graham Evangelistic Assoc.: <http://www.graham-assn.org>

Campus Crusade For Christ: <http://www.ccci.org>

Fellowship Of Christian Athletes: <http://www.gospel/com.net/fca/>

Freedom In Christ Ministries [Dr. Neil Anderson]: <http://www.ficm.org>

Great Commission Ministries: <http://www.greatcommission.org>

Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship: <http://www.ivpress.com>

Josh McDowell Ministries: <http://www.ccci.org/josh/>

The Navigators: <http://www.gospelcom.net/navs/>

Youth For Christ: <http://www.gospelcom.net/yfc/>

* You can also log onto <http://www.gospelcom.net/> for addresses of other Christian organizations and resources.

Keep feeding the good side. May His grace and peace be yours.

“ . . . in love he claims all.”—C.S. Lewis