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[Senior Editor- It is with regret we announce the resignation of Associate Editor Dr. Dustin Smith. whose scholarship and erudition has been greatly appreciated, and will be sorely missed. We wish him the best in his future endeavors.]

Editorial, Dustin Smith - Fall 2015

It has been the custom of the *Journal of Biblical Unitarianism* to focus its attention upon the

Journal of Biblical Unitarianism theological perspective that regards the true God as one person, based upon the Shema of Deut. 6:4 and Mark 12:29. This journal's former title, *Journal from the Radical Reformation,* also made a significant emphasis on contributing to the wider scholarship of this important theological theme. This issue aims to continue in this tradition by offering a variety of articles on the subject of monotheism.

Bob Jones, one of my esteemed colleagues at Atlanta Bible College, has provided an essay on the theme of monotheism within Isaiah chs. 40-48. Jones demonstrates that the Isaianic claims located within these chapters insist that Yahweh is the sole creator God, thus

subverting the claims of Israel's pagan neighbors. Lee F. Greer offers a lengthy article on reclaiming the Jesus depicted in our earliest biblical traditions. Greer establishes through carefully argumentation that the post-biblical doctrine of the Trinity was not held by either the biblical authors or their successors. Furthermore, my article on monotheism depicted in Gen. 1:1-2:3 hopes to situate the passage within its literary and cultural milieu. The essay compares and contrasts Genesis' first creation account with other creation accounts and beliefs within the Ancient Near East and concludes that the Israelites argued for the true God polemically against the gods of the surrounding nations.

A few upcoming publications in regard to the biblical theology of unitary monotheism might be of interest for readers. First of all, the highly acclaimed James D. G. Dunn will release his final volume in the *Christianity in the Making* series, published by Eerdmans. The title, *Neither Jew nor Greek: A Contested Identity,* will focus on the development and history of early Christianity from the year 70 CE and proceeding into the second century. This extremely important work is due out in December of this year. On a much smaller scale, Wipf and Stock Publishers has accepted a manuscript written by myself and two other gentlemen (Lee Irons and Danny Dixon) in which we debate three views of Christology, the first christological book to attempt such a feat. The publishers are currently typesetting the manuscript, so look forward to *The Son of God: Three Views* (hopefully) within the next couple of months.

I wish our readers well and sincerely hope they find fulfillment and enjoyment with this issue.

Dustin Smith, Associate Editor

Reclaiming Jesus—A historical and bibliographic note on what came before trinitarian orthodoxy

Lee F Greer | Riverside, CA ©2015

Trinitarians either claim that their christology is either found in the New Testament or a natural development. An expanding body of scholarly work on early Christianity challenges the orthodox Nicean-Chalcedonic formulation of trinitarian theology on historical, philosophical, and critical-exegetical grounds. These scholarship breakthroughs parallel those on the historical Jesus. As a disciplinary outsider, a scientist, I summarize scholarly literature on the question: To what extent is the institutionally-ascendant trinitarian orthodoxy an eisegetical and anachronistic reading of later conciliar dogma back onto the disparate texts and early Jesus movement rather than based on the traditions and writings captured in our NT? In addition I offer some thoughts on the ethical implications for the broader world.

What is trinitarianism? The developed doctrine has been summarized as (1) one God, monotheism; (2) three distinct and equal persons in God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and (3) the Father *begets* (*eternal generation* of) the Son and from whom *proceeds* (*eternal procession* of) the Spirit (East), or the Father and the Son are jointly the *eternal source* of the Spirit (West, *filioque* clause), although all three are "ontologically equal" and co-eternal with each other (Senor, 2013).[1] Senor's defense is largely against hypothetic, straw man "incoherence" arguments against the trinity, and appeals to the speculative dynamic indwelling (περιχώρησις; rotational procession of reciprocity) of the inner life of the trinity as three persons in one substance,

1 Senor, T.D. (2013). "The doctrine of the trinity is coherent," in Moreland, J.P., Meister, C., Sweis, K.A. (eds.). *Debating Christian theism*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; pp. 313-314, 314-346.

first put forward by the 4th century Cappadocian fathers.[2] Senor does not engage how trinitarian doctrine developed. Perhaps the definitive trinitarian work on christological doctrinal development is the magisterial two volume *Christ in the Christian tradition* (1965, 1975; 1987; 1995; 1996)[3] by Aloys Grillmeier, SJ. The evangelical Protestant trinitarian theologies by Robert W. Jensen, *The triune identity* (1982) and the two volume *Systematic theology* (1997, 1999).[4]

§ ***Textual criticism and historical-critical exegesis***. Although we will later turn in brief to scholarly Unitarian and Arian Christian dissent going back for centuries, under often devastating suppression and persecution, we start by reference to modern scholarship. In the very mid-20th century years when Karl Rahner[5] and others were re-kindling interest in trinitarian doctrine, many other scholars of all persuasions were unearthing a very different early Christian world.

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2 Cappadocian fathers of early post-Nicean fame who came up with the social trinity: Basil the great (330-379 CE), Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 332-395 CE), and Gregory of Nazianzus (329-389 CE).

3 Grillmeier SJ, A. (1965; 1975 2nd ed.). *Christ in the Christian tradition. Volume one: From the apostolic age to Chalcedon (451)*. Trans. by John Bowden. London, UK: Mowbray & Company / Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press. Grillmeier SJ, A. (1987) *Christ in the Christian tradition. Volume two: From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the great (590-604). Part one: Reception and contradiction, the development of the discussion about Chalcedon from 451 to the beginning of the reign of Justinian*. Trans. by Pauline Allen & John Cawte. London, UK: Mowbray & Company / Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press. Grillmeier SJ, A., co-authored by Hainthaler, T. (1995). *Christ in the Christian tradition. Volume two: From the Council of Chalcedon*. *Part Two: The church in Constantinople in the sixth century*; trans. by John Cawte & Pauline Allen. London, UK: Mowbray & Company / Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press. Grillmeier SJ, A., co-authored by Hainthaler, T. (1996). *Christ in the Christian tradition. Volume two: From the Council of Chalcedon*. *Part four: The church of Alexandria With Nubia and Ethiopia*. 2nd revised ed.; trans. by John Cawte & Pauline Allen. London, UK: Mowbray & Company / Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

4 Jensen, R.W. (1982). *The triune identity: God according to the gospel*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press. Jenson, R.W. (1997). *Systematic theology, Volume 1: The triune God*; and (1999). *Systematic theology, Volume 2: The works of God*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

5 Rahner, K. (1970). *The trinity*. London, UK: Burns & Oates.

Textual criticism of the extant, surviving New Testament fragments uncover numerous texts where politically-ascending proto-orthodox scribes in the early centuries and later altered and introduced text variants usually in awkward efforts to make the manuscripts read more in harmony with their evolving christologies. A striking example is the altering of John 1:18 in certain Alexandrine texts from "the only begotten son" (ὸ μονογενὴς υἱός) into the oddly misbegotten phrase "the only begotten god" (ὸ μονογενὴς θεὸς). Many such textual alterations are documented by Bart Ehrman in his *Orthodox corruption of scripture* (1993).[6]

Dissent in the modern trinitarian ranks. Distinguished Anglican theologian James D. G. Dunn who himself subscribes to the Nicean formulation, argues that most trinitarians are confused by their own great creeds, and often differ little from tritheists. They have furthermore failed to do exegesis and therefore have eisegetically read their own creeds back into the diverse christological statements of the NT. Dunn is part of a rich tradition of such scholars.

In his monumental *Christology in the making* (1980; 1989)[7] Dunn exegetically considers the disparate christological understandings of Jesus for Christians in the NT such as christ / messiah, son of David, son of man, the last Adam, son of God, wisdom, *logos*, and high priest in their own contexts, showing that all of these apprehended Jesus as messiah, as the anointed agent of God, exalted and honored by God, and none of them comprehended any plurality in God or personal divine preexistence—all were indicative of the one God of Israel's immanent action in their messiah. Preexistence was only in the sense of the Hellenist-influenced wisdom tradition of the preexistence of the personified metaphor of wisdom with God (as in *Proverbs* 8; חכמה, or σοφία in the *LXX*). The earlier extended metaphor of primordial "lady wisdom" in *Proverbs* 8 (cf. *Job* 26) was likely a

6 Bart D. Ehrman. (1993). *The orthodox corruption of Scripture: The effect of early Christological controversies on the text of the New Testament*. Oxford, UK; New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

7 James D.G. Dunn (1980; 1989 2nd edition). *Christology in the making: A New Testament inquiry into the origins of the doctrine of the incarnation*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press.

poetic polemic against the Yahwist *asherah* (אֲשֵׁרָה) cult of the late pre-captivity centuries BCE in Judah (see Schneidewind, 2004)[8]. These metaphorical ideas were developed in Hellenistic Philonic Judaism in the 1st century BCE, but were never thought to introduce plurality in God.

A Stoic-influenced divine immanence which had found a home in the wisdom tradition of Hellenistic Judaism continuously made itself felt in Paul's christology and would have been plain to his first hearers and readers—the one God of Israel is immanent in his divine agency in and through his chosen agent, Jesus the messiah / christ. Dunn repeatedly argues that the first readers in context understood all of these passages in terms of metaphor, specifically "vivid personification of God's immanence" (p. xx), not as a preexistent hypostatic plurality in God. Hypostatic plurality was introduced by a few apologists in the late 2nd century and the controversies provoked raged down through the 6th century, but not in the 1st century CE.

The richness of pre-Hellenistic late prophetic thought is seen in the messianic passage in Isaiah 45:1-14.[9] Yahweh calls forth Cyrus (כֹּרֶשׁ) as his messiah (מְשִׁיחוֹ), to subdue nations and kings under him (v1), giving him the treasures of darkness and the hidden secret riches to reveal to him that the God of Israel called you (Cyrus) by name (v3), surnamed (אֲכַנְּךָ) you and clothed you (v4) as His son though you (Cyrus) didn't know Him, made like a pot by a Potter and brought forth as a child of a Father and a Mother (v9-10), inviting you (Cyrus) to ask him about His sons and command Him about the work of His hands (v11). God raised His messiah Cyrus in righteousness, directing all his ways, so that he would free My captives of Israel and re-build My city (v13). God decrees that the labor of Egypt, the merchandise of

8 See Schniedewind, W.M. (2004). *How the Bible became a book: The textualization of ancient Israel*. Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

9 Compare Psalm 2 where Yahweh establishes his anointed / messiah in Mt. Zion and proclaims him God's son, begotten of God this day by divine decree, before whom all the kings of Earth will be subjected; or coronation Psalm 45 where Yahweh anoints the davidic king and delegates to him divine power to rule, even addressing him as God (אֱלֹהִים) whose throne lasts forever (cited in Heb. 1:8 and applied to christ) and enjoining the royal bride of Israel to worship (וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִי) him as their lord, while the great and wealthy entreat his favor (יְחַלּוּ פָנֶיךָ).

Cush, the Sabeans and men of stature would come to you Cyrus His messiah, coming in chains, bowing down in worship and supplication to you Cyrus, saying 'Surely God is in you; You are a God who hides yourself, O God of Israel' (v14). That is, God was *in* Cyrus conquering, freeing the captives, rebuilding the city, and receiving the worship due God alone through his messiah Cyrus—it is the deputized messianic language of divine immanence, as Dunn repeatedly points out. None of this made Cyrus part of a godhead. In mid-1st century, Paul writes of the one God of heaven that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (cf. Acts 38:10; Eph. 4:30; Col. 1:19; 2:9; John 14:10; 17; etc.). Note that this is neither the Patripassian modalist position, "God was Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," nor the Athanasian trinitarian position, "Christ was God reconciling the world to Himself." The latter two are entirely foreign to Paul and his Hellenistic Hebrew concept, and by introducing an equal to God, they depart from monotheism, in a way anachronistic to the NT. So argues Dunn.

Divine sonship. The meaning of Jesus as the son of God was understood in far different and diverse ways in the 1st century CE than later. In chronological order, we summarize (see the **Appendix I** chronology):

- *Q-Magdalen[10]-Ya'akovian tradition (30-62 CE)* – The earliest Jesus traditions are preserved in what survives of the sayings / aphorisms source *Q* (30-50 CE),[11] in the epistle of James (*Ya'akov*) the brother of Jesus (before 62 CE) with its 30 citational and allusive parallels with *Q*),[12] in the parallel *Didache* (~100 CE),[13] and in another parallel

10 Mary Magdalene, in the older Nazarene tradition, was considered a leading apostle and teacher. After the ascendancy of the Pauline-influenced tradition, she gradually became eclipsed, and turned into a recovered woman of ill-repute.

11 *Q* (http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/q-contents.html); Robinson, J.M., Hoffman, P., Kloppenborg, J.S., eds. (2000). *The critical edition of Q: A synopsis including the gospels of Matthew and Luke and Thomas with English, German, and French translations of Q and Thomas*, by The International Q Project. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Press.

12 Tabor, James D. (2006). *The Jesus dynasty: The hidden history of Jesus, his royal family, and the birth of Christianity*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster; p. 275.

13 Translation: http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/didache-roberts.html.

collection of sayings, some of which ended up in the gospel of Thomas (~80s-120 CE).[14] Central to the *Q*-Ya'akovian tradition are the teachings (not the person) of Jesus, the anointed servant of God, in announcing the incoming (Jubilee) justice of the kingdom of God, forgiveness as debt release through redistributive justice (Jesus' kingdom prayer in *Q*, Lk. 11:2-4 = Mt. 6:9-13). There are no virgin birth or resurrection stories or complex soteriological statements, and even the communal meal has no imagery of the "body and blood" atonement but is simply a thankful remembrance of what God has taught the kingdom community through His servant Jesus the messiah, with the wine signifying "Your holy vine of David Your child which You made known to us through Jesus Your child" and "the fragments of bread" signify "the life and knowledge" (or sayings of truth) revealed "through Jesus Your child" (*Didache* 9:2-3). David and Jesus are each called God's child, similar to how John the Baptizer and Jesus are called "wisdom's children" in *Q* (Lk. 7:29-35 = Mt. 11:16-19). This "common meal" formulation is foreign to the sacrificial Pauline and later eucharistic developments.

- *Pauline (50s-early 60s CE)* – In the Pauline and deutero-Pauline works, christ is the pre-ordained son of God, the blood sacrifice for sin, exalted to messianic lordship through a spiritual resurrection, and memorialized in the eucharistic meal of the "body and blood." The epistles open with reference to God our father, and the Jesus as the lord messiah / christ, who is always subordinate to God the source of all: "χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ είρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ Πατρὸς ἠμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ" which translates to "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and lord Jesus messiah." Paul's writings (50s-

14 A number of the sayings or *logia* of Jesus suggest that the gospel of Thomas was written contemporary with much of the NT writings, somewhere between 50-100 CE, with independent parallels and allusions such as reference to "James the just, the brother of Jesus" as leader of the church (cf. Gal. 2:1-14). See Hogeterp, A.L.A. (2006). *Paul and God's Temple*. Leuven, Netherlands / Dudley, MA: Peeters; p. 137; and Meyer, M. (2001). "Albert Schweitzer and the Image of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas." In Meyer, Marvin; Hughes, Charles. *Jesus then & now: Images of Jesus in history and christology*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International; p. 73.

early 60s CE) strongly influence the Markan theology of atonement (70s-80s CE). In Romans 1, christ is foretold by God in the prophets as the Davidic son from "the seed of David according to flesh" who is "marked out [ὀρισθέντος] as the son of God in power through the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead" (vs. 3-4), indicating the Pauline linking of Jesus' divine sonship with a spiritual resurrection and visionary appearances referenced (see I Cor. 15), a very different understanding of christology and of Easter from what obtained later. Anachronistically, Grillmeier (1975; p. 17) by contrast assumes the chalcedonic formulation of two natures (divine and human) in considering this passage.

- *Markan gospel (70s-80s CE)* – In Mark's gospel, Jesus is the son of God from the baptism, citing Psalm 2:7, where the davidic king on his coronation day was told by Yahweh, "You are My son, today have I begotten you" (v7). Mark's "body and blood" eucharist and soteriology mirrors the Pauline. There are no miraculous birth stories or resurrection appearances in Mark, but an empty tomb and directions to meet the risen Jesus in the Galilee. [ref to truncated ending here???]

- *Matthew's gospel (80s-90s CE)* – Jesus is the son of God because of the virgin birth (no preexistence implied). By Matthew, a claim of divine virgin birth or parthenogenesis is inserted on an eisegetical mistranslation and misapprehension of the Greek *LXX* of Isaiah 7:4. This claim is found only in Matthew and Luke in the NT, but parallel some other religions. An empty tomb is embellished with elaborate resurrection miracles, and visionary appearances of risen Jesus again only in the Galilee on a mountain.

- *Luke & Acts (late 80s-early 2nd century CE)* – Luke follows Matthew on divine sonship through virgin birth. However, Acts also reflects an another earlier tradition about the apostolic teaching concerning the man Jesus' death and resurrection by God's "predetermined plan and foreknowledge" (2:23-25), Jesus as "a man whom God has appointed" (17:31), and Jesus' divine sonship (citing Ps. 2:7) results

from God resurrecting him (13:33; cf. Heb. 1). Contrary to Mark and Matthew, Luke-Acts has all immediate resurrection appearances in or near Jerusalem over 40 days, but not in the Galilee.

- *The epistle to the Hebrews* (late 1st to early 2nd centuries CE) – This epistle was not accepted in the West for centuries, and views Jesus' divine sonship as connected with the resurrection (cit. Ps. 2:7) and his priesthood as the eschatological final appeal of God who earlier spoke by prophets, whose exaltation and worship was earned by inheritance, obedience, and derivation from God his Father (chapter 1).

- *Early Johannine writings (90s to after the turn-of-the-century CE)* – Jesus is the son of God and the eschatological, Danielic son of man foretold of old, the messianic fulfillment at last of God's divine λόγος, the christ who is always subordinate and pictured as praying, "And this is life eternal that they might know You, the only true God, and Jesus the christ whom You sent" (John 17:3). Immediate resurrection appearances occur in Jerusalem, except for one in the Galilee the late-added chapter 21.

- *Revelation (100 or later CE)* was not accepted in the East for centuries. Jesus is the lamb of God, the man-child exalted to God's throne because of his sacrifice and foreordained as lamb slain in the divine foreknowledge of God who alone is creator, from the foundation of the world, like the foreknown saints. God and the lamb are carefully distinguished, and the divine honors bestowed in accordance with the lamb's accomplishment. All honors to the lamb are derived from and bestowed by God the creator.

Critically, in not one of these 1st and early 2nd century sources is there any post-Nicene-like divine "second person" christology (3rd – 4th centuries), let alone a full trinity (5th century), although the christologies got more elaborate and increasingly foreign to the Hebrew tradition of Jesus himself with time. Unlike trinitarian theism, in the NT (whether mid-1st or early 2nd

centuries) there is only one God as Father to all, Jesus exalted as messiah, and no co-equal plurality in God.

Preexistence. Judaism and the earliest Christianity had very different views of preexistence than developed later in Christianity. The Hebrew view of preexistence was what existed in the mind and foreordination of God, and reached fulfillment in events and human beings, whereas the platonic Greek view encompassed the literal incarnation of preexistence of deities and spirit beings. "...when the Jew wished to designate something as predestined, he spoke of it as already existing in heaven" (Selwyn, 1983).[15] In Hebrew thought, "everything truly valuable preexisted in heaven" (Schurer, 1979).[16] "Within the Christian tradition the New Testament has long been read through the prism of the later conciliar creeds... Speaking of Jesus as the Son of God had a very different connotation in the first century from that which it has had ever since Nicea [325 CE]. Talk of Jesus' preexistence [in the NT] ought probably in most, perhaps in all cases to be understood, on the analogy of the preexistence of the Torah, to indicate the eternal divine purpose being achieved through him rather than preexistence of a fully personal kind" (Wiles, 1974).[17] In the Babylonian Talmud (Tract. פסחים chap. iv)[18], seven things pre-existed creation in the decrees of God: (1) Torah (Pr. 8:22), (2) repentance (Ps. 60:2-3), (3) Gen Heden (Eden; Gen. 2:8), (4) Gehenna (Tophet; Isa. 30:31), (5) the throne of glory, (6) the place of the sanctuary (Jer. 17:12), and (7) the name of messiah (Ps. 72:17). Dunn argues that preexistence in the Pauline writings involves imagery "allusive and strongly metaphorical" for God's wisdom in christ, not a separate

15 Selwyn, E.G. (1983). *First epistle of St. Peter*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House; p. 124.

16 Schurer, E. (1979). *The history of the Jewish people in the age of Jesus Christ*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark; **2**: 522.

17 Wiles, M. (1974). *The remaking of Christian doctrine*. London, UK: SCM Press; pp. 52-3.

18 Cited in Rees, T. (1818). *The Racovian catechism*. London, UK: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown. Reprinted 1994. Indianapolis, IN: Christian Educational Services; https://archive.org/details/racoviancatechis00rees; Link to full version on Google books.

preexistent hypostasis in God (Dunn, 1998).[19] Diverse texts make explicit the same understanding of preexistence. The righteous are invited to "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt. 25:34). The names of the saints are "written in the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). The first epistle attributed to Peter, addresses those "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God …. for he [christ] was foreknown before foundation of the world, but has been manifested in these last times because of you" (I Pet. 1:2, 18-20). Personal preexistence "is not necessarily implied in his description of Christ as 'foreknown before the foundation of the world,' since Christians also are objects of God's foreknowledge" (Selwyn, 1983). Other modern scholars, both Protestant and Catholic, who recognize that preexistence in Hebrew thought and in the NT was not necessarily literal but rather in the purpose, plan, foreknowledge, and foreordination of God include F.C. Baur (1878);[20] H.H. Wendt (1892; re *John* 17:5);[21] E.C. Dewick (1912);[22] *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* (1916);[23] Charles Gore (1923);[24] James MacKinnon (1931);[25] John Knox (1967);[26] Lyonnet (1967);[27] Raymond Brown (1966; re

19 Dunn, James D.G. (1998). *The theology of Paul the apostle*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

20 Baur, F.C. (1878). *Church history of the first three centuries*. London, UK: Williams and Norgate; p. 65.

21 Wendt, H.H. (1892). *The teaching of Jesus*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark; **2**: 169-72.

22 Dewick, E.C. (1912). *Primitive Christian eschatology, The Hulsean Prize essay for 1908*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; pp. 253-4.

23 *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*. (1916). Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark; **2**: 264.

24 Gore, C. (1923). *Belief in Christ*. London, UK: John Murray; p. 31.

25 MacKinnon, J. (1931). *The historic Jesus*. Longmans, Green and Company; pp. 375-9.

26 Knox, J. (1967). *The humanity and divinity of Jesus*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press; p. 106.

27 Lyonnet, S. (1967). "L'ascension et la mariologie biblique." In *Maria in Sacra Scriptura*. *Acta congressus mariologici-mariani in Republica Dominicana anno 1965 celebrati*. Rome: Pontifica Academia Mariana Internationales; **4**: 61.

John 17:5; 1977);[28] Aaron Milavec (1978);[29] B.F. Westcott (1981);[30] and even Augustine also, regarding John 17:5 (cit. Buzzard & Hunting, 1998).[31]

Even the Philippians 2 hymn, which Arian Christians three centuries later cited to argue their subordinarian preexistence view, Dunn and other modern scholars, including Catholic theologian Karl Josef Kuschel argue is a "last Adam" christology where the first Adam as man in God's image (ἄνθρωπον κατ᾽ είκόνα Θεοῦ, Gen. 1:27 *LXX*; cf. Heb. 1) tried to exalt himself to God, the "last Adam," like the first man was in the form of God (μορφῇ Θεοῦ) and the form of a servant (μορφὴν δούλου), but did not grasp for divine equality as Adam did but humbled himself, therefore God superexalted (ὑπερύψωσεν) him. It is not an assertion of Jesus' divine preexistence. Writes Kuschel in *Born before all time* (1992), "The Jewish background is enough for understanding this hymn and indeed for providing continuity with Aramaic Jewish Christianity in the proclamation of Christ. So 'humbling himself,' 'emptying himself,' is not to be understood as the act of a mythological pre-existent heavenly being, but as a qualification of the man Jesus. Like the son of man and son of God of the earliest Aramaic-speaking Jewish-Christian community, he was understood and confessed as a lowly figure and as God's plenipotentiary, as an eschatological representative, as the true human being and definitive messenger."[32] Importing later dogma by contrast, Grillmeier (1975; pp. 20-21) departs from Hebraic thought giving μορφῇ Θεοῦ a very non-Hebrew meaning insisting with Ernst Käsemann that it should be translated "'in the form of divine mode of existence in

28 Brown, R. (1967). *The gospel according to John, Anchor Bible*. New York, NY: Doubleday; p. 743; (1977). *The birth of the messiah*. London, UK: Jeffrey Chapman; pp. 140-1, 291.

29 Milavec, A. (1978). "Matthew's integration of sexual and divine begetting." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* **8**: 108, 31.

30 Wescott, B.F. (1981). *The gospel of John*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; pp. lxxxiv, lxxxvii.

31 Buzzard, A., Hunting, C.F. (1998). *The doctrine of the trinity: Christianity's self-inflicted wound*. Lanham, MD; Oxford, UK: International Scholars Publications.

32 Kuschel, K-J. (1992). *Born before all time: The dispute over Christ's origin*. Transl. John Bowden. New York, NY: Crossroad; pp. 254-55.

divine power and substance'" and attempts to dismiss the Adamic parallel, which as Dunn points out involves a strong five point chiastic parallel.[33]

Although N.T. Wright and James Dunn are both proponents of the new (non-Reformationist) perspective on Paul, they disagree on Pauline christology and preexistence. In *The new perspective on Paul* (2005; 2008)[34] and in his earlier, *The theology of Paul the apostle* (1998)[35], Dunn maintains that Paul's view of divine immanence in christ does not involve personal preexistence. By contrast, N.T. Wright insists that I Cor. 8:6[36] shows that Jesus as christ was included in the *shema Israel* (שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל) and hence recognized as part of the godhead. Dunn naturally would see this as anachronistic eisegesis, with Paul's forceful "confession of God as one"[37]: "Paul speaks of God not simply of the God of Christ but as the 'the God our *Lord* Jesus Christ.' Even as Lord, Jesus acknowledges his Father as his God. Here it becomes plain that *kyrios* (lord) is not so much a way of identifying Jesus with God, but if anything more a way of *distinguishing* Jesus from God."[38]

Worship and christology. In dialogue with his fellow trinitarians, James Dunn engages Larry Hurtado (1988; 1999; 2003; 2005)[39], and Richard Bauckham

33 Dunn (1989); pp. xviii-xix.

34 Dunn, J.D.G. (2005). *The new perspective on Paul*. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck; (2008, revised edition). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

35 Dunn, J.D.G. (1998). *The theology of Paul the apostle*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans / Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark; pp. 266-292.

36 I Cor. 8:5-6, "...as there are many gods and many lords, yet to us [Christians] there is one God the Father from whom are all things and we in Him, and one lord Jesus [the] christ because of whom are all things and we because of him." Vid. the deutero-Pauline I Tim. 2:5, "There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man christ Jesus."

37 Dunn (1998); pp. 36-37; Section §10.5 (p. 252 in pp. 234-265).

38 *Ibid.* p. 254; see Ephesians 1:3 and II Corinthians 1:3. Compare I Peter 1:3 and I Corinthians 11:3, "the head of christ is God."

39 Hurtado, L.W. (1988). *One God, one Lord: Early Christian devotion and ancient Jewish monotheism*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress; (1999). *At the origins of Christian worship: The context and character of earliest Christian devotion*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; (2003). *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in earliest Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanss; (2005). *How on earth did Jesus become*

(1998; 2008) who argues that Jesus as christ was accorded "full cultic worship" by early Christians who were "binitarian" but still "monotheistic."[40] Dunn gives a more nuanced, exegetical treatment of worship in NT christology in *Did the first christians worship Jesus?* (2010).[41] He points out that the most common Greek word translated "worship" is προσκυνέω (to bow down, to prostrate in submission) translated in the Greek LXX OT from the Hebrew שָׁחָה, which is applied to God, to God's appointed human rulers, or to God's angelic agents. Joseph's brothers worship before Egypt's governor, Joseph (Gen. 42:6; 43:28), as Jacob did before Esau (Gen. 33:3). Various people worshipped before King David (II Sam. 14:4, 22; I Kings 1:23, 31). At King Solomon's cultic coronation, "the whole assembly worshipped the Lord [יהוה; Κύριος in the *LXX*] and the king" (I Chron. 29:20). Solomon was anointed (וַיִּמְשְׁחוּ) king by the high priest (v22), and "so Solomon sat on the throne of Yahweh (כִּסֵּא יְהוָה) as king instead of David his father..." (v23). Dunn cites Barker in pointing out that "the king was the visible presence of the Lord in the temple ritual and Solomon's enthronement was his apotheosis … this is what they meant by becoming divine."[42] Likewise, God appointed the messiah Cyrus to receive worship and supplication (Isa. 45:14ff). Such worship is consistent with unitary monotheism in which the one God only was honored through His agent, and neither Joseph, Solomon, Cyrus, nor Jesus became a divine hypostasis or part of any godhead. Reviewing the exegetical evidence, Dunn concludes that the early Christians "worshipped" Jesus only in the qualified divine agent sense, and not as the one creator God. They did not engage in "Jesus-olatry" even in the more expansive christologies. Jesus as christ is the εἰκὼν or image of God (Col.

God? Historical questions about the earliest devotion to Jesus. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

40 Bauckham, R. (1998). *God crucified: Monotheism and christology in the New Testament*. Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press / Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanss; pp. vii-viii; (2008). *Jesus and the God of Israel: God crucified and other studies in the New Testament's christology of divine identity*. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, Authentic Media / Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; pp. xi-x, 127.

41 Dunn, J.D.G. (2010). *Did the first Christians worship Jesus? The New Testament evidence*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

42 Barker, M. (1999). "The high priest and worship of Jesus" in C.C. Newman, J.A. Davila, G.S. Lewis (eds.), *The Jewish roots of christological monotheism* (JSJSupp 63). Leiden, : Brill; pp. 94-95.

1:15; cf. Heb. 1). "An *idol*, is a depiction on which the eye fixes, a solid wall at which the worship stops. And *icon* on the other hand is a window through which the eye passes, through which the beyond can be seen, …" (Dunn, 2010; p. 147). Unfortunately, Dunn focuses on only one form of early Christianity the Pauline, and ignores almost entirely the older Jesus-Ya'akovian tradition, which entailed an even more modest and Hebraic christology, less mystical and visionary than Paul's.

Doubting Jesus—insights of the mythicists. Analogous to the null hypothesis of statistical tests in the basic sciences, in historical[43] studies, the mythicists or "christ as myth" theorists doubt that a Jesus of Nazareth existed or that a single figure can be connected with the christ of Christian faith. The mythicists[44] and others in historical Jesus studies, emphasize the paucity or

43 As Dominic Crossan states, "The first step of my own methodological process does not begin with the words or deeds of Jesus himself from the earliest Christian data but—trying to imagine *as if* Jesus had never existed—I begin with the Roman Empire and the Jewish tradition in interaction with it" (2009). "Jesus and the challenge of collaborative eschatology," in *The historical Jesus: Five views*, contributors, R.M. Price, J.D. Crossan, L.T. Johnson, J.D.G. Dunn, D.L. Bock; Beilby, J.K. & Eddy, P.R. (eds.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; p. 106.

44 Vigorous scholarly debate has yielded several recent works: Classical historian Richard Carrier (2014). *On the historicity of Jesus: Why we might have reason for doubt*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, attempts to examine "the relevant evidence for and against the historicity of Jesus" (p. 13); Carrier (2012). *Proving history: Baye's theorem and the quest for the historical Jesus*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Press; by a Dominican priest under discipline, Brodie, T.L. (2012). *Beyond the quest for the historical Jesus: Memoir of a discovery*. Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press; Price, R.M. (2009). "Jesus at the vanishing point," in *The historical Jesus: Five views*, Beilby, J.K. & Eddy, P.R. (eds.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press; pp. 55-83; Price, R.M. (2011). *The Christ-myth theory and its problems*. Cranford, NJ; American Atheist Press; Doherty, E. (2009). *Jesus: Neither God nor man – the case for a mythical Jesus*. Ottawa, Canada: Age of Reason Publications; Ehrman, B.D. (2012). *Did Jesus exist? The historical argument for Jesus of Nazareth*. New York, NY: HarperCollins; Doherty, E. (2012). *The end of an illusion: How Bart Ehrman's "Did Jesus Exist?" has laid the case for an historical Jesus to rest*. Ottawa, Canada: Age of Reason Publications; Carrier, R., Murdock, D.M., Salm, R., Doherty, E., Fitzgerald, D., Price, R.M., Zindler, F.R. (2013). *Bart Ehrman and the quest for the historical Jesus of Nazareth*. Cranford, NJ; American Atheist Press; Van Voorst, R.E. (2000). *Jesus outside the New Testament: An introduction to the ancient evidence*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; and others.

absence of independent historical evidence for Jesus, the parallels to various dying savior-god mythologies, and suggest that Jesus Christ was an invention of the earliest Christians, namely Paul. The mythicists and others have provided a valuable service in helping us to understand the degree to which Paul constructed the visionary figure of the christ of faith and by extension most of Christian theology.[45] Where the mythicists seem to be mistaken is in not recognizing that Paul is fighting against an earlier Jesus tradition and set of disciples (associated with James the brother of Jesus) that he vigorously opposes, sarcastically belittles, and even anathematizes (Gal. 1:8-9, 16-18; 2:6, 9, II Cor. 5:11-13; cf. the later-composed, Pauline-influenced Luke-Acts harmonization, which minimizes the role of the family of Jesus, except where unavoidable). In his mid-century epistle, James the brother of Jesus responds much more gently.

What about the λόγος *poem in John 1:1-18?* This poem fits best, as Dunn points out within the wisdom tradition of Hellenistic and pre-Hellenistic Judaism. The Aramaic paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible called Targums sometimes also personified "the word of the Lord" (Lightfoot, 1989 reprint).[46] Lightfoot writes, "When John presents the eternal word he was not thinking of a being in any way separate from God, or some 'hypostasis.' The later dogmatic trinitarian distinctions should not be read into John's mind … in the light of a philosophy which was not his …. We must not read John in the light of the dogmatic history of the three centuries subsequent to

45 Some of the important books on the Pauline metamorphosis of a large segment of the early Jesus movement: Tabor, J. (2012). *Paul and Jesus: How the apostle transformed Christianity*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster; Ehrman, B. (2009). *Jesus interrupted: Revealing the hidden contractions in the Bible (and why we don't know about them)*. New York, NY: HarperOne; Maccoby, H. (1986). *The mythmaker: Paul and the invention of Christianity*. New York, NY: Harper & Row; Segal, A.F. (1997). *Paul the convert: The apostasy and apostolate of Saul the Pharisee*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Lüdemann, G. (2001). *Paul: The founder of Christianity*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books; and the apologetic essay of N.T. Wright (1997). *What Paul really said: Was Paul of Tarsus the real founder of Christianity?* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

46 Lightfoot, J. (1989 reprint ed.). *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica*. Vol. 3, p. 238. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

the evangelist's writing." See also James Denny (1920; 121-125)[47]; C.J. Wright (1953; 677)[48]; Morris (1971; 102)[49]; Birdsell (1975; 715)[50]; Cupitt (1979; 92)[51]; F.F. Bruce (allows for possibility in a 1981 personal communication, A.F. Buzzard & Hunting, 1998)[52]; J.A.T. Robinson (1985)[53]; Leonhard Goppelt (1992)[54]; Colin Brown (1991)[55]; Karl-Joseph Kuschel (1992; 381)[56]; WA Beardsley (1993)[57]; and James D.G. Dunn (1980, 1989). We may know that the earliest Christians commonly understood the λόγος poem in terms of poetic personification metaphor not any plurality in God, because the 2nd century proto-orthodox church fathers admitted as much, and are thus primary inadvertent historical sources, particularly since some of them were consciously pushing away from personification metaphor toward literal preexistent hypostaticism.

By the 2nd century CE, we have in Justin Martyr (died ca. 165 CE) the middle and neo-platonic-influenced adopter of the "metaphysical trias" first speculating about christ's personal hypostatic preexistence, but even his

47 Denny, J. 1920. *Letters of Principal James Denny to W. Robertson Nicoll, 1893 – 1917*. London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton.

48 Wright, C.J. (1938; 1953). *Jesus: The revelation of God*, Book 3, of the *Mission and Message of Jesus: An exposition of the gospels in the light of modern research*. New York, NY: EP Dutton & Company.

49 Morris, L. (1971). *The gospel according to John. New International Commentary on the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

50 Birdsall, J.N. (1975). Language of the New Testament. *New Bible Dictionary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanss.

51 Cupitt, D. (1979). *The Debate About Christ*. London, UK: SCM Press.

52 Buzzard, A.F., Hunting, C.F. (1998). *The doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's self-inflicted wound*. Lanham, MD; Oxford, UK: International Scholars Publications.

53 Robinson, J.A.T. (1985). The person of Christ (Bampton Lecture). In *The priority of John*. London, UK: SCM Press.

54 Goppelt, L. (1992). *The theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans; **2**: 297, "The *logos* of the prologue became Jesus; Jesus was the *logos* become flesh not the *logos* as such."

55 Brown, C. (1991). Trinity and incarnation: In search of contemporary orthodoxy. *Ex Auditu* **7**: 88-89.

56 Kuschel, K.-J. (1992). *Born before all time? The dispute over Christ's origin*. Transl. John Bowden. New York, NY: Crossroad.

57 Beardsley, W.A. (1993). "Logos." In: B.M. Metzger and MD Coogan (eds.), *The Oxford companion to the Bible*. New York, NY / Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

formulation sounded more Arian than trinitarian: "There was a time when the son did not exist; God was not always a Father" (*Against Hermogenes*, ch 3; also *Dialogue* 56, 62, 128, 129).[58] Theophilus of Antioch (c. 117-181 CE) also used the term "trias" but still thought of the λόγος of John 1 as "God's plan, purpose, reason, and vision" (cf. Fackré, 1978).[59] Tertullian (c. 155-230 CE), even though he had begun using the Latin *trinitas*, was still far removed from the Nicean and Chalcedonic usages of one and two centuries later. Tertullian translated λόγος as *sermo* or speech in Latin, defining *sermo* as "whatever you think" or "understand." He wrote, "it is the simple use of our people [Christians] to say [re John 1] that the word of revelation was with God." Speaking of λόγος, he added that "although God had not yet sent forth His word, He had it both with and in reason within Himself" (*Ad Praxeus*, 5). Condescendingly he wrote of the common Christians of his day who did not agree with his metaphysical speculations: "'All simple people,' Tertullian wrote, 'not to call them ignorant and uneducated... take fright at the 'dispensation'... they will have it that we are proclaiming two or three gods'" (Addis, 1967).[60] Not surprisingly the "simple people" were correct—more than one god was contemplated.

Even the speculative Origen of Alexandria (185-254 CE) in his commentary on the gospel of John, testified perhaps unwillingly to "numerous Christians [in his day] who employed only the name of the *logos* for the pre-existent Christ (without its philosophical connotation and only in the sense of an utterance of the Father) which came to expression in a son when Jesus was conceived" (cf. Heb. 1:1-2).[61] "Whoever knows the development of the history of dogma knows that the image of God in the primitive Church was unitary. And only in the second century did it gradually, against the doctrine of subordinationism, become binary. For the Church Fathers such as Justin Martyr, Iranaeus, Tertullian, Jesus is subordinate to the Father in everything,

58 Cited in Buzzard & Hunting (1998).

59 Buzzard & Hunting (1998) citing Fackré, G. 1978. *The christian story*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

60 Addis, W.F. (1967). *Christianity and the Roman Empire*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton.

61 Buzzard & Hunting (1998) citing Fackré, G. (1978). *The Christian story*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

and Origin hesitated to direct his prayer to Christ for as he wrote, 'That should properly be to the Father alone'" (Lapide, 1981).[62] "In the first century God is still monotheistic in good Jewish fashion, in the second century God becomes two-in-one, from the third century the one God gradually becomes threefold" (*Ibid*.). Harold Ellens comments, "From Nicea [325 CE] to Chalcedon [451 CE] the speculative and Neoplatonist perspective of Alexandrian christology gained increasing ground and became orthodox Christian dogma in 451 C.E."[63] Catholic scholar and academic Karl-Heinz Ohlig writes (2003), "No matter how one interprets the individual steps, it is certain the doctrine of the Trinity, as it in the end became 'dogma,' both in the East and even more so in the West, possesses no Biblical foundation whatsoever and also has no 'continuous succession'."[64]

Of the *Q*-Ya'akovian or Nazarene Christians who lingered in Palestine, Epiphanius of Salamis (315-403 CE) in his anti-heretical *Panarion* provides valuable and hostile historical witness:

"The Nazarenes are simply complete Jews. They use not only the New Testament but the Old Testament as well, as the Jews do. They have no different ideas, but confess everything exactly as the Law proclaims it and in the Jewish fashion—except for their belief in Christ. They acknowledge both the resurrection of the dead and the divine creation of all things. *They declare that God is one, and that his son is Jesus Christ*. They are trained to a nicety in Hebrew. They are different from Jews, and different from Christians. They disagree with Jews because they have come to faith in Christ; but since they are still fettered by the Law—circumcision, Sabbath, and the rest—they are not in accord with Christians. Today, Nazarenes are found in Beroea, near Coele-Syria, in the Decapolis near Pella, and in Bashanitis at the place called *Khokhabe* in Hebrew. For that was their place

62 Lapide, P. (1981). *Jewish monotheism and Christian Trinitarian doctrine*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press.

63 Ellens, H. (1997). The influence of paganism on post-apostolic Christianity. *The Bible Review* (June, 1997).

64 Ohlig, K.-H. (2003). *One or three? From the Father of Jesus to the trinity (Saarbrücker Theologische Forschungen)*. New York, NY: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers; p. 130.

of origin, since the disciples had settled in Pella after ... Christ told them to abandon Jerusalem and withdraw from it because of its coming siege. People like these are refutable at once ... they are nothing but Jews. Yet they are very much the Jews' enemies. The Jewish people have a hatred of them. Three times a day they say, 'God curse the Nazarenes,' for despite their Jewishness, they preach that Jesus is the Christ" [*Emphasis* added].[65]

The ἐγώ εἰμί *or "I am (he)" statements*. Even in the late turn of the century gospel of John, which has teachings so different from the kingdom proclamation of Jesus in *Q* and the later synoptics, there is no claim by Jesus to be part of the deity. This phrase, which literally means "I am (he / she)" or "It is I," particularly when an explicit predicate is not nearby has been ungrammatically seized upon by orthodox apologists since Ambrose (c. 340-397 CE) as an unqualified statement of self-existence and of divinity. However, with all the "I am (he)" statements of Jesus in John's gospel, *the context always makes explicit or implicit the predicate, whether the good shepherd, the messiah, the vine, the son of God, or the son of man*. In context, ἐγώ εἰμί never stands alone and unqualified by the predicate, not even in Exodus 3:14 (*LXX*) where a present participle is explicit, God says to Moses, "ἐγώ εἰμί ὁ ον" or "I am the One who is." In II Samuel 2:19-20, the predicate is implicit in context, Abner asks his pursuer, "Is that you, Asahel?" who replies, "ἐγώ εἰμί" / "I am (he)."[66] In John 4:25-26, the predicate is Jesus as messiah to the woman at the well. In 6:20, "it is I [Jesus], don't be afraid." In 9:9, the implicit predicate is the man born blind. In 13:3, 13, 18-19, the predicate is the Davidic messiah set up by God into lordship. In 17:14, 16, the implicit predicate is Jesus who is not of this world even as his disciples

65 Excerpted from Epiphanius, *Panarion* 29; cf. Pritz, R.A. (1992). *Nazarene Jewish Christianity: From the end of the New Testament period until its disappearance in the fourth century*. Jerusalem, Israel: Magnes Press, Hebrew University.

66 So, a story—my little Greek grandmother, ΥιαΥίά (pronounced yə-YA) and all of 4' 9", knocks on my door, and my hands being full, I call out, "Who it is?" So she answers with her little Greek motherly voice, "ἐγώ εἰμί" or colloquially, "It's me [ΥιαΥίά]!" because the predicate is always revealed by context. Recognizing her in the nick of time, I was about to stone her for claiming divine self-existence, until I thought, wait, Athanasian apologists since St. Ambrose have perverted the Greek grammar of this passage. So, she lived happily with us for several more years.

are not of this world, i.e. sent by God. In 18:4-5, the implicit predicate is Jesus who acknowledges before the mob that he is indeed Jesus of Nazareth. And of course in John 8:24, 28, and 58, the explicit and implied predicate is the uplifted (Danielic) son of man, who does only what he is told to do by God, and whose day was joyfully foreseen by Abraham because he was before Abraham in the foreordination and wisdom of God.

On the basis of his careful exegesis (which has earned him several fellow trinitarian critics), James Dunn yet insists on his own adherence to the Nicene-Chalcedonic trinitarian formulation, which he states gives him leave to be historically-faithful to the NT texts contrary to "...the assumption that the Logos of John 1.1 can be substituted by 'Christ', or the argument that Col. 1.15 would have been intended by Paul as a description of Christ, that is, of Jesus the messiah. In contrast, he says classical orthodoxy is that Jesus Christ is he whom the Word of God *became* in the incarnation."[67] It is exceedingly revealing that historical exegesis leads James Dunn to what he calls "classic orthodoxy" which is ironically closer to classical Socinian unitarianism than to classical trinitarianism. Dunn continues, "The mistake, or so it seems to me, is the equivalent of treating 'person' in the Trinitarian formula ('one substance, three persons') as 'person' in the sense that we now understand 'person', or, more to the point, in the way that Jesus of Nazareth is a person. If the pre-existent Word of God, the Son of God, is a person in that sense, then Christianity is unavoidably tritheistic. And if we take texts like Col. 1.15ff. as straightforward descriptions of Jesus who came from Nazareth we are committed to an interpretation of that text which has broken clearly and irrevocably with monotheism." By departing from the Stoic-influenced wisdom tradition of divine immanence that was Paul's context, we lose Paul's claim was that the "fullness of God" came to dwell in the messiah, Jesus, and that "fullness is for us too" (*Ibid*., p. xxxii). The post-NT 'hypostatization' of christology tends inevitably toward modalism or polytheism. Trinitarianism indeed launched into the confusion inherent in its own self-contradictions.

67 Dunn, James D.G. (1989). Forward to the second edition. pp. xxxi-xxxii.

Biblical unitarians. In recent years, a resurgence of conservative, biblicist unitarianism in the Anabaptist tradition has resulted in a flurry of scholarly works, including those of Anthony Buzzard and other writers.[68] These scholars in the Anabaptist tradition have in many cases done very careful exegesis and a large service in uncovering earlier christological meanings in the NT documents. Trinitarians in academia and in ecclesiastical positions have tended to mostly ignore these scholars even as they have largely ignored the historical, exegetical insights of their fellow critical scholars. A weakness in biblical unitarian exegesis is not their unitarianism, but like others, their Christian tendency to harmonize and ignore the gulf between the Pauline / post-Pauline and Jesus / Ya'akovian traditions, and the resulting very real conflicts in what became our NT—all unitarian, but differing on the kingdom, ethics, salvation, covenant, visionary dualism, eschatology, and the role of messiah.

§ ***History—tracing the sources to uncover untenable historical claims***. Moving away from the exegetical questions in the historical-critical analysis of the NT texts (1st and early 2nd centuries CE), we consider the philosophical roots and ethical consequences of Athanasian-trinitarian ideology and of its rivals in the development of Christianity in the following centuries CE.

Hellenistic influence? One of the egregiously false historical claims of Robert W. Jenson (1982)[69] is his attempted denial that Hellenistic philosophy

68 Buzzard, A.F., Hunting, C.F. (1998). *The doctrine of the Trinity: Christianity's self-inflicted wound*. Lanham, MD / Oxford, UK: International Scholars Publications; Buzzard, A.F. (2014). *The one God, the Father, one man messiah translation: New Testament with commentary*. McDonough, GA: Restoration Fellowship; Buzzard, A.F. (2007). *Jesus was not a trinitarian; A call to return to the creed of Jesus*. McDonough, GA: Restoration Fellowship; Navas, P. (2011). *Divine truth or human tradition? A Reconsideration of the orthodox doctrine of the trinity in light of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures*. Bloomingdale, IN: AuthorHouse; Deuble, G.S. (2010). *They never told me this in church*. McDonough, GA: Restoration Fellowship; Schoenheit, J.W., Graesar, M.H., Lynn, J.A. (2000). *One God & one lord: Reconsidering the cornerstone of the Christian faith*. Indianapolis, IN: Christian Educational Services.

69 Jensen, R.W. (1982). *The triune identity: God according to the gospel*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press; p. 34.

influenced the formation of the trinity doctrine. As one trinitarian scholar recently summarized Jensen: "early Christian thinkers ... deliberately refused to mingle Greek and biblical ideas and the doctrine of the Trinity is the fruit of their efforts."[70] On the contrary, it has long been shown by many that Hellenistic philosophy in the immanent Stoic form and even in the Platonic-Philonic form influenced Pauline theology in the epistles, that Stoic thought in Hellenistic Judaic wisdom tradition influenced λόγος christology in the turn-of-the-century Johannine gospel. Cynic and Stoic immanence may have even affected Jesus' own oral sayings and *modus operandum*. Indeed, neo-platonism deeply affected 4th century christology both Arian and Athanasian. Jensen's claim has always been demonstrably false but is completely untenable as Marian Hillar has shown in his massive *From logos to trinity* (2012)[71] where he not only traces the Hellenist λόγος concepts in Jewish and early Christian thought as the plan and wisdom of God, but also goes beyond previously-known sources on emanations. Hillar breaks new ground in discovering previously-unknown sources of trinitrian thought in the middle Platonic philosophy of Numenius and in the Egyptian metaphysical concepts and monuments where the divine is represented as "a triune entity" resembling the "metaphysical triad" of Justin Martyr, and the *trinitas* of Tertullian. The proto-orthodox introduced a new hypostatic οίκουμένη of mystical interactions to find plurality in God, all of which is very Platonic Hellenism. It is important to note that both the Arians and the Athanasians were influenced by neo-Platonism, rather than Stoicism as were some of the earlier Christians, including Paul.

Patristics against incarnational trinitarianism. Early christology in the 1st – 2nd centuries CE entailed the language of fulfillment of God's prophetic action, the climactic realization of God's preexistent purposes, but not the incarnation of preexistent divine or semi-divine hypostases. Telling primary historical witness is found in the many early incarnation ideas of the proto-

70 Rice, R. (2015). "What is the trinity?" 22 March 2015 presentation, Centennial Center, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA. More than once in this paper, I cite Richard Rice's presentation because of his succinct and clear distillation of trinitarian belief.

71 Hillar, M. (2012). *From logos to trinity: The evolution of religious beliefs from Pythagoras to Tertullian*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

orthodox patristics (2nd and 3rd centuries) which exhibited a lack of unanimity on what the "incarnation of christ" meant—quite unlike the later dogmatic Nicene and Chalcedonic formulations. These early incarnational christologies include Jesus Christ as the incarnation of God's spirit (Hermas, Tertullian, Cyprian, Hilary), the incarnation of an angel / archangel (Justin, Tertullian, Clement, Epiphanius), the incarnation of the chief archangel (Hermas), and the incarnation of "the angel of the Lord" / λόγος which was brought into existence in the distant past (Justin, cf. Arius a century later).[72] So, even the claimed forefathers of incarnational Athanasian trinitarianism could not reach agreement that Jesus Christ was the incarnation of a second co-equal person or "son" in a tri-personal "godhead" which somehow remained the one God. Only with Chalcedon (451 CE) did that peculiar, mercurial view become dogma. The confusion inherent in the self-contradictions of the Nicene-Chalcedonic trinitarian development is evident in the ongoing morass of claims and disputes among even the proto-orthodox, the orthodox, and the spawning of "heresies" before and after the councils that were supposed to establish the orthodoxy (Grillmeier, 1975; 1987; 1995; 1996).[73]

Arian and Athanasian (4th – 6th centuries CE). Without the Athanasian-trinitarian ascendancy, Emil Brunner claimed that Christianity would have "become either Paganism or Judaism" and if Arian Christianity had triumphed, "it would have been all over for the Christian church."[74] The idea that Athanasian orthodoxy was required for Christian survival or thriving is

72 Dunn (1989); see especially pp. 131-132 on patristic references to spirit, angel, and archangel incarnational christologies, as well as p. 157 on Justin Martyr and an "angel of the Lord" incarnation; p. 386 on reference about Hermas and incarnation of God's angel.

73 See Grillmeier, 1975: pp. 33-437 on christology disputes from the 2nd century up to Ephesus, 431 CE; pp. 443-555 on disputes from Ephesus, 431 to Chalcedon, 451 CE; Grillmeier, 1987: pp. 20-88 on christology disputes in sources, chronicles, and hagiographies 451-800 CE; pp. 93-335 on disputed attempts at authoritative ecclesiastical and papal interpretation of Chalcedon from 451 CE through emperor Justinian I, 565 CE; Grillmeier, 1996: on christology disputes in the Constantinopolitan church in the 6th century; Grillmeier, 1996: on christology disputes in the Alexandrian, Coptic, and Nubian churches, from Chalcedon to the 6th century.

74 Rice (2015) citing Emile Brunner.

empty speculation because an historical experiment has been done, answering quite precisely what would happen with a hegemony of Athanasian-Nicene orthodoxy versus Arian Christianity within at least one location in Christian Europe—the Iberian Peninsula.

Outside the bounds of the waning Roman Empire in the 4th-6th centuries CE, various Germanic peoples such as the Ostrogoths, the Vandals, and the Visigoths became christianized by Arian Christianity, and were viewed as heretics by the Athanasian-Nicean Roman hierarchical Christianity. Arian Christian Bishop Wulfila (ca. 310-383 CE) made an alphabet for Gothic, translated the Bible into Gothic, and this led to the conversion of the Goths to Arian Christianity.[75] In addition to contributing to family and community property law through the tradition of the *forum judicum*, eventually established that the nobility rather than the king would choose the royal successor from the royal family, an early check on royal power, centuries before the English *Magna Carta*. The Arian Visigoths established a tolerant, benign hegemony over Hispania, the Iberian Peninsula from 395-587 CE. The tolerant Arian Ostrogoths who ruled in the Italian peninsula and beyond were favorably described by Catholic presbyter, Salvian of Marseille in his *De gubernatione Dei* (ca. 405 CE). He praised the Goths for their devotion to their Arian creed, their chaste lives, their tolerance toward Catholics under their rule, their good treatment of their Roman subjects, and hoped that these good Goths may find salvation, despite their Arianism. Before the Visigoths took over there were hierarchical disputes among the Athanasian-Nicene Christians (Priscillianist controversy; First Council of Toledo, 400 CE), which involved calling of ecclesiastical support from Rome. However, Arian Visigoth rule was generally tolerant toward the Nicene-Chalcedonic Christians living among them, and also toward the Sephardic Jews living in Hispania, who advanced in society—both Niceans and Jews enjoyed rank and peace under Arian Christian rule.[76] Despite the generally tolerant rule of

75 Wolfram, Herwig; transl. Thomas J. Dunlap (from the German of 1979). (1988). *History of the Goths*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press; p. 75.

76 Graetz, H. (1894; 1956 reprint). *History of the Jews*, Vol. 3. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America; p. 44; Gerber, J.S. (1992). *The Jews of Spain: A history of the Sephardic experience*. New York, NY: Free Press; p. 9.

the Arian Visigoths, the Second Council of Toledo (527 CE) was convened by Nicene Christians to deal with Arian Christianity. After the conversion of Reccared I to Catholicism (587 CE), Arian uprisings were suppressed with slaughter.[77] The Third Council of Toledo (589 CE) brought Visigothic Iberia into the Roman Catholic church,[78] condemned Arian Christianity, immediately imposed restrictions on the Jews, confiscated Arian churches, and introduced the *filioque* clause to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed.[79] It ended with a triumphalistic sermon by Leander, bishop of Seville, *Homilia de triumpho ecclesiae ob conversionem Gothorum* or "sermon on the triumph of the church upon the conversion of the Goths." The Jews began to flee Iberia. Arian Christianity was exterminated over time. King Sisbut (613 CE) decreed the forcible conversion of Jews, and other measures followed forbidding Jewish observances of circumcision, Sabbath, and other festivals. The Fourth Council of Toledo (633 CE) the Athanasian Nicene (Catholic) bishops arrogated the right to choose the Visigoth king away from the nobility. During this interval, Jews endured being flogged, killed, property confiscated, taxed into financial collapse, forbidden to do business, forcibly baptized, and could only practice their Judaism in secret. The degradation and suffering of the Jews during this century was only relieved by the Muslim conquest.[80]

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77 John of Biclaro, *Chronicle*, 91. Translated in Kenneth Baxter Wolf (1990). *Conquerors and chroniclers of early medieval Spain*, second edition. Liverpool, UK: Liverpool University Press; p. 74.

78 Stocking, Rachel L. (2001). *Bishops, councils, and consensus in the Visigothic kingdom, 589-633, (History, languages, and cultures of the Spanish and Portuguese worlds)*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press; pp. 60-61.

79 The *filioque* clause added to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed states that the Holy Spirit (now another hypostatic person) proceeds from both the Father and also the Son. The adoption of the *filioque* caused further dissension in the West, and eventually contributed to the great schism between the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic communions. The Council also endorsed the Councils of Nicea, Ephesus, Constantinople, and Chalcedon, as well as the synodical letters of the Roman popes.

80 Katz, S. (1937). *The Jews in the Visigothic kingdoms of Spain and Gaul*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Cited in Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, p. 177. See also Visigothic Jewish history by Heinrich Graetz (1956 reprint of 1894 work). *History of the Jews*, Vol. 3. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society

These persecutions anticipated the darker days of the Inquisition a few centuries later, after the Reconquista. Arian Christian tolerance anticipated the Arian and Unitarian championing of freedom of conscience, expression, and the early stirrings of democracy in the Radical Reformation, culminating in the Enlightenment. Historically, the experiment has been tried both ways and we can state based on historical evidence that while Arian Christianity has been generally tolerant and benign in practice, Athanasian-Nicene Christianity has been exceptionally virulent in its intolerance and authoritarian exclusivity.[81] A link between this virulence and the deification of a man, Jesus, as God, seems hard to escape. Sadly the roots were already present in the earliest controversies in Christianity, manifest in the frequent demonization of those with differing beliefs.[82]

Universality. Closely linked with the Athanasian triumphalism, it has been urged that a trinitarian incarnation (supposedly grounded in John 1:14) tells us something unique about human beings—giving us great and unique ethical insight. Richard Wolin (2005) discussing Jürgen Habermas wrote, "Our idea of the intrinsic worth of all persons, which underlies human rights,

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of America, 1956 reprint [1894]), pp. 43-52 (on Sisibut, pp. 47-49); Salo W. Baron (1957). *A social and religious history of the Jews*, Vol. 3. New York, NY: Columbia University Press; pp. 33-46 (on Sisibut pp. 37-38); N. Roth (1994). *Jews, Visigoths and Muslims in medieval Spain: Cooperation and conflict*. Leiden: Brill; pp. 7-40; Ram Ben-Shalom (2002). "Medieval Jewry in Christendom," in M. Goodman, J. Cohen and D. Sorkin, *The Oxford handbook of Jewish studies*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; p. 156.

81 An example of the difference on religious tolerance is found in a reported exchange between an Arian Christian representative Agilan sent by the Visigoth king to meet Catholic bishop, Gregory of Tours (as Gregory reports it in his *History of the Franks*, c. 500 CE). Agilan: "T*hough we believe not the things which you believe, yet we do not speak evil of them, for the holding of* **this or that belief may not be imputed as a crime**," a tolerance associated with a much later age. Bishop Gregory: "Y*ou are a defender of the Gentiles, and a champion of heretics, for you do* **defile the dogmas of the church and do proclaim the worship of pagan abominations**." See also http://threehierarchies.blogspot.com/2007/06/in-honor-of-trinity-sunday.html.

82 Cf. Pagels, E. (1996). *The origin of Satan: How Christians demonized Jews, pagans, and heretics*. New York, NY: Random House.

stems directly from the Christian ideal of the equality of all men and women in the eyes of God."[83]

No, historically the intrinsic worth and equality of all humankind is not an original Christian contribution, much less a trinitarian one—in fact it's not a Christian contribution at all. The idea of the universal equal brotherhood of humankind actually predates Christianity by a few centuries, and had its origins in classical Hellenistic concepts, which influenced the Greco-Roman world. The idea that we are all part of a community of the world or universe (κοσμοπολίτης, from where we get "cosmopolitan") was proposed by Diogenes of Sinope (c. 412-323 BCE), wandering founder of the Cynic school of philosophy, and further developed by the Stoic school of philosophy founded by Zeno of Citium (ca. 301 BCE). The Stoics developed the "cosmopolitan" idea of the universal fraternity of humankind and the natural equality of all, irrespective of rank, wealth, or legal status (even slaves), based on a monistic cosmology of universal foundational substance ὑποκείμενον, propositional logic, and a naturalistic ethics—all peoples being children and beneficiaries of the same universal Nature and subject to the same universal limits and mortality, should therefore live together and help each other in brotherly love.[84] Stoic thought remained strongly influential into the Roman era, with a Stoic philosopher becoming the emperor Marcus Aurelius (died 180 CE). This trend had definite but not pervasive influence on the ethics of both Judaism and Christianity. Far to the East in Asia, centuries before the Cynics, the Stoics, or the Jesus tradition, an even more expansive universal ethic was found in the teachings and contemplative

83 Wolin, R. (2005). "Jürgen Habermas and post-secular societies." *The chronicle of higher education review* (23 September 2005): http://chronicle.com/article/J-rgen-Habermas-and/25576.

84 See Epictetus*, Discourses*, i. 9. 1 quoting Diogenes, "I am not an Athenian or a Corinthian, but a citizen of the world"; or in *Discourses*, ii. 5. 26, "Each human being is primarily a citizen of his own commonwealth; but he is also a member of the great city of gods and men, whereof the city political is only a copy." Seneca: "Kindly remember that he whom you call your slave sprang from the same stock, is smiled upon by the same skies, and on equal terms with yourself breathes, lives, and dies." *Moral letters to Lucilius, Letter 47: On master and slave*, 10, c. 65 CE.

practice tradition (*dharma*) of itinerant teacher Siddhartha Gautama (c. 563-483 BCE) who came to be known as the Buddha (the "awakened one") with his *sangha* (community of followers).[85] This rich contemplative tradition included among others the idea of *bodhicitta* ("awakened mind") of compassion and lovingkindness for the benefit of all sentient beings. The practical contemplative path past the clinging and cravings of the ego / self as the source of internal suffering, involves deep recognition of the impermanence of all, including the "persistent self" illusion, i.e., *anatta* ("no self") within an inter-existent living "web" or "ocean" of sentient beings,[86] with whose distress the awakened know empathic solidarity leading to compassionate action.

By contrast, there are only glimpses of such universality in the Christian NT, most obviously when Paul is reported as engaged with the Stoics and Epicureans on Mars Hill in Athens (Acts 17), speaking of the "entire creation" (Rom. 1), and is "being a Greek to the Greeks." The Christian proclamation encompasses the diaspora or "scattered tribes of Israel scattered abroad" (Ya'akovian and I Peter) or the elect among the nations (Pauline). There are also a few glimmers of multi-national statements in second Isaiah and the later prophets, and in the Jesus material in *Q* on how God as universal Father sheds his gifts of rain and sun on all—such that a few scholars suggest that Jesus understanding of divine immanence and his itinerant movement may have been influenced in thought and style by Cynic and Stoic thought.[87] However, the foundation in the Hebrew Scriptures is

85 For a scholarly biography of the Buddha based on early sources, see Bhikkhu, N. (2001, 3rd edition). *The life of the Buddha: According to the Pali canon*. Onalaska, WA: Pariyatti Publishing. First published 1972, 1978, 1992. Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society. Cf. Armstrong, K. (2000). *Buddha*. London, UK: Orion Books.

86 For a popular summary / citation of data from modern neuroscience strongly supporting the benefits of meditative practice and on the illusory nature of the "self," see Harris, S. (2014). *Waking up: A guide to spirituality without religion*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. Inter-existence, inter-being / *inter-être* as a Buddhist concept has been expounded by Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh.

87 Crossan, J.D. (1991). *The historical Jesus: The life of a Mediterranean Jewish peasant*. New York, HarperCollins; Funk et al. (eds.). Also see the work of the Jesus Seminar: Funk R., Hoover R., & the Jesus Seminar. (1993). *The five gospels: The*

divine election of Israel above all others through the covenant promises to Abraham, would also involve a blessing for all families of earth (later written in Gen. 49; 6th – 4th century BCE) but ending up focused on the national aspirations of Israel, as God's chosen people. The focus later narrowed on Judah and the house of David. By stark contrast with the Stoics, the Judeo-Christian "universality" is only a qualified universality. Those few statements are lost in a veritable avalanche of texts in the Hebrew scriptures and in the NT advocating divine election and exclusion of others who do not share the faith or are not called. In the Hebrew scriptures, the promises are based on God's election of Israel to the exclusion of others, except for those who in the end submit to Israel. In the NT, particularly in Pauline and Johannine writings, there is a very strong, repetitive predestinarian, and even double predestination notions of divine election and reprobation.

Christian dissenters and the Enlightenment. By welcome contrast, a truly universalist call for cosmopolitan human rights, natural equality, and freedom of expression only came to the fore from the mid-17th century with the early Radical Enlightenment when clandestine manuscripts began again advocating a monistic worldview and universal naturalistic ethics, building on the work of Giordano Bruno, the thought in Benedict de Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologicus-Politicus* and the *Ethics* (1677), and many others among the *esprits forts* and liberal Socinian / Unitarian radicals of the early Enlightenment and through the high Enlightenment with Voltaire, Diderot, Baron d'Holbach, and Thomas Paine and the recognition of universal human rights and freedom.[88] However the foundation for the Enlightenment moral advance was laid in the Radical Reformation, in centuries of Arian and Unitarian contributions to thought and polity[89], the martyrdom and / or

search for the authentic words of Jesus. (Scholars' Version, SV). New York, NY: Polebridge Press, MacMillan Publishing; Funk, R. & the Jesus Seminar. (1998). *The acts of Jesus: What did Jesus really do?* New York, NY: HarperCollins, a Polebridge Press Book.

88 Israel, J. (2001). *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the making of modernity 1650-1750*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; see especially pp. 157-436. See also Marian Hillar's "Socinians, a history," http://www.socinian.org/socinians_2.html.

89 Morse, E.M. (1925). *Our unitarian heritage: An introduction to the history of the unitarian movement*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

historical witness of Miguel Servetus (1553), Sebastian Costellio (1563), Ferenc Dávid (1579), Giordano Bruno (1600), Fausto Socinus (1604), and many others, including the multitude of earlier persecuted and decimated sects on whose shoulders they stood. These bequeathed the beginnings of universal freedom to John Locke (1667) and others but only with Benedict Spinoza (1677) and Pierre Bayle (1706) would *libertas philosophandi* be extended to all including non-theists. Servetus, Bruno, Spinoza, Bekker, Bayle, Newton, Laplace, D'Alembert, Priestly, and many other scholarly dissenters established several of the modern fields of science, philosophy, and political thought.

§ ***Conclusion—reclaiming Jesus***. It has been claimed that "early Christians developed the doctrine of the Trinity because they recognized that an affirmation of God's complex unity was the only way to safeguard the central claim of Christian faith, 'God was in Christ.'"[90] This claim is historically mistaken and anachronistic. The Pauline "God was in Christ" formulation was precisely not that—not the plural hypostatic trinitarian construct of later centuries. It was neither "God was Christ" nor "Christ was God." Missing the historical-exegetical context of the concept of divine immanent action, the trinitarian oscillates between states of complex unity modalism and perichoretic plurality tritheism, constantly slipping into 'unorthodoxy'. The complex orthodox concepts are manifestly self-contradictory. The kingdom ethic of early Christian doxology became hopelessly mired in paradoxology, requiring constant rigid authoritarian hierarchical structures to maintain for centuries at the cost of much bloodletting.

Now thanks in part to the hard-won sacrifices of Arian Christian and Unitarian dissenters and freethinkers in the West and their contributions to the Enlightenment, people are freely entitled to their opinions and their free expression. Likewise, the trinitarian orthodox remain entitled to their own orthodoxy, their rich speculative theological tradition, their "Athanasian arithematic," and their paradoxes, what a growing number simply see as

90 Rice (2015).

bizarre *non sequitur*s. However, the orthodox are not entitled to re-write history without challenge, nor do they have a credible historical, exegetical claim that the trinity is a natural development of the Hebrew bible or the New Testament.

Modern scholars of religion and religious studies, NT theologians, secular historians, archaeologists, scholars in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and humanism are recovering the Jesus heritage from the obscuration of dogma. The Jesus tradition is part of the broader heritage of humankind. A wider world is rediscovering the historical Jesus. That historicization may be painful for some Christians, but it is good for the ultimate health of Christianity, for humankind and for interfaith dialogue among Jews, Christians, Muslims in the West, and the non-violent resistance traditions among Buddhists, Hindus, and others in the East, which have so influenced progressive religious movements in the West. The Jesus heritage in the *Q*-Ya'akovian tradition remains practically relevant in (a) the linking of forgiveness-conflict resolution with release from debt bondage, (b) redistributive justice for poverty in the commons, and (c) the use of nonviolent resistance to tyranny, injustice, and totalitarianism, which has already historically proved so pragmatic in the greatest movements of the modern world.[91] Linked with the heritage of the Enlightenment, these tools are invaluable as we as humans together around the world face the scientific and crisis ecological challenges of our time.

91 Sharp, G. (2005). *Waging nonviolent struggle: 20th century practice and 21st century potential*. Boston, MA: Porter Sargent Publishers.

Appendix I. Brief chronology of Christian sources (including Hebrew מקרא & Greek *LXX*)—the Jesus traditions and their origins (100 BCE until 138 CE).

Dates	Other	*Q*-Ya'akovian	Synoptic	Pauline	Johannine
100 – 1 BCE Qumran Death of Herod the Great (4 BCE) Births of John the Baptiser & Jesus of Nazareth	Dead Sea scrolls (two messiahs—priest-prophet & king)				
1 – 30 CE Revolt of Judas Galilean (6 CE) Deaths of John the Baptizer & Jesus of Nazareth—ossuary tomb practice in Judea (20 BCE-70 CE)	John the Baptizer & disciples	Jesus of Nazareth & family[92] / disciples			
30 – 50 CE Oral traditions about John & Jesus Attempt to place Caesar image & Jewish resistance (40 CE)	Proto-Thomas (*Q logia* parallels)	*Q* (possible link to Magdalene & Jesus family)	M? L?	?	?

92 Evidence for the family of Jesus was carefully edited, minimized, and even suppressed in the NT (Tabor, 2006).

50 – 70 CE Jesus movement → Palestinian Nazarene Christians: Ossuary tombs (30-70 CE): East Talpiot I—Jesus family, East Talpiot II—"Yonah" & other Christian epigrams, *Dominus flevit*, early Christian necropolis;[93]	Thomas (~50-100 CE)	Epistle of James (before 62 CE; brother of Jesus; chair of Jerusalem church; ~30 parallels with *Q*; kingdom ethics soteriology;		Pauline Epistles (spiritual resurrection tradition;[94] anti-Ya'akovian polemic; Gal.; Rom.; I & II Cor.; Phil.; I Thess.; Philemon); divine immance	

93 A number of early Christian-associated ossuaries (30-70 CE) have been found in and around Jerusalem[see Rahmani, L.Y. (1994). *A catalogue of Jewish ossuaries in the collections of the State of Israel*. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities]. Among many with early Christian epigrams, symbols (in including East Talpiot II tomb ossuary with the fish / "Yonah" and Greek "IAIO raises up" inscriptions), or historical associations, there are significant inscriptions like "Yehosef son of Qafa [Caiaphas]" (very ornate), "Alexandros (son of) Simon … Cyrenian" [Mk. 15:21; 1/200; van der Horst, P.W. (1991). *Ancient Jewish epitaphs*. Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos; pp. 140-1], "Shimon son of Yonah" [Mt. 16:17; Bagatti, P.B., Milik, J.T. (1958). Gli Scavi del "Dominus Flevit" (Monte Oliveto – Gerusalemme). *Publicazioni dello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum N. 13*. Gerusalemme: Tipographia dei PP. Francescani), and "Ya'akov son of Yehosef brother of Yeshua" (<1.71/2509; Fuchs, C. (2004). "Demography, literacy and names distribution in ancient Jerusalem—How many James/Jacob son of Joseph, brother of Jesus were there?" *Polish J. of Biblical Research* 1–30), the full inscription of which contains ancient patina establishing it as genuine [Rosenfeld, A., Feldman, H.R., Krumbein, W.E. (2014). "The authenticity of the James ossuary." *Open Journal of Geology* **4** (3): 69–78. doi:10.4236/ojg.2014.43007]. Preliminary patina elemental abundances [Rosenfeld, A., Ilani, S. (2002). "SEM-EDS analyses of patina samples from an ossuary of 'Ya'akov son of Yossef brother of Yeshua.'" *Biblical Archaeology Review* **28** (6): 29; cf. Rosenfeld, A., Pellegrino, C., Feldman, H.R., Krumbein, W.E.K. (2011). "The connection of the James ossuary to the Talpiot (Jesus family tomb) ossuaries." http://bibleinterp.com/PDFs/JOTalpiot3.pdf] match in provenance the other ossuaries in the E. Talpiot I tomb [published in Kloner, A. (1996). "A tomb with inscribed ossuaries in east Talpiyot, Jerusalem." *Atiquot* **29**: 15–22] including those inscribed "Marya" (21.86/317; Latinized form in Aramaic characters of Hebrew *Mariam*), "Matya" (short for Matityahu), "Μαριαμηνου [η] Μαρα" [unique, translated "Mary [the] Master"; cf. Bovon, F. (2002). Mary Magdalene in the *Acts of Philip*. In *Which Mary?—The Marys of Early Christian Tradition*, F. Stanley Jones, (ed.). *Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series* **19**: 77-89. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature], "Yoseh" (33.63/2509; rare diminutive of Joseph, cf. Mk. 6:3; Mt. 13:55-

Paul of Tarsus mission (ca 48-64 CE)—'body & blood' eucharist, blood atonement, spiritual resurrection; Jewish Revolt begins (68 CE) Jerusalem falls to Titus (70 CE) Masada falls (72 CE)		gentle Pauline critique)		christology	
70 – 80 CE Pauline soteriology-influenced Markan "body & blood" eucharist; empty tomb tradition		Epistle of Jude (date?; brother of James; veiled polemics)	Mark (70s-80s CE; no virgin birth; first empty tomb tradition;[95] Pauline	Deutero & pseudo epistles (Col.; Eph.; II Thess.; I & II Tim.; Titus)	

56), "Yehuda son of Yeshua," and "Yeshua son of Yehosef" [a remarkable association in historical context conservatively estimated at <1/30,000; Feuervarger, A. (2008). "Statistical analysis of an archeological find." *The Annals of Applied Statistics* **2** (1): 3-54; with discussion and reply, pp. 1-112; Feuerverger, A. (2008). Supplement to "Statistical analysis of an archeological find." doi: 10.1214/07-AOAS99SUPP]. Geologist Dr. Aryeh Shimron (select publications 2000-2014: http://www.geoarch-tours.com/articles.html) has a forthcoming paper on the geochemical element abundances signature in the limestone ossuaries from the post-burial *terra rosa* Rendzina sediment in Talpiot I which he says further confirms the provenance of the James ossuary in the Talpiot I tomb. *Comment on East Talpiot I*: *The context and name association results are statistically very robust, equal to and beyond any other ossuary identifications. The underlying reason why these identifications remain controversial seems to be less about the strength of the data and more about Christian dogma and the sensitivities of Jewish-Christian relations.*

94 Pauline spiritual resurrection tradition as solution to a dispute in Corinth (I Cor. 15) and "ignorance" in Thessalonika (I Thess. 4).

95 It is noteworthy that the earliest Mark manuscripts don't include any resurrection appearances, but allude to appearances to come in the Galilee. Matthew follows Mark (as he does on almost everything) and elaborates the mountain top appearance in the Galilee (cf. Transfiguration tradition), while Luke-Acts and John have immediate appearances in Jerusalem. These are very distinct and contradictory traditions (although the later John 21 addendum attempts to add an appearance in the Galilee). The earlier Pauline resurrection tradition is spiritual and visionary, while *Q* lacks any known resurrection tradition.

			soteriology)		
80 – 100 CE Virgin birth traditions from mistranslation and misapprehension of Isaiah 7, *LXX* (Luke and Matthew; 80s-90s CE); spiritual and no bodily resurrection in Luke (80s-90s CE); anti-Judaism and first bodily resurrection traditions, Matthean, Johannine (90s-100 CE), later developed by Tertullian (2nd century CE) into "resurrection of the flesh" dogma	Epistle of Barnabas (after 70 CE and before 135 CE)	*Didache* (~100 CE; multi-parallels with *Q*; Ya'akovian christology & soteriology; no resurrection tradition; no 'body & blood' eucharist)	Luke-Acts [of Paul] (80s-90s CE; bodily? resurrection tradition; Pauline harmonization) Matthew (80s-90s CE; "body & blood" eucharist; elaborate multi-bodily resurrections)	Pauline Christianity and early Pauline-influenced Christianities spreading contemporary with Palestinian Nazarene (Ya'akovian) Christianity	John (~95-100 CE; early *logos* christology, son of man, son of God; always subordinate to the one God, his Father; anti-Jewish; anti-Thomas?)
100 – 135 CE Era ends with Bar Kochba rebellion (132-135 CE); final separation of Jewish & Christian destinies; Hebrews & Revelation – exalted subordinate christology, Pauline soteriology, & polemic against Ya'akovian Christianity & Judaism		Nazarenes (Palestinian Ya'akovian Christianity—lasts until the 4th century CE); Ebionites		Hebrews (~80-100 CE; rejected in West until late; Pauline soteriology; polemic against Ya'akovian Christianity)	Revelation (~100-135 CE; rejected in East favored by Constantine [4th c CE]; exalted subordinate christology)