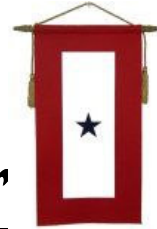




The Fellowship Commentator



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF BIBLICAL ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

Volume XIII, No. 2 (2007-2)

Editor: F. Paul Haney, *minister & pastor*

Apr/June 2007

A Publication of

◆ **Divine Capitalization Issue**

Christ Fellowship Ministries

"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2Chron.7:14, RSV).

CFM is a Sabbath-keeping outreach ministry to the glory of Yahweh our Elohim and Yahshua, his anointed agent.

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BAD GRAMMAR TELLS ME SOMETHING about a person. And it should tell you something, too. (I am not talking about the occasional slip of the lip or pen—we all do that.) Persistent bad grammar is not acceptable in corporate America (although it is quite acceptable in TV programming)—that's why our elders (parents, grandparents and people over 30) nag us so much about staying in school and getting a good education. Granted, obtaining a "good" education in today's state-run school systems (at least here in the States) can sometimes be more accidental than otherwise, but, the principle is there, nonetheless. Get an education. Get wisdom!

Wisdom is not a clambering vine or creeping moss that eventually covers a person just because he managed to live a long, productive, and relatively healthy life. No, no. And as the elderly person rocks away on the front porch, wisdom does not just naturally come upon him like a tsunami. Picking up a modicum of wisdom, I tell you, takes some effort. No effort, no wisdom. And wisdom comes from a base of knowledge. Old folks, frankly, are not necessarily wise folks or wellsprings of wisdom. Not that there is anything wrong in being an old folk. However, you should *always* honor the elders in our midst (**Lev.19:32**) whether you think they deserve it or not. But I digress.



Having been in the educational circuit for some time, I have discovered that when a student does not learn, it is not always the teacher who is at fault. He could be, but mostly, I would say, the student has a listening problem. Once the listening problem makes itself known in a youngster (or rather, once you notice it in your child), the damage has probably already been done. Now he won't listen to you until he becomes 27 years of age and finally moves out of the house. One who does not listen (and therefore cannot contemplate the words or concepts) can scarcely become wise.

I'm not sure what all this has to do with the subject at hand, but the preamble does give me an opportunity to beat another drum as well as get in a good mood to make a case regarding a pet peeve and that is...

Bad Grammar— Very Bad Grammar!

Any number of written papers on biblical subjects will have examples of a peculiar but common grammatical blunder and inaccuracy embedded of which I speak is the fixation on capitalizing personal pronouns and words relative to the Trinitarian notion of deity. These words are capitalized because it is believed that any reference to the Triune God should be held in reverence. It's one way of bowing down before the Trinity. The words "He, Him, His, Word, Light, Person" and other references to God, Jesus, or the holy spirit are commonly capi-



talized in Trinitarian (and near Trinitarian) orthodoxy.

Astonishingly, many writers who do not accept the deity of Jesus or the holy spirit continue to advocate the trinitarian capitalization methodology (and in so doing, I suggest, also unknowingly advocate trinitarianism) by falling in lockstep with the Roman Catholic and Protestant model. The capitalizing of personal pronouns is gimmicky. It is a publicity device meant to send a message to the reader. It is also a form of editorializing and the insertion of a preconceived notion into the minds of the readers of the work, be it a Bible or a study paper.

In reviewing a paper from a friend, I made the following remarks, in part.

It looks interesting thus far but I have found one point in it that I think is a serious defect and common in many other writings by our group and indeed, within Christendom's writings on biblical issues.

To capitalize personal pronouns, especially within a biblical context, is very bad grammar, something that is a holdover from the Roman Church, and I think, a bowing down to that Church's (and orthodoxy's) overt stance on trinitarianism. It also makes the writing more complex and more difficult to read. I'm sorry but when I run into this kind of poor grammatical expression, it turns me off the subject and the writing—I do not wish to continue. I know others who feel the same way. That is one reason I use the RSV—no caps on personal pronouns.

To capitalize personal pronouns within a biblical text is a form of *editorializing and eisegesis*. It is *unbecoming* for a serious writer to capitalize personal pronouns and related words. ... For instance, you wrote: **John 1:14b ...and made His tabernacle among us...**

Who is this "His" supposed to be? God??? You inject a trinitarian notion into the passage by capping these pronouns, and no matter the reason it is done—your writing becomes an editorial for trinitarianism. (I can quote a true scholar (a Phd) who agrees with this conclusion. I do not consider myself a scholar but a researcher and an analyst.)

Frankly, this is poor writing and I tell you this as a friend and not an enemy, since you asked for my opinion. FPH

Two examples of Pronoun Capitalization Madness (PCM):

(1.) The NKJV: "And there is no other God besides Me, a just God and a Savior; there is none besides Me. Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself; the word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that to Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall take an oath. He shall say, 'Surely in the LORD I have righteousness and strength. To Him men shall come, and all shall be ashamed who are incensed against Him" (Isa.45:21-24).

By contrast:

(2.) "And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed, all who were incensed against him (Isa.45:21-24, RSV).

(As an aside, notice the under-scoring: some form of salvation was possible from God in Isaiah's time.)

The only place within these examples (besides first letters of the sentences) that should be capitalized is the single word "God", given as a proper name or title. I can put up with the RSV "God and Savior" above. But notice the sentence structure: "... a righteous god and savior..." By using the word "a" before "righteous god and savior," the writer is not grammatically naming a specific god and savior, but one of a possible number. I would not dogmatically reject the RSV rendering, however, because I know (as they mean to imply) there is only one God and one Savior.

Webster: The letter (word) "a" (English indefinite article) denotes a thing not previously defined, while "the" denotes one that has been previously defined. 1. One; one sort of; 2. each; any one. "The" (as opposed to *a* or *an*), is used to refer to a particular person, place, thing, or group. It is the English definite article. (Webster's New World Dictionary).

One person wrote that they capitalize biblical pronouns because it helps them sort out the antecedent of the pronoun. But that is a lame excuse. For instance:

"All Israel has transgressed thy law and turned aside, refusing to obey thy voice. And the curse and oath which are written in the law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him" (Dan.9:11).

What proper noun is the antecedent of "him"? Just go back along the sentence until you reach a proper noun. That would be "God."

The Rule: A pronoun usually refers to a noun or a pronoun which precedes it in a sentence. ... The antecedent of a pronoun is the word which "goes before" the pronoun. It is the word to which the pronoun refers. [Instant English Handbook, p.74]

The decision as to what to capitalize or not is made by the editors of any given Bible. But this may come as a shock: The 1611 King James Version of the Bible did *not* capitalize personal pronouns like *he, him, his, me, my,* and so on. For example:

"Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his maker, Aske me of things to come concerning my sonnes,

and concerning the workes of my hands command ye me" (Isa.45:11, KJV, 1611 ed.).

"Look vnto mee, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth..." (Isa.45:22, KJV, 1611).

In later English versions, capitalization of pronouns and some nouns do not stem from the context (as it should regarding proper nouns), but, from doctrinal positions that orthodox translators employ to editorialize the Bible. This editorializing often represents deliberate corrupting attempts to deify Jesus the Christ. Notice the "rock" passage: **"For they drank from the supernatural Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ" (1Cor.10:4, RSV).**

The "Rock" is supposed to be God, or a God, a Deity, according to Trinitarian and near-Trinitarian theology. So, it makes sense within these circles to capitalize "rock" in both places. Never mind that the rock was *not* the "Anointed One," something that had yet to be proven when the passage was originally rendered.

If your *Weltansicht* or worldview encompasses an orthodox or near-orthodox position respecting the nature of God and Jesus, then you are *naturally* going to "honor" that view by capitalizing certain pronouns as well as related nouns as, **"The One whom He sent"**—and you will be *fearful* about *not* capitalizing—perhaps fearful of offending someone, the Church, even God! One COG person wrote me, after reading my scathing objection to One-God persons capitalizing these words and pronouns that he does it "to honor or show respect to God." He also capitalized pronouns for Jesus, as I recall. Another said he does it because of *convention*. The convention (or rule), I suggest, is nothing more than a tradition established by early orthodox bible interpretation. Maybe the reader should bow his head when he reads these "pronouns of deity."

"Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent' " (Jn.6:29, NKJV). In this instance, both Jesus and God are being represented as Deity.

Capitalizing pronouns deifies the subject. It represents a *subjective editorial comment*.

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Another example of how the KJV does *not* capitalize personal pronouns, at least prior to the 19th century: **“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (Jn.6:29, KJV, Bible Explorer, 1769 ed.)**

But I have a 1972 Thomas Nelson KJV that reads exactly as the passage above in **Jn.6:29**. I do not know what edition the publisher used, however. Surprisingly, the very same KJV by Thomas Nelson does *not* capitalize the personal pronouns that refer to God or Jesus within **Jn.1:1-14!** Not even **The Living Bible (TLB)** capitalizes these pronouns, while the editors of **TLB** insert this church doctrinal perspective into the beginning of John: **“Before anything else existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God” (Jn.1:1-2, TLB).**

Capitalization Rule No. 1:

Use capital letters to begin proper nouns, sentences, headings, some abbreviations and acronyms, and the important words in composition titles. Proper nouns are the particular names of people, places and things.

Rule No. 2: Do not capitalize the first letter of a word (or words in a phrase) simply to highlight it or because you or someone else thinks it's an important word. *Excessive, arbitrary capitalization distracts the reader and hinders reading.*

Check this or another style manual for capitalization of a particular word or type of word. If it is not listed there, check your dictionary. And if still in doubt, use lowercase. (Garbl's Editorial Style Manual)

Lord Acton remarked that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The historical Roman Church, beginning soon after the Nicene Council in 325 AD, acquired absolute control of the emerging Christian religion. Power to forgive or not forgive sins, excommunication, and power over many facets of community life was amassed within the super-rich and powerful Roman Catholic Church. I suspect that out of this intimidating context, many of the faithful were fearful and afraid to appear blasphemous or unspiritual,

lest something terrible come upon them, not from God so much, but a “stroke” from the Church. Perhaps in keeping with this concept, some folks today consider it an article of faith that you should capitalize every word that could possibly refer or be related to God. Often this activity extends to other words than pronouns. A possible example: *“God is A Holy God in His Being; Holy is His Name.”*

For some, adverbs, nouns, or even verbs that are thought to refer to divine attributes are capped. No word is safe from some Divine Cappers. Individual writers who are Divine Cappers often think they are “showing reverence” to the divine being, kind of like bowing the head every time you hear or read a reference to God or his attributes in front of a Christian “Wailing Wall” in a show of piety. On the other hand, others just capitalize personal pronouns that refer to deity.

On one forum in May, 2006, a person wrote: *What ever happened to the capitalization of pronouns when referencing Christ, God, or the Holy Spirit? I know that as a student I was always taught to capitalize any pronoun that referenced the Trinity. ... I remember one of my students asking me why I made them do it when their textbook didn't require it. I said that it is because every time we do it, we are acknowledging the He that is I AM. God alone deserves such respect in the middle of sentences.*

Another responded: *The N.T. was written in all lowercase letters so I figure if St. Paul can reference the Trinity with lowercase then it's probably ok for me to reference the Trinity with lowercase.*

Regarding the original MSS a person responded: *Of course you're right, it's not really the point that there is no capitalization in the original language (in the Greek at least). For those of us who do capitalize the personal pronouns in reference to the Trinity (and, as a general rule, I do), we have been raised and/or taught that it is the name of God that is to be revered. It doesn't matter whether that name is used as a proper noun or not, if you are referencing God then you show the appropriate respect.*

A writer: *I wonder what the original translators of the Scripture*

into English did? And if we know their reasons? I think that would be Tyndale and one other I can't name at the moment.

One responder: *You can read Wycliffe's translation of the NT (...here.) He doesn't capitalize the pronouns. Neither did Tyndale, as you can see (...here.) I don't know when the practice of capitalizing the pronouns began; my guess would be probably sometime shortly after the Reformation occurred.*

Another added: *There's also a less pious, more pragmatic reason for preferring the capitalization of "Him." In a case where there are two possible antecedents (e.g. "God asked Moses whether He ..." or "God asked Moses whether he ..."), it's easier to make your antecedent clear if your rule is that the capitalized pronoun refers to God, and the uncapitalized pronoun refers to the human antecedent. #*

Unfortunately for this last “antecedent” writer who has suggested a nonsensical example, there are *not* two “possible” antecedents in his example; there is only one single antecedent according to English rules of grammar as noted above—and to suggest adopting a rule that a capitalized pronoun refers to deity is worse than ridiculous. (Additionally, I was unable to find the writer's citation in any Bible, but did find **“Moses asked God”** only in **Ex.3:11, 13, HCSB**) so I think he created the example for the sake of the illustration.

As mentioned within the forum dialogue, the **original manuscripts** of the Bible do *not* capitalize all these words—they have **no “divine pronouns”** and **no “divine mandate”** to create them. Hebrew does not have a distinction between capitals and lower case letters. Greek does, but the MSS are either all caps or all lower case.

Biblical manuscripts do not capitalize “divine” pronouns, but editors and writers of biblical topics do, as do some translators. This could create problems. Capitalized words in any given Bible version do not always refer to deity because *neither Jesus nor the holy spirit are deity. But many words are capped when referring to them because of trinitarian dogma and editorializing.*

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Some people try to resolve this by *not* capitalizing pronouns when the reference is unclear and capitalizing only the clear ones. But this amounts to *interpretation*. Then some capitalize pronouns referring to God the Father but not to Christ. It makes Jesus look less deserving of reverence, since the intent of capitalizing was to convey reverence. The confusion is just awful.

I say we should follow the direction of the biblical authors, not the translators who cap everything in sight, or the interpreters who insert their concepts of divinity into the Bible as you will find in the New American Standard Bible (NASB) or the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB). We should follow ordinary capitalization conventions for the English language. We should capitalize the beginnings of sentences, proper names, acronyms and some abbreviations. (To me "Bible" is a proper name or title, even apart from "the" or "Holy.") Other conventions do exist, so if in doubt, check a grammar or dictionary because the rules for capitalization in English are a bit complicated. The rules, however, have changed over time, and now, in general, the advanced and improved premise is to capitalize fewer terms.

Some people capitalize various pronouns and other words out of a fear of offending some reader. If a reader is offended because a writer uses proper grammar, that's the problem of the reader.

Apparently, the Christian community is divided on this issue. It appears that most modern translations of the Bible *do not* capitalize pronouns and related words, but some, like the NASB and NKJV, do. Although most Bible versions do not capitalize pronouns, it appears that most Christian writers *do* capitalize them! Go figure.

◆ **The World English Bible notes:** *The WEB doesn't capitalize pronouns pertaining to God. This is similar to the NRSV and NIV, and the same as the original ASV of 1901. Note that this is an English style decision, because Hebrew has no such thing as upper and lower case, and the oldest Greek manuscripts were all upper case. I kind of prefer the approach of the KJV, NKJV, and*

NASB of capitalizing these pronouns, because I write that way most of the time and because it is a way of offering greater honor to God.

I admit that it is kind of a throw-back to the Olde English practice of capitalizing pronouns referring to the king. This is archaic, because we don't capitalize pronouns that refer to our president. It is also true that choosing to capitalize pronouns relating to God causes some difficulties in translating the coronation psalms, where the psalm was initially written for the coronation of an earthly king, but which also can equally well be sung or recited to the praise of the King of Kings.

Capitalizing pronouns relating to God also makes for some strange reading where people were addressing Jesus with anything but respect. In any case, in the presence of good arguments both ways, we have decided to leave these as they were in the ASV 1901 (which also gives us fewer opportunities to make mistakes). —(World English Bible Translation FAQ) {Note: All underscoring mine: FPH.}

◆ **Speed Bumps:** The goal of clear and natural English should be part of anyone's psyche whose purpose is to communicate a thought.
• **One Web Writer:** *Notice, too, that I avoid capitalizing he and him and all that other stuff when referring to Yahshua. It's an American invention to capitalize all those words, and a nice gesture of respect, but a capitalized word in English is reserved for proper names and the start of a sentence. It detracts from the message when the text is sprinkled with so many speed bumps for the reader.*

◆ **Orthodox Presbyterian Church:** *Question and Answer—Capitalization Of Pronouns When Referring to Deity:*

Question:
I notice that in some places on the OPC Web site pronouns "he, his, him" (when referring to God) are capitalized (this seems to be in headings or possibly at the beginning of sentences?), but in most places these pronouns are not capitalized. I don't have any scriptural basis (that I know of—I'm a new Christian), but I just feel a need to capitalize His name and personal pronouns referring to God. Is there a particular

reason these pronouns aren't capitalized regularly? I would guess that there must be a reason, because I know your aim is to glorify the Lord. Mine is too. I would just like to know what someone with more education and knowledge believes and why. I appreciate any guidance you can give in this matter. God bless your ministry. It has certainly been a blessing to me.

Answer:

We follow the style which does not capitalize pronouns relating to deity. This intends no disrespect to God; it is the usage of the historic English Bibles: Wyclif (1380), Tynedale (1534), Cranmer (1539), Geneva (1557), Rheims (1582), and King James Version of KJV (1611). Moreover, it is the style followed by the New International Version (NIV) and English Standard Version (ESV), as well as by our denominational magazine New Horizons. The NASB and NKJV do capitalize pronouns relating to deity (introducing something which is not in the Greek or Hebrew, I might add).

Note the capitalization used in 1Jn.5:20, KJV: "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

You are correct in noting that on some of our pages, headings are capitalized (with the exception of definite and indefinite articles [when not the first word of the heading] and prepositions of five letters or fewer, according to common usage). —(Orthodox Presbyterian Church)

◆ **World Publishing:** *Some religious literature chooses to capitalize pronouns that refer to the deity. As in the original languages, GOD'S WORD does not capitalize any pronouns (unless they begin sentences). In some cases scholars are uncertain whether pronouns in the original texts refer to God or someone else. In these cases the presence of capitalized pronouns would be misleading. —(p. xiii, GOD'S WORD, Grand Rapids: World Publishing, 1995)*

Indeed, capitalization of pronouns referring to Jesus results in a religious/political assertion—a religious editorial comment—of his sup-

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posed deity. One who capitalizes such pronouns, whether they acknowledge it or not, are making the statement that Jesus is worthy of deification and is in fact, a "God" on a par with Yahweh. I find this troubling because so many people, even those who do NOT accept Jesus as a "God," slavishly follow the Roman Catholic tradition. **FPH**

RELEVANT QUOTATIONS

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about the things that matter."

"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

"Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity."

—Martin Luther King, Jr.
(1929-1968)

"Most human beings have an almost infinite capacity for taking things for granted."

—Aldous Huxley

The Sixth Annual One-God Conference Experience

THE SIXTH ANNUAL One-God Conference took place on June 8-10 in the Albany, NY area. Being honored once again to be among the group of Presenters at the conference, I am able to offer a copy of my presentation to the readers of *The Fellowship Commentator*. However, I must admit that my personal experience at this conference was definitely lower in quality than what I expected.

To give you a flavor of my first anticipated presentation entitled...

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO CHRISTIAN ORTHODOXY – or – *The Bizarre Hijacking of Biblical Monotheism by The Architects of Flexible Monotheism* ...I offer this tidbit from page 2:

"The deception foisted upon the early Christian world, as small as the congregations were in those years, and upon the faithful of the later times, came to be called *Trinitarian-*

ism via *Romanism* which evolved into *Catholicism*, not to be confused with *Binitarianism*, a more modern form of *Polytheism*. But to get all the way to full-blown *Trinitarianism* and *Authoritarianism* as practiced by Modern Orthodoxy or the Modern Christian Church, from the singularity of the Primitive introduction of Yahweh's religion by Jesus of Nazareth, many devious curves and clever turns were taken by Romanism in concert with the Roman Empire (after a time) from the beginning throughout the early centuries.

"Today, we find a considerable amount of bobbing and weaving taking place in Christendom. And, lest I leave anyone outside of my *Circle of Condemnation and Denunciation*, Luther's *Protestantism* and *Protestantism's* fellow travelers have not fared much better defining true biblical beliefs, broadcasting doctrinal clarity, or establishing uniformity aside from the adopted Romanist beliefs."

However, I changed my mind at almost the last minute (within the last 6 or 7 days) and replaced the above possibility (to be finished later) with the following odd title: **JOHN—THE ODD MAN Among The Gospel EVANGELISTS**

A copy of this newly revised 34 page presentation (the corrected edition) is available upon the receipt of this newsletter: note the "FREE" box on the last page—just drop us a note and ask us to send you a copy. It is also available on our website "cfministries.org" in PDF format from the Navigation page.

But you may be asking why this presentation, above all the others, was not of the highest quality. To be frank, an early timing problem turned my normally smooth presentation into a rushed production that started late and suddenly ended early. The listeners of any taped recording will get only about 1/2 of what I anticipated to deliver. The listeners on the Virtual Church telephone line got even less; the phone line dropped out for a while and the listeners were unable to hear any follow-up questions.

In my added "FOREWORD" of the revised presentation (which is available as an 8-page addendum to the earlier 28 page printed presentation or as a 6-page inclusion within

the revised issue), I explain a number of areas of possible misconception or misunderstanding. I also offer 7 typical extended scholarly quotes from various sources that discuss the difficulties of the Johannine literature.

One area of misconception and misapplication of information (in type, at least) that arose from my truncated presentation is essentially this: *that for a person to criticize the legitimacy or authenticity of the Gospel of John in part is to suggest or imply removing it from the New Testament in whole*, which is what a few of the audience mistakenly thought I meant to do. Nothing could be further from the truth. I feel strongly that this kind of self-limiting thinking is out of place in a scholarly discussion of the NT books where innovation should be considered a positive feature of research, analysis, and legitimate scholarship. Nevertheless, the presentation is available in its entirety in print format right here from *Christ Fellowship Ministries*; all you need do is ask for a copy. **FPH**

PS: Contradictory writings: One point that has to be made respecting the internal problems with the Gospels and letters, and this especially includes the Synoptic Gospels, is that:

To be textually internally contradictory is not the same as being hostile to Yahweh's teachings and therefore worthy of abandonment.

I think I remember someone suggesting (it may have been in a writing somewhere) that all those "contradictions" within Mathew, Mark, and Luke render those Gospels problematic and very suspect—*how can we trust contradictory writings?*

The Synoptics were written from three different perspectives, but not side-by-side. The Gospel of Mark, it is said, was the first to be written, and Matthew and Luke looked to Mark for some of their material, yet, for example, the idea that one listing of the genealogy of Jesus (**Matt.1:1 ff**) differs from the other (**Lk.3:23 ff**) might simply be a consequence of writing from memory or from a different perspective. Of course, each instance of a contradictory text should be evaluated on its own merit. But the Gospel of John, which is radically different from the others,

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is a special case. Indeed, John's Gospel (as well as Revelation) was rejected by many early Christians before it was finally accepted as part of the New Testament canon.

One presenter at the One-God Conference, who neglected to put his name on his paper, wrote this:

The synoptic gospels demonstrate an obliviousness to Jesus' deity. There is not a single scripture in these three books which teach or imply that Jesus was God in the flesh.

[The citation of **Matt.1:23** respecting Immanuel, or "God with us," is not a passage that declares or implies that Jesus was actually God in the flesh. Strangely enough, a passage two verses prior to this one says that his name would be "Jesus"! FPH]

Every passage in these books reflects the same understanding about the nature of Jesus that our group proclaims: That Jesus was the son of God, not God the son. That Jesus was the Christ of YHWH, anointed by YHWH, not YHWH playing the role of the anointed one. That Jesus' progenitor was YHWH, the God of the Hebrew Scriptures who made the worlds, entered into a covenant with Abraham and chose Israel as his special people. ... Gabriel did not tell Mary she would give birth to God, but to the son of YHWH. ... The Shema (Mk.12:28-34) was understood by the Pharisees and Jesus to teach that there is only one God, not that the God persons in the Godhead are unified. ... (Lk.5:17) Jesus did not do miracles because he was God, as it is claimed, but because God's power was with him. ... (Lk.22:28-29) Why would one God person grant to another God person a kingdom he already possessed? #



Letters to the Editor

What follows is an email letter received that challenged one point of my aborted One-God Seminar presentation and my response.

Q: *Dear F. Paul Haney, I have just listened to your 'John the Odd one out' talk that you did at the recent ONE GOD conference. [The title is "John The Odd Man Among The Gospel Evangelists.]*

*To say I was very surprised about most of the things you came out with would be an understatement. Anyways, let me get to the point. Concerning the verse (John 20:9) For as yet **they knew not the scripture**, that he must rise again from the dead. I am confident that someone at the Conference must have pointed out to you which OT scripture John was talking about. If not; then the scripture can be determined by its usage in the Book of Acts i.e. (Acts 2:24-32) [fully quoted from the KJV, v.31 cited here].*

v.31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

Answer: Psalms 16:8-11

*Peter tells us **which scripture** speaks of the resurrection of Christ; and informs his Jewish audience that David was **not** speaking of his own resurrection; rather he was speaking of his Messianic descendant!! Hence, Psalm 16:8-11 is the scripture speaking of the resurrection of the Messiah. Paul confirms this by using the very same scripture to bring out the same point i.e. the resurrection of the Messiah.*

*(Acts 13:34-37) And as concerning that **he raised him up from the dead**, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David. V.35 Wherefore he saith also **in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.** ... v.37 **But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.***

Hopefully this answers your question concerning which scripture was John 20:9 referring to. Yours in Hope of the Kingdom DG #

A: *My response [edited]*

Dear DG, Thank you for taking the time to write. Unfortunately, what you heard on the tape from the One-God conference was my aborted presentation that ended in mid-stream. I have attached an 8-page

"Foreword" to this email that was added to my complete presentation that explains my position and the aborted presentation. All 34 pages are available from CFM upon request at no cost by snail-mail. I hope you will write for the full package.

*At one point in the presentation, I mentioned that **John 20:9** refers to an OT scripture that does not exist (or words to that effect). You are suggesting that you have the answer. It is Psalm 16. I disagree. Let me explain.*

The word "Scripture" is used 31 times in the NKJV. Every time it refers to the OT writings; the word never calls any NT writings Scripture, as in "holy" or "Sacred."

The Target Passage: John 20:8-9, Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

*In Jn.20, the passage speaks of Jesus and refers to an OT scripture that speaks of him. Your suggestion is that the referenced passage is found in **Psalm 16**. But an examining of this Psalm shows otherwise.*

Psalm 16 speaks of David and Yahweh. Yahweh is the LORD and God; neither refer to Jesus.

Psalm 16 (NKJV, selected passages) A Michtam [golden, precious Psalm] of David.

¹Preserve me, O God, for in You I put my trust.

⁵O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You maintain my lot.

⁷I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel; My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.

⁸I have set the LORD [Yahweh] always before me;

Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.

⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope.

¹⁰For You [Yahweh] will not leave my [David] soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.

¹¹You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

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The underscored passage v.10, a verse of "parallelism," speaks of the writer, David, and not to any other person. The passage in all places refers to God or Yahweh, the Almighty God, and never to Jesus. To have the writer veer off his concept in verse 10 to speak of *Jesus* as "your Holy One" does violence to the theme of the entire Psalm. Reading "Jesus" in there is foreign to David's thought processes—it becomes an incoherent lump in the middle of an otherwise understandable thought. It makes no sense, grammatical or otherwise. Consider:

¹⁰**For You [Yahweh] will not leave my [David] soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Jesus the Messiah to see corruption.**

¹¹**You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

Do you see how contextually rough this reading would be? But that's what we're asked to accept.

The underlying Hebrew phrase should be translated as "your holy ones"—plural! Now that makes sense. It is only by *application by translators* that the three passages of John and Acts are made to refer back to Psalms 16. "Not leave my soul" and "nor allow your holy ones to see corruption" speak of the corruption of Sheol (the grave or the abode of the dead).

The believer's hope for the future, so far as this had place, was not prolonged existence in Sheol, but deliverance from it and restoration to new life in God's presence (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia).

So David was not thinking about any future messiah within this Psalm.

Adam Clarke tells us that the *singular* phrase in **v.10** is a corruption!

Adam Clarke Commentary: Psa.16:10 - Thine Holy One - This is in the plural number, חַסִּידִים *chasideycha*, thy Holy Ones; but none of the versions translate it in the plural; and as it is in the singular number, חַסִּיד *chasidecha*, in several ancient editions, among which is the Complutensian Polyglot, and no less than two hundred and sixty-four of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., and in the quotation by St. Peter, in Acts 2:27; Acts 13:35, we may take it for granted that the present reading is a

corruption; or that חַסִּידִים is an emphatic singular.

• Here, Adam Clarke tells us that the actual text is a corruption, since the word is plural and means holy ones, not a singular being. I would take this to mean something respecting a resurrection of the Jews (said to be the holy people of God, **Deut.7:6**, Israelites), since David was a Jew himself (**Matt.1:3-6**) and an Israelite, yet that is only my opinion. But let me ask, why would English translators, virtually all of whom were trinitarian, prefer to translate the passage in **Psa.16:10** as singular, and read back into the passage by implication through capitalization, something about a future messiah? I believe this capitalization was a deliberate attempt by English translators to insert the Messiah back into this passage.

Nevertheless, if you carefully read the Psalm, it says nothing at all about the idea that "Jesus must rise from the dead."

One should not try to read thoughts and concepts back into the Bible. That the writer of Acts (whoever he was) quotes Peter in **Acts 2:24-32** who applies an OT passage about Yahweh or God, to Jesus, does not mean that the passage in Psalms 16 *does indeed* refer to Jesus (which it does not), or did originally. Another quotation, again by the writer of Acts, of Paul, this time (**Acts 13:34-37**), applies the same passage, interestingly, to Jesus. But again, this simply does not support the idea that the Psalm *originally* spoke of Jesus, or, that John's Gospel referred to **Psalm 16**. I am surprised that you would use these two passages to support your position that **John 20:9** refers to either of them.

I noticed that you are not on our mailing list to receive our free quarterly newsletter entitled "The Fellowship Commentator." If you would like, I could add your name to our mailing list. Our website is CFMinistries.org. You will find the complete text of my One-God presentation there in PDF format (among many other writings in HTML). Thank you again, *F. Paul Haney*

(The Hebrew may not have reproduced very well.)

If it's in the Greek, —it must be so!

The title of this column says it all: *If the phrase, word, or passage is found in a Greek New Testament, it must be original and it must be true. Bam!!!*



It is hardly necessary to demonstrate the foolishness of this concept—*just finding a passage in a book that someone put together long after the date of the original writing does not lend credibility to the book*. But one person at the One-God Conference in Albany actually said this about a passage in John, and it was the Prologue. With a straight face, he suggested that the Prologue could *not* have been added "at a later date" (as some scholars suggest) because it was in his Greek New Testament. He wanted to go get it and show me! (I knew it was there.)

I could barely believe my ears (and was just about speechless) because what he uttered in all seriousness at that table was a most un-scholarly (and silly) declaration. Yet apparently, this fellow learned to read Greek in some academic setting. I guess the only proof for him regarding the addition of the Prologue Hymn would be for me to produce an original manuscript from under the table. Sad to say, this young man and others like him make similar mistakes regarding Greek New Testaments. I quickly recovered my composure and asked him: *Which Greek text do you use?* He said: *I have them all—in one volume—through footnotes and references*. I could only look away and smile weakly—he must not have known that some odd 5-6,000 MSS parts and fragments have been found and all differ in some respect.

What Most Bible Readers Do Not Know

(1) Underneath every English New Testament version is at least one Greek Text Edition and sometimes more than one, as well as departures from the text thereof due to personal concerns and preferences of the translator.

(2) The content of any Greek Text Edition that underlies any given

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English Translation or Version is dependant upon personal choices and personal preferences of the translator(s). Greek text editions were not written by the New Testament authors.

(3) Underneath every Greek Text Edition are various numbers of copies of copies of Greek (and perhaps Latin) textual manuscripts (MSS).

(4) Any Greek Text Edition is based upon a foundation of varying Greek MSS, and is of necessity (due to internal dynamics of that Edition) different from any other Greek Text Edition (having its own set of foundational MSS and variations) which may underlie any other given Language (English) Translation or Version.

(5) No English Translation has any Original Manuscript or Autograph as its foundation.

(6) Greek Text Editions that underlie English NT Versions are based upon varying and different MSS copies, none of which agree with one another in all particulars.

(7) No Greek Text Edition has any Original Manuscript or Autograph as its foundation.

(8) No Original Greek Autographs exist today. They may not have existed for about 1,900 years.

(9) Nevertheless, Christian apologists and writers will tell you that the NT text, in its Original Autograph and Original Language structure, is without error, without any significant corruption, flawless, and inerrant. They will say that God's "Holy Spirit" preserved these "inspired" foundational NT texts and further, that the same "Holy Spirit" also made sure that the transmission of said texts to this very day was without error and that the Greek texts we have now are flawless.

And to make matters worse, Christian writers make these claims having never seen or studied an original autograph. As a result, the claims being made by Christian apologists of a flawless or "near" flawless text are without evidence and without basis in fact. #

What "Corrupted Text" Means

A philosopher once said, "If you would speak to me, define your terms." Good idea, because words mean things and word meanings are

variable in various contexts. In Textual Criticism, when it is said that a text is "corrupted," the word does not necessarily mean that the text in question is "worthless" or "useless." On the contrary, a change might be a real correction. *A corrupted text is simply one that has seen change, negative or positive, from its original composition.*

The term "corrupt" in Textual Criticism means, *containing alterations, foreign admixtures, or errors; or it is contaminated or deteriorated, from the exemplar or archetype.*

A text can be altered and made better than it was previously. This happens many times in the print media. When our good friend Dixon Cartwright (editor of The Journal) receives a *Letter to the Editor*, his journalistic experience and expertise often tells him to revise the letter a bit, at least to shorten it. In his capacity as editor, if Dixon is able to recover some rational thought from the letter, he has *improved* the piece for possible publication.

As a stream can rise no higher than its fountains, so no New Testament text can obtain a just weight of influence above that of its supporting manuscript source. It should be a matter of great interest then, to examine the basis of *prominent* NT Greek editions.

Alterations in a text can be deliberate or accidental. A New Testament scribe or copyist by definition is not a legitimate or official text editor. Scribes were not unbiased. While slips of the pen are common and mistakes are frequent in *every single NT manuscript*, the scribe may (innocently, of course) decide that he is better equipped than the author to *harmonize* or *refine* the writing since it is "obvious" to him that the author *meant* to have his words in harmony with certain other doctrinal positions.

Or, he may decide that a different word other than the original fits better, so he removes the one and inserts the other. Or, he might be a zealous monk who decides to *clarify* a concept and add a line or a paragraph of text in support of some church dogma. This is how deliberately altered "Nature-of-God" texts come to be, and according to my research, such alterations can and do significantly change biblical doctrine.

On the Assignment of Names & Titles

Jesus of Nazareth has been assigned various names and titles (as well as attributes) of Yahweh, the God of both the Old and the New Testaments. Because of these designations, frequently the Christian reader will assume that Jesus IS what he is implied to be. Take the word "Lord," for instance. It generally means "supreme in authority," as one might use the word God or master, or even the word "Sir."

R.E. Brown: *The Father, God, is Kyrios* [Kyrios, κύριος], "Lord," a name used in Greek to render the Yahweh of the Israelite Scriptures. *Jesus is also Kyrios, "Lord," (Phil.2:9).*

[**Phil.2:9** states that God exalted Jesus and gave him the name above other names. Jesus was *not* Kyrios in eternity past—he became Lord. **Phil.2:11, NKJV**; "...and **that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**"]

The name that God gave him was *Yahshua* (Jesus) (**Lk.1:31**), which means "Yah Saves," and the title is Lord, or master, certainly *not* "God."]

*Finally there is that solemn statement in 2Cor.3:17 "The Lord is the spirit [pneuma]; where the spirit [pneuma] of the Lord is, there is freedom." Thus the same divine name is used in all three; yet the same things are not affirmed of all three. Jesus says "The Father is greater than I," and the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ. (Raymond E. Brown, *Biblical Exegesis & Church Doctrine*, p.104) Though Jesus may be called "Lord," he is not equal to Yahweh in any sense except in mind (**Jn.10:30**). *F. Paul Haney**



FREE

JOHN THE ODD MAN Among
the Gospel Evangelists

Write to:

Christ Fellowship Ministries

P.O. Box 337,

Kensington, CT 06037

Email: CFMinistries@att.net

Website: CFMinistries.org

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