

Trinitarian Verses

آيات التثليث

[English - إنجليزي]

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There are several key verses which Christians use to prove the biblical origin of the Trinity. Upon analysis of these verses, one can clearly see that they do not prove the Trinity, but rather the same monotheistic message of God. One of the most frequently cited passages from the Bible is Isaiah 9:6-7, from which Christians conclude that the Messiah must be God incarnate. The passage states:

“or a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore the zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.”

That Isaiah 9:6 has been misinterpreted can be seen from the fact that Jesus is never called the “Eternal Father” anywhere else in Bible. Since the Trinitarian doctrine teaches that Christians should “neither confound the Persons nor divide the Substance”

(Athanasian Creed), how can the Trinitarians accept that Jesus is the “Eternal Father”? Let us consider additional facts impartially.

First, all the Hebrew verb forms in Isaiah 9:6 are in the past tense. For example, the word which the Christian Bibles render as “**his name will be called**” is the two words ‘*vayikra shemo,*’ which properly translated, should read “**his name was called.**” The word “*vayikra*” is the first word to appear in the book of Leviticus (1:1), and it is translated properly over there – in the past tense. In addition, the King James Version translates the same verbs elsewhere in the past tense in Genesis 4:26 and Isaiah 5:25. Only in Isaiah 9:6-7 are these verbs translated in the future tense!

Notice that it says “**a child HAS been born to us.**” This is an event that has just occurred, not a future event. Isaiah is not making a prophecy, but recounting history. A future event would say a child will be born to us, but this is NOT what the verse says. The Christian translations capitalize the word ‘**son**’ assuming that this is a messianic prophecy and the names of a divine son.

Second, the two letter word “**is**”, is usually not stated in Hebrew. Rather, “**is**” is understood. For example, the words “*hakelev*” (the dog) and “*gadol*” (big), when joined into a sentence - *hakelev gadol* - means “the dog IS big,” even though no Hebrew word in that sentence represents the word “is.” A more accurate translation of the name of that child, then, would be “**A wonderful counselor is the mighty God, the everlasting father ...**”. This name describes God, not the person who carries the name. The name Isaiah itself means “**God is salvation,**” but no one believes the prophet himself is God in a human body!

Third, the phrase “**Mighty God**” is a poor translation according to some biblical scholars. Although English makes a clear distinction between “**God**” and “**god**,” the Hebrew language, which has only capital letters, cannot. The Hebrew word “**God**” had a much wider range of application than it does in English. Some suggest a better translation for the English reader would be

“**mighty hero**,” or “**divine hero**.” Both Martin Luther and James Moffatt translated the phrase as “**divine hero**” in their Bibles.

Fourth, according to the New Testament, Jesus was never called any of these names in his lifetime.

Fifth, if Isaiah 9:6 is taken to refer to Jesus, then Jesus is the Father! And this is against the Trinitarian doctrine.

Sixth, the fact that the New Testament does not quote this passage shows that even the New Testament authors didn’t take this verse to be in reference to Jesus.

Seventh, the passage is talking about the wonders performed by the Lord for Hezekiah, king of Judah. Preceding verses in Isaiah 9 talk of a great military triumph by Israel over its enemies. At the time Isaiah is said to have written this passage, God had just delivered King Hezekiah and Jerusalem from a siege laid by the Assyrians under General Sennacherib. The deliverance is said to have been accomplished in spectacular fashion: an angel went into the Assyrian camp and killed 185,000 soldiers while they slept. When Sennacherib awoke to find his army decimated, he and the remaining soldiers fled, where he was assassinated by his own sons (Isaiah 37:36-38). Chapters 36 and 37 of Isaiah recount how Hezekiah stood firm in the face of Sennacherib’s vast army and his blasphemous words against the God. When all seemed lost, Hezekiah continued to trust in the Lord, and for this he was rewarded with a miraculous victory. It is interesting to note that the statement, “**the zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this**,” found at the end of Isaiah 9:7, is found in only two other places in the Bible: Isaiah 37:32 and 2 Kings 19:31. Both these passages discuss the miraculous deliverance of Hezekiah by God. Therefore, in light of the above, Isaiah is recounting God’s defense of Jerusalem during the Assyrian siege. Furthermore, Soncino’s commentary says the chapter is about the fall of Assyria and the announcement of the birth of Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz.

The Hebrew name “Immanuel” can be translated as, “God with us” or “God is with us.” Some people believe, based on Isaiah 7:14, that because Jesus would be called “Immanuel,” he must be God incarnate. Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23 are often read around Christmas. They are read as follows:

Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”

Matthew 1:23 “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

First, the prophesy states that his **name** will be Immanuel.”

It does not say that “he **will be** Immanuel.”

Second, Mary never called her child “Immanuel” as required by the prophecy. According to the Bible, she named him Jesus following instructions by the angel of God.

Matthew 1:25 “but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son; and he called His name Jesus.”

Luke 1:30-31 “The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.’”

Third, when read in context, the birth and naming of the child Immanuel was to be a sign for king Ahaz that God was with his people who were about to be invaded by two rival kingdoms (Isa 7:10-16). The promise was fulfilled by God (2 Kings 16:9). The name “God is with us,” means that God will support us.¹ The name makes perfect sense if the child’s name was supposed to indicate to King Ahaz that God was on his side.

¹ “The name Immanuel could mean ‘God be with us’ in the sense ‘God help us.’ “Interpreter’s dictionary of the Bible, vol. 2, p. 686.

Isa 7:10-16 “Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, ‘Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.’ But Ahaz said, ‘I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test.’ Then Isaiah said, ‘Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of men? Will you try the patience of my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right. But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste.’”

2 Kings 16:9 The king of Assyria complied by attacking Damascus and capturing it. He deported its inhabitants to Kir and put Rezin to death.

Fourth, Isaiah 7:14 in actual Hebrew does not say a virgin would give birth but that a young woman would conceive. The Hebrew word *almah*, used in Isaiah 7:14 means young woman or maiden, not a virgin. The Hebrew word for virgin is *b'tulah*. The RSV (Revised Standard Version) Bible is one of the few Christian Bibles that used the translation ‘young woman’ instead of replacing it with the word ‘virgin.’

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Imman’u-el.

Fifth, when something is “called” a certain name, it does not mean that the thing is literally what it is called. Symbolic names are frequently used by Hebrews in the Bible. Many names would cause great problems if taken literally. Jerusalem is called “the Lord our Righteousness,” and Jerusalem is obviously not God (Jer. 33:16). In Genesis 32:30, we are told that Jacob called a piece of land “Face of God.” Abraham called the mountain on which he was about to sacrifice Ishmael “the Lord will provide,” yet no one would believe that the mountain was God. Similarly, no one

would believe an altar was God, even if Moses called it that: “Moses built an altar and called it ‘the Lord is my Banner’” (Ex. 17:15). Would Christians believe that Elijah was “God Jehovah,” or that Bithiah, a daughter of Pharaoh, was the sister of Jesus because her name means “daughter of Jehovah?” Do Christians believe that Dibri, not Jesus, was the “Promise of Jehovah,” or that Eliab was the real Messiah since his name means “My God (is my) father?” Similarly, would they say that Jesus Bar-Abbas, who avoided crucifixion by being set free (Mat. 27:15-26)², was the son of God because his name meant “Jesus, son of his Father”? Of course not.

We can conclude that reading Jesus as the fruition of a prophecy in Isaiah is only due to Matthew quoting the prophecy, rather than people actually calling Jesus Immanuel in his lifetime. Furthermore, even if his name was Immanuel, the name does not necessarily reflect the fact, as can be seen from other names linked with God (in the Hebrew forms of *El* or *Yah*) belonging to other people. Making the claim that Immanuel means Jesus God in the flesh among His people is therefore merely an example of how the Trinitarian doctrine of incarnation was forced upon the message of Jesus by “bending” prophecies.

2 The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible from the Westcott-Hort Greek Variants

Some people say that since the same titles – Alpha and Omega - are used for both God and Jesus, this proves that they one and the same. It is further claimed that these expressions mean the eternity of the Father and the Son. Upon analysis, we see that this notion raises several problems.

Isaiah 44:6 “This is what the Lord says - Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.”

Revelation 1:8 “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

Revelation 1:11 “Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last:”

Revelation 22:13 “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

First, the Book of Revelation is an unreliable book. Early Christians and elders of the Church - Marcion, Caius of Rome, Dionysius of Alexandria, Amphilocius of Iconium, Gregory of Nazianzus, Cyril of Jerusalem, Synod of Laodicea in 360 CE - disputed it.³ The author of the Revelation identifies himself as some unknown John, but probably not the apostle John because the style of the book is completely different from the Gospel of John.⁴ Other than his name, very little is known about him. Martin Luther criticized this book. He wrote in the preface to Revelation,

About this book of the Revelation of John, I leave everyone free to hold his own opinions. I would not have anyone bound to my opinion or judgment. I say what I feel. I miss more than one

3 *Bible Research*, an internet resource by Michael D. Marlowe.
(<http://www.bible-researcher.com/canon5.html>)

4 *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Revelation of St. John* by R. H. Charles. T. & T. Clark, 1920

thing in this book, and it makes me consider it to be neither apostolic nor prophetic... Many of the fathers also rejected this book a long time ago... For me this is reason enough not to think highly of it: Christ is neither taught nor known in it.”⁵

To this day, Lutheran scholars put the Revelation of John in a separate category of disputed books.

Second, Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Biblical scholars are not completely sure what the phrase “**the Alpha and the Omega**” means. It cannot be strictly literal, because neither God nor Jesus is a Greek letter. It is like saying God is ‘A’ and ‘Z’. Lenski concludes, “It is fruitless to search Jewish and pagan literature for the source of something that resembles this name Alpha and Omega. Nowhere is a person, to say nothing of a divine Person, called ‘**Alpha and Omega**’, or in Hebrew, ‘**Aleph and Tau**’.”⁶ Although there is no evidence from the historical sources that anyone is named “**the Alpha and Omega**,” Bullinger says that the phrase “is a Hebraism, in common use among the ancient Jewish Commentators to designate the whole of anything from the beginning to the end; e.g., ‘**Adam transgressed the whole law from Aleph to Tau**’.”⁷ The best scholarly minds have concluded that the phrase has something to do with starting and finishing something, or the entirety of something.

Third, the doctrine of Alpha and Omega is a sad and unfortunate example of mankind’s tampering with the Word of God. It shows how doctrine is contracted by men to justify false beliefs. The phrase “**Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last**” (Revelation 1:11) which is found in the King James Version was not in the original Greek texts. Therefore, the Alpha

5 *Luther’s Works*, vol 35 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963), pp. 395-399.

6 R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Revelation* (Augsburg Pub. House, Minneapolis, MN 1963), p. 51.

7 E. W. Bullinger, *Commentary on Revelation* (Kregel Pub., Grand Rapids, MI, 1984), pp. 147 and 148.

Omega phrase is not found in virtually any ancient texts, nor is it mentioned, even as a footnote, in any modern translation!

Revelation 1:10-11

KJV “and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last:”

NIV “and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: ‘Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches’”

NASB and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, saying, “Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches:”

ASV “and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, What thou seest, write in a book and send it to the seven churches:”

RSV “and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches”

NAB (Catholic) “and heard behind me a voice as loud as a trumpet, which said, “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches”

Fourth, In the Book of Revelation 1:8, King James Version implies that Jesus said he was Alpha and Omega. Since God says

He is Alpha and Omega in Isaiah 44:6, Jesus, according to Christians, is claiming divinity here. However, the wording of King James is inaccurate. Not only do all modern translations clarify it was God who said it, not Jesus, but the conveyor of the words is one of God's angels.

Revelation 1:1-3

NRSV “The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; *He made it known by sending His angel* to His servant John, who testified *to the word of God* and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near.”

With these corrections, it becomes evident that this was a statement of God and not a statement of Jesus, the Prophet of God.

Revelation 1:8

KJV “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

NIV “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

NASB “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

ASV “I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

RSV ““I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.’

New American Bible (Catholic) “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty.”

Fifth, Revelation 22:13 is part of the vision of an unknown John (not the author of the gospel) in which he claims a visitation by an angel, mentioned in Revelation 21:09.

NRSV “Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, ‘Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.’”

The angel is speaking from Revelation 22:10-13:

NRSV “And he said to me, ‘Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy. See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone’s work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.’

Jesus did not say those words, not is there any indication they refer to him. Then passage continues in verses 14 and 15.

NRSV “Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.”

This does not appear to be Jesus Christ speaking because the appearance of the first person singular pronoun in 22:16 signals a shift in speaker. Therefore, Alpha and Omega in the passage refers to God Himself, speaking through the angel. This is born out by Revelation 21:5-7, which says:

NRSV “And the One Who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ Also He said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ Then He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of

life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.””

What Jesus is reported as saying is,

NRSV, Revelation 22:16; ““It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.””

Therefore, for the sake of argument, should the saying “I am the Alpha and the Omega” actually pertain to other than Jesus, can one gamble personal salvation on a vision claimed by an author whose identity is not clear, and whose book is disputed as being reliably canon?

Sixth, what is significant is not so much the use of this name, but the fact that God is always superior to Jesus when the Bible describes the relationship between God and Jesus as explained elsewhere.

We can see from this analysis that these verses which Christians use to prove that Jesus is the son of God cannot be used in proving the Trinity. Rather, an examination of the history of the theological development in Church philosophy will reveal that the Trinity was a concept developed much later in Christianity due to various socio-political factors, which later Christians sought to justify through various passages of the Bible.