

John 8: Jesus Christ is the One

First we have focused on considering the clear verses about God and His son. They are uniform in showing that only the Father is God. Next I want to consider some of the verses that through the years have served as a springboard for the development of this doctrine.

All difficult verses must be understood in light of the clear verses on the identical subject. By looking at the clear verses first, when you come to the difficult verses, even if you never figure out what the verse means, you will at least know what it cannot mean. The cause for any apparent contradictions or possible ambiguities we encounter in God's Word must lie either in our understanding of what is written, the translation, or the underlying texts from which the translations were made.

Difficulties with the Underlying Text

The only verse in the King James Version that actually states what could be considered a definition of the trinity is found in I John.

→I John 5:7-8 (KJV)

I John 5:7-8 (NASB)

7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

Difficulties in Understanding

There can also be difficulties in understanding what we read. When we come to God's Word we set aside our own opinions and endeavor to allow the Word to speak for itself.

→Luke 5:21-24 (KJV)

No verse of Scripture says that only God can forgive sins, that was their personal opinion. The authority to forgive sins, like all other authority, originates with God, but He can give that authority to anyone He chooses. Part of the authority God gave to Jesus Christ was the power to forgive sins. Our lord made it clear that he was forgiving sins as the son of man, which is a Messianic title, and not a name for God.

John 20:23 (NASB)

If you forgive the sins of any, *their sins* have been forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they have been retained.

This delegation of authority does not make the apostles God any more than it made the Jesus Christ God.

Abraham and Christ

The section of Scripture I really want to cover with you has elements of poor translation and reading into the text what is not there at all.

→John 8:58 (KJV)

→John 7:37-44 (KJV)

→John 8:12-59 (KJV)

The Pharisees start in with insults and accusations, but the real crux of their opposition is found at the end of verse 53 – who are you?

Let's consider the context of this seemingly difficult statement. It is no secret that Jesus Christ faced great opposition during his earthly ministry. This opposition arose not because of what he had done, but because of who he claimed to be.

→Mark 14:61-64 (KJV)

Jesus answered his inquisitors by saying "I am." Whenever you see this phrase the logical question should be: "I am *what*?" The context here in Mark supplies the ready answer: "I am the Christ, the Son of the Blessed."

For the third time during this discourse he begins a statement with the solemn "verily, verily" which marks the statement out as particularly important. He then goes on to say "Before Abraham was, I am." This is what turned the crowd to murder, but what does this last phrase mean, and why would it anger them?

The Pharisees were looking for proof that Jesus claimed to be the Christ, because that would allow them to put him to death on the charge of blasphemy.

"I am" is a translation of the Greek phrase *ego eimi*, (a form of the verb "to be") Alone it is not a complete sentence, it requires a direct object (predicate nominative) in order to make a complete thought. If the direct object is not specifically stated, it must be supplied from the context.

→John 9:9 (KJV)

John 8:18 (NIV)

I am one [*ego eimi*] who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."

John 8:24 (NIV)

I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one [*ego eimi*] I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."

John 8:28 (NIV)

So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one [*ego eimi*] I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.

Four times in John 8 Jesus Christ uses the phrase *I am* without a stated explanation. In the first three occurrences the translators completed the thought by the phrase "I am one" or "I am the one." Why didn't they follow through in verse 58? They purposely ignored their own approach to translation, leaving the verse in an ambiguous form which has been used to imply that Jesus was somehow claiming to be God.

Jesus Christ is "the one" anointed by God as the Messiah, he is "**the one**" who is the Son of God, and he is certainly greater than Abraham. Jesus is **the one**, not one in a long line of prophets as taught by Islam, he is not one among many good men as in Buddhism. Jesus is **the one**, the only begotten son of God, the Christ.