

**PROPHET JESUS (pbuh):
A PROPHET, NOT A
SON, OF GOD**

HARUN YAHYA

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Published by

GLOBAL PUBLISHING

Talatpasa Mahallesi, Emirgazi Caddesi,
İbrahim Elmas İş Merkezi A Blok, Kat: 4
Okmeydanı - İstanbul / Turkey
Tel: +90 212 222 00 88

Printed and bound by Secil Ofset in İstanbul
100 Yil Mah. MAS-SIT Matbaacilar Sitesi 4. Cadde No: 77
Bagcilar-Istanbul/Turkey
Phone: (+90 212) 629 06 15

All translations from the Qur'an are from *The Noble Qur'an: a New Rendering of its Meaning in English* by Hajj Abdalhaqq and Aisha Bewley, published by Bookwork, Norwich, UK. 1420 CE/1999 AH.

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T o t h e R e a d e r

A special chapter is assigned to the collapse of the theory of evolution because this theory constitutes the basis of all anti-spiritual philosophies. Since Darwinism rejects the fact of creation – and therefore, God's existence – over the last 140 years it has caused many people to abandon their faith or fall into doubt. It is therefore an imperative service, a very important duty to show everyone that this theory is a deception. Since some readers may find the chance to read only one of our books, we think it appropriate to devote a chapter to summarize this subject.

All the author's books explain faith-related issues in light of Qur'anic verses, and invite readers to learn God's words and to live by them. All the subjects concerning God's verses are explained so as to leave no doubt or room for questions in the reader's mind. The books' sincere, plain, and fluent style ensures that everyone of every age and from every social group can easily understand them. Thanks to their effective, lucid narrative, they can be read at one sitting. Even those who rigorously reject spirituality are influenced by the facts these books document and cannot refute the truthfulness of their contents.

This and all the other books by the author can be read individually, or discussed in a group. Readers eager to profit from the books will find discussion very useful, letting them relate their reflections and experiences to one another.

In addition, it will be a great service to Islam to contribute to the publication and reading of these books, written solely for the pleasure of God. The author's books are all extremely convincing. For this reason, to communicate true religion to others, one of the most effective methods is encouraging them to read these books.

We hope the reader will look through the reviews of his other books at the back of this book. His rich source material on faith-related issues is very useful, and a pleasure to read.

In these books, unlike some other books, you will not find the author's personal views, explanations based on dubious sources, styles that are unobservant of the respect and reverence due to sacred subjects, nor hopeless, pessimistic arguments that create doubts in the mind and deviations in the heart.

A b o u t t h e A u t h o r

Now writing under the pen-name of HARUN YAHYA, he was born in Ankara in 1956. Having completed his primary and secondary education in Ankara, he studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, he has published many books on political, scientific, and faith-related issues. Harun Yahya is well-known as the author of important works disclosing the imposture of evolutionists, their invalid claims, and the dark liaisons between Darwinism and such bloody ideologies as fascism and communism.

Harun Yahya's works, translated into 57 different languages, constitute a collection for a total of more than 45,000 pages with 30,000 illustrations.

His pen-name is a composite of the names Harun (Aaron) and Yahya (John), in memory of the two esteemed prophets who fought against their peoples' lack of faith. The Prophet's (may God bless him and grant him peace) seal on his books' covers is symbolic and is linked to their contents. It represents the Qur'an (the Final Scripture) and Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace), last of the prophets. Under the guidance of the Qur'an and the Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet), the author makes it his purpose to disprove each fundamental tenet of irreligious ideologies and to have the "last word," so as to completely silence the objections raised against religion. He uses the seal of the final Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace), who attained ultimate wisdom and moral perfection, as a sign of his intention to offer the last word.

All of Harun Yahya's works share one single goal: to convey the Qur'an's message, encourage readers to consider basic faith-related issues such as God's existence and unity and the Hereafter; and to expose irreligious systems' feeble foundations and perverted ideologies.

Harun Yahya enjoys a wide readership in many countries, from India to America, England to Indonesia, Poland to Bosnia, Spain to Brazil, Malaysia to Italy, France to Bulgaria and Russia. Some of his books are available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Urdu, Arabic, Albanian, Chinese, Swahili, Hausa, Dhivehi (spoken in Mauritius), Russian, Serbo-Croat (Bosnian), Polish, Malay, Uygur Turkish, Indonesian, Bengali, Danish and Swedish.

Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in many people recovering faith in God and gaining deeper insights into their faith. His books' wisdom and sincerity, together with a distinct style that's easy to understand, directly affect anyone who reads them. Those who seriously consider these books, can no longer advocate atheism or any other perverted ideology or materialistic philosophy, since these books are characterized by rapid effectiveness, definite results, and irrefutability. Even if they continue to do so, it will be only a sentimental insistence, since these books refute such ideologies from their very foundations. All contemporary movements of denial are now ideologically defeated, thanks to the books written by Harun Yahya.

This is no doubt a result of the Qur'an's wisdom and lucidity. The author modestly intends to serve as a means in humanity's search for God's right path. No material gain is sought in the publication of these works.

Those who encourage others to read these books, to open their minds and hearts and guide them to become more devoted servants of God, render an invaluable service.

Meanwhile, it would only be a waste of time and energy to propagate other books that create confusion in people's minds, lead them into ideological chaos, and that clearly have no strong and precise effects in removing the doubts in people's hearts, as also verified from previous experience. It is impossible for books devised to emphasize the author's literary power rather than the noble goal of saving people from loss of faith, to have such a great effect. Those who doubt this can readily see that the sole aim of Harun Yahya's books is to overcome disbelief and to disseminate the Qur'an's moral values. The success and impact of this service are manifested in the readers' conviction.

One point should be kept in mind: The main reason for the continuing cruelty, conflict, and other ordeals endured by the vast majority of people is the ideological prevalence of disbelief. This can be ended only with the ideological defeat of disbelief and by conveying the wonders of creation and Qur'anic morality so that people can live by it. Considering the state of the world today, leading into a downward spiral of violence, corruption and conflict, clearly this service must be provided speedily and effectively, or it may be too late.

In this effort, the books of Harun Yahya assume a leading role. By the will of God, these books will be a means through which people in the twenty-first century will attain the peace, justice, and happiness promised in the Qur'an.

INTRODUCTION

Islam and Christianity, the world's two largest Divine religions, have many beliefs in common, such as God's absolute existence, His eternal existence, His creation of the universe from nothing, and His control of all matter through His infinite might. Muslims and Christians oppose the same intellectual errors; struggle against atheism, racism, fascism, and moral degeneration; and use very similar methods to communicate the message of God's existence. Their common aim is to help all people know God so that they can build a world full of justice, one in which they can live in peace and tolerance. They act out of fear, respect, and love for God; follow the path of His messengers, and abide by His revelation.

There is also great harmony in terms of moral values. A human model that thinks only of its own interests, is without love, ruthless, selfish, self-interested and lacking in honesty is the exact opposite of the religious moral values espoused by Muslims and Christians alike. Christians also long for a world governed by love, honesty, compassion, devotion, justice, humility, and fraternity, and endeavor to bring such a world about. They also strive against the behavior forbidden by our Lord, such as prostitution, homosexuality, drug abuse, violence, and exploitation.

Both Christians and Muslims harbor a deep love of and respect for Prophet Jesus (pbuh), God's chosen messenger who was introduced to us in the Qur'an and made superior to the worlds: He [Jesus] is, **"of high esteem in this world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near"** (Surah Al 'Imran: 45). He is a most valuable servant, one honored by God with various miracles and superior moral values.

This book concentrates on the false belief in the *trinity*, which does not form part of true Christianity (defined as the message revealed to Prophet Jesus [pbuh]) and which only emerged long after he had been raised to God's presence. We shall examine, in the light of both Christian sources and the Qur'an, the monotheistic belief on which true Christianity is based, and analyze how belief in the trinity, based on the concept of *the son of God* (God is surely beyond that!), came into being.

However, before doing so, we wish to declare that we consider that both our Lord and Prophet Jesus (pbuh) are free of all of the expressions we shall be using to describe this belief in the trinity. In addition, throughout the book, several changes have been made to Biblical passages: the word *Father* has been replaced by *God-Lord, and Son by Prophet-messenger*. Wherever the name Jesus (pbuh), the Prophet of God, appears, the word "Prophet" has been appended as a mark of respect.

Another important matter that needs to be emphasized is that Muslims, who believe in all of the prophets and books sent by God, respect the beliefs and values of both Christians and Jews. The Qur'an considers Judaism's Torah and the Psalms as well as Christianity's New Testament to be divine books, and regards Jews and Christians as *People of the Book*. The Qur'an describes Muslims as **"those who believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you."** (Surat al-Baqara: 4)

The phrase **"what was sent down before you"** is a reference to the Pages of Prophet Abraham (pbuh), the Torah of Prophet Moses (pbuh), the Book of Psalms of Prophet David (pbuh), and the Gospels of Prophet Jesus (pbuh). God's revelation to Prophet Abraham (pbuh) no longer exists. The

other texts have come down to us, but only in corrupted forms, for they contain statements and interpretations that are far removed from God's true religion. Nonetheless, sections compatible with the Qur'an regarding faith in God and His prophets; the love, fear, and respect of God; proper moral values and the like have survived to the present day. (God knows best.) God revealed these books as guides to the humanity: **"He has sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming what was there before it. And He sent down the Torah and the Gospel previously, as guidance for humanity"** (Surah Al 'Imran: 3-4). In another verse, God says of the Torah:

We sent down the Torah containing guidance and light, and the Prophets who had submitted themselves gave judgment by it for the Jews – as did their scholars and their rabbis – by what they had been allowed to preserve of God's Book to which they were witnesses. (Surat Al-Ma'ida: 44)

The Qur'an also reveals that some Jewish religious figures **"distort words from their proper meanings"** (Surat al-Ma'ida: 41) and write the Book with their own hands and then say: **"This is from God' to sell it for a paltry price"** (Surat al-Baqara: 79). In other words, they have corrupted God's revelation to Prophet Moses (pbuh). Christians, on the other hand, have fallen into a grave error: the trinity (Surat an-Nisa': 171).

In the Qur'an, God provides a great deal of important information about the theological or moral errors of some members of People of the Book. This does not mean, however, that all of them have gone astray, as the following verses state:

They are not all the same. There is a community among the People of the Book who are upright. They recite God's Signs throughout the night, and they prostrate. They believe in God and the Last Day, enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and compete in doing good. They are among the righteous. You will not be denied the reward for any good thing you do. God knows those who guard against evil. (Surah Al 'Imran: 113-15)

Among the People of the Book are some who believe in God, what has been sent down to you and what was sent down to them, and who are humble before God. They do not sell God's Signs for a paltry price. Such people will have their reward with their Lord. And God is swift at reckoning. (Surah Al 'Imran: 199)

Exemplary Muslims live their lives according to the Qur'an, for it determines their value judgments, moral characteristics, and perspectives on life and other people. The same thing applies to their attitude toward the People of the Book, for they always approach them on a basis of tolerance, justice, and love. Thus, Muslims regard them not as *the opposition*, but as devoted believers in God. Anything else would be a violation of the Qur'an, since many of them have a sincere belief in God and may therefore hope for salvation. All of the reminders presented in this book have been written with that in mind and with the intention of fulfilling God's order to **"command what is good and avoid what is evil."** Our goal is to show the erroneous nature of belief in the trinity and to help Christians see the

truth, so that they will realize this error and abandon all beliefs that are incompatible with faith in the one God.

CHRISTIANS' ERRORS REGARDING THE TRINITY

Throughout history, God has sent prophets to lead their people out of their mistaken beliefs and to the path of true monotheistic belief by relaying God's revelation to them. Although each religion contains different stipulations, observances, and practices, their essence is always the same: *tawhid*, which the Qur'an defines as **"to believe in God as the One and Only Deity."** Someone who believes in *tawhid* knows that Almighty God is the Lord of the worlds, that all people are totally dependent upon Him, and that all beings have submitted to Him. To put it another way, Christianity and Judaism, despite their corrupted forms, are built on the foundation of absolute monotheism.

All members of these three religions who believe in God's existence and oneness abide by the religion that our Lord revealed to Prophet Abraham (pbuh). According to the Qur'an, his religion is a *haneef* (pure natural belief) religion, and our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) was commanded to abide by it:

Then We revealed to you: "Follow the religion of Abraham, a man of pure natural belief [haneef]. He was not one of the idolaters." (Surat an-Nahl: 123)

The word *haneef* means *someone who believes in and serves only God*. This is the attribute of Prophet Abraham (pbuh) that the Qur'an emphasizes as being *haneef*, for this great servant of God distanced himself from his tribe's superstitious beliefs and turned solely to God. He also encouraged his tribe to abandon their pagan beliefs and idolatry. (For details, see Harun Yahya, *Prophet Abraham and Prophet Lot* [Istanbul: Global Publishing, 2005].)

The divine religion revealed to Prophet Abraham (pbuh) was maintained by sincere believers among his progeny:

Who would deliberately renounce the religion of Abraham except someone who reveals himself to be a fool? We chose him in this world, and in the Hereafter he will be one of the righteous. When his Lord said to him: "Become a Muslim," he [Abraham] said: "I am a Muslim who has submitted to the Lord of all the worlds." Abraham directed his sons to this, as did Jacob: "My sons. God has chosen this religion for you, so do not die except as Muslims." Or were you present when death came to Jacob and he asked his sons: "What will you worship when I have gone?" They said: "We will worship your God, the God of your forefathers Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac – one God. We are Muslims submitted to Him." (Surah Al 'Imran: 130-133)

As we have seen, Prophet Abraham's (pbuh) *haneef* religion is common to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Jews regard him as the prophet of all Jews and say that they are following his path. Like them, Christians also regard Prophet Abraham (pbuh) as one of their prophets. Faith, love, and respect for this great prophet are as important to Jews and Christians as they are to Muslims:

Who could have a better religion than someone who submits himself completely to God, is a good-doer, and follows the religion of Abraham, a man of pure natural belief? God took Abraham as an intimate friend. (Surat an-Nisa': 125)

As commanded by our Lord, Muslims believe in what was revealed to all of the prophets and make no distinction between them:

Say: "We believe in God and what has been sent down to us; what was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes; what Moses and Jesus were given; and what all the Prophets were given by their Lord. We do not differentiate between any of them. We are Muslims submitted to Him." (Surat al-Baqara: 136)

However, those who are closest to Prophet Abraham (pbuh), who is a role model for all believers with his joyous faith in and deep love of God, his submission and obedience to all of our Lord's commands, and his superior moral values, are those who abide by those moral values and follow the path of monotheism. Our Lord reveals that:

The people with the strongest claim to Abraham are those who follow him and this Prophet, and those who believe. God is the Protector of the believers. (Surah Al 'Imran: 68)

For this reason, Christians and Jews who sincerely believe in God must, like Prophet Abraham (pbuh) and those who follow him, turn solely to God and adopt his moral values, sincerity, and depth of faith. Like his followers, they must be devout believers in God's oneness and ascribe no partners to Him. However, the Christians have left this path due to their belief in the trinity, which has, in effect, given God two partners: Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and the Holy Spirit (God is surely beyond that!).

What does the error of the trinity mean for Christians?

Christianity was born among the Jews living in Palestine. Almost all of Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) people, including his followers, were Jews who lived by the Mosaic law. The most fundamental characteristic of Judaism was its uncompromising monotheism.

However, after Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) ascension to God's presence, Christianity began to assume a very different form as it moved out of the Jewish world and into the pagan one. Its traditional monotheism, the basis of the Mosaic law, underwent a great change: Due to the belief in the trinity, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) began to be regarded as divine. (Surely God is beyond all such misguided beliefs and expressions.)

The concept of the trinity, the culmination of a long process, refers to belief in a three-part God consisting of *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*. It has become one of traditional Christianity's most important elements of faith, despite its contradiction of monotheistic belief in our Almighty Lord as the One and Only. It may be described as follows:

F According to the belief in the trinity, God revealed Himself in three distinct identities, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and yet they are the same thing. In other words, *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are God Himself, or God exists as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*. According to this irrational and mistaken belief, each of the three components of the trinity is God, and thus possesses the same power and capacity. (Surely God is beyond that!)

F It is believed that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is the son of God, and therefore possesses the same nature as God. This belief, known as *homoousian*, states that *the Father and the Son have the same essence*.

F It is believed that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was not created, but came from eternity as the son of God, was made flesh and became a human being, and descended from heaven to bring salvation to humanity through his crucifixion. This belief is known as incarnation.

The belief in the trinity, which is a mistaken one seeing our Almighty Lord through a superstitious eye, ascribes divinity to Prophet Jesus (pbuh), sent by God as a prophet to his people. However, despite its many internal contradictions and anti-monotheistic nature, it still occupies a very important place in Christian belief. In fact, some Christians consider it a "litmus test" for those who consider themselves to be Christian.

However, history shows that those people and communities who rejected this erroneous belief and maintained that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was merely a human being and prophet of God have been dealt with harshly. The evidence that such people produced from the New Testament and the life of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was always ignored, and people were forbidden to discuss such matters. As we shall see in the following chapters, opponents of belief in the trinity claimed that its proponents openly *ascribed partners to God*. As a result, church authorities branded them and their followers as *unbelievers, heretics, or enemies of the faith*. Some were exiled, and others were hanged or burnt alive by the Inquisition's courts. Yet this did not reduce their numbers or prevent the spread of their ideas. Nonetheless, the proponents of the trinity were always in the majority.

Even impartial researchers have determined that true Christianity is that *muwahhid* (monotheistic) Christianity that was oppressed during Europe's Dark and Middle Ages. Many Biblical scholars, especially those beginning with the eighteenth century, have concluded that the trinity, atonement for sins, and similar beliefs are nowhere to be found in the New Testament or other early Christian scriptures that did not make it into the New Testament.

As a result, some contemporary Christian denominations reject the trinity. *The Unitarian Church, for example, is a large denomination that rejects this belief*. Although there may be differences of opinion among them, such congregations deny that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is the son of God and say that true Christianity commands one to believe in God as the One and Only. Many of them also emphasize the erroneous belief that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was crucified to atone for humanity's sins. Today, one can find anti-trinitarian Christians throughout the Christian world under different names and different ecclesiastical organizations. *In the United States in particular, "opponents of the trinity"*

are growing stronger every day, and there is a great increase in the number of people openly expressing the truth in the Christian world. Among these, The Worldwide Church of God is particularly noteworthy. The founder of this church, Herbert W. Armstrong, maintains that belief in the trinity is a superstition that emerged under the influence of pagan cultures.

On the other hand, it is a fact that some anti-trinitarian views emerged within various Christian churches but that they were suppressed. For instance, the founders of the Seventh-day Adventist movement, which was born in the nineteenth century and stresses that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) will soon return, actually built their denomination on *Arian* foundations (Arius a young deacon in the Alexandrian church, was an important Christian of the third century who rejected the trinity and the divine nature ascribed to Prophet Jesus [pbuh]) However, the charges of *deviation from Christianity* leveled at this denomination by other churches led to its abandonment of Arianism and subsequent adoption of the trinity. This interesting volte-face is today admitted by members of that church.¹

One of the most noteworthy aspects of this subject is that trinitarian belief does not appear in the Bible itself. *It appears neither in the Old Testament, the holy book of the Jews, nor in the New Testament, the Christian holy text.* Rather, it is based on misinterpretations of a few New Testament passages, and the word itself was only used for the first time by Theophilus of Antioch at the end of the second century. Acceptance of the belief took place much later. Given these facts, Biblical researchers and scholars, as well as opponents of the trinity, ask such questions as: *If this belief were really true, did Prophet Jesus (pbuh) not state it unequivocally? And why is trinitarian belief not openly stated in the Bible? Their answers are unambiguous: No belief that is not clearly present in the New Testament, and which was thus unknown to the early Christians, can represent the basis of Christianity. This is an error that came about after Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and under the influence of the established Greek [pagan] culture.*

THE QUR'AN REJECTS BELIEF IN THE TRINITY

The New Testament frequently emphasizes God's infinite power and might, and describes Prophet Jesus (pbuh) as a messenger of God with human characteristics. Those few expressions that purportedly support belief in the trinity, as we will show below, clearly contradict the New Testament as a whole. All of this evidence reveals that trinitarian belief emerged long after Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was raised to God's presence. However, first we need to look at how the Qur'an, the only source from which people can obtain totally accurate information about Christianity and Prophet Jesus (pbuh), treats this belief.

The Qur'an states that the Gospel was revealed as a confirmation of the Torah:

And We sent Jesus son of Mary following in their footsteps, confirming the Torah that came before him. We gave him the Gospel containing guidance and light, confirming the Torah that came before it, and as guidance and admonition for those who guard against evil. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 46)

By proclaiming this revelation, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) corrected the errors that had crept into the Torah. The Qur'an, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace), states that both the Gospel and the Torah are true, but that their original forms have been corrupted. One of its verses reveals that the Qur'an *confirms and conserves*:

And We have sent down the Book to you with truth, confirming and conserving the previous Books. So judge between them by what God has sent down and do not follow their whims and desires, deviating from the Truth that has come to you. We have appointed a law and a practice for every one of you. Had God willed, He would have made you a single community. But He wanted to test you regarding what has come to you. So compete with each other in doing good. Every one of you will return to God, and He will inform you regarding the things about which you differed. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 48)

The quality of the Qur'an revealed in the above verse is of the greatest importance. Not only does the Qur'an confirm the original purity of the revelations sent to Prophet Moses (pbuh) and Prophet Jesus (pbuh), it also conserves them. Revealing their subsequent corruption and then calling Jews and Christians to the true path is a manifestation of that attribute.

Christianity's place is very different at this point, because our Lord reveals that:

...You will find the people most affectionate to those who believe [Muslims] are those who say: "We are Christians." That is because some of them are priests and monks, and because they are not arrogant. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 82)

The truth of this verse has been seen throughout the history of Islam. The close relationship between Christians and Muslims began in the earliest days of Islam, and was further reinforced when some of the first Muslims sought refuge from Makkan persecution in Christian Ethiopia. Christians living in Muslim lands have always lived in peace, tolerance, and justice. (For detailed information, see Harun Yahya, *A Call for Unity* [Istanbul: Global Publishing, 2004])

Our Lord states that the Gospel was sent down as "**guidance and light... and as guidance and admonition for those who guard against evil**" (Surat al-Ma'ida: 46) and "**as guidance**" (Surah Al 'Imran: 4) to Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) people. Some verses actually invite Christians to abide by the truth revealed in the Gospel:

The people of the Gospel should judge by what God sent down in it. Those who do not judge by what God has sent down are deviators. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 47)

Say: "O People of the Book. You have nothing to stand on until you implement the Torah and the Gospel and what has been sent down to you from your Lord..." (Surat al-Ma'ida: 68)

Other verses extend a very warm welcome to Christians. In fact, the Qur'an praises Christian moral values and invites those who possess them to become even more godly. Several verses also reveal the error of believing in the trinity. For example:

People of the Book. Do not go to excess in your religion. Say nothing but the truth about God. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God and His Word, which He cast into Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in God and His Messengers. Do not say: "Three." It is better that you stop. God is only One God. He is too glorious to have a son! Everything in the heavens and in Earth belongs to Him. God suffices as a Guardian. The Messiah would never disdain to be a servant to God, nor would the angels near to Him. If any disdain to worship Him and grow arrogant, He will, in any case, gather them all to Him. (Surat an-Nisa': 171-72)

With these words, our Lord reveals just how mistaken belief in the trinity is and warns its proponents that they will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment.

The belief that *Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is God* is also clearly rejected in the verses. (Surely God is beyond that!) Our Lord reveals that those who hold such a belief have become unbelievers:

Those who say that the Messiah, son of Mary, is God are unbelievers. The Messiah said: "Tribe of Israel. Worship God, my Lord and your Lord. If anyone associates anything with God, God has forbidden him the Garden and his refuge will be the Fire." The wrongdoers will have no helpers. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 72)

As revealed in this verse, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is a servant created by God, a prophet who has submitted to God, possesses superior moral values, and is made superior to the worlds. In telling people of the true religion, he spoke of our Lord's infinite might and power and stated that he was His servant. Another verse reveals that those who ascribe divinity to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) do not fully appreciate God and His might:

Those who say: "God is the Messiah, son of Mary," do not believe. Say: "Who possesses any power at all over God if He desires to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone else on Earth?" The kingdom of the heavens and Earth, and everything between them, belongs to God. He creates whatever He wills. God has power over all things. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 17)

As revealed in the verse, everyone is helpless and needy in our Lord's presence. God, Who created everything from nothing, possesses absolute power and dominion over all animate and inanimate entities. Thus, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is the servant and messenger of God, a human being created by and submitted to Him.

It is also revealed in Surat al-Ma'ida that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) himself rejected all claims concerning his supposed "divinity":

And when God asks: "Jesus son of Mary! Did you say to people: 'Take me and my mother as deities besides God?'" he will respond: "Glory be to You! It is not for me to say what I have no right to say! If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is in my self, but I do not know what is in Your Self. You are the Knower of all unseen things." (Surat al-Ma'ida: 116)

Other verses reveal the true message that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) imparted to his people:

He said: "I am the servant of God. He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet. He has made me blessed wherever I am and directed me to perform prayer and give the alms as long as I live..." (Surah Maryam: 30-31)

I come confirming the Torah I find already there, and to make lawful for you some of what was previously forbidden to you. I have brought you a Sign from your Lord. So have fear of [and respect for] God and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path. (Surah Al 'Imran: 50-51)

Another verse reveals the essence of the message imparted by the prophets:

It is not right for any human being that God should give him the Book and Judgment and Prophethood, and then that he should say to people: "Worship me rather than God."

Rather, he will say: "Be people of the Lord because of your knowledge of the Book, and because you study." (Surah Al 'Imran: 79)

Our Lord is unsullied by these erroneous beliefs, and the Qur'an reveals some of His titles:

Say: "He is God, Absolute Oneness; God, the Everlasting Sustainer of all. He has not given birth and was not born. And no one is comparable to Him." (Surat al-Ikhlās: 1-4)

This is the truth. God is One and Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is His servant and prophet, as were Prophet Abraham (pbuh), Prophet Moses (pbuh), Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace), and all of the other prophets (peace be upon them all).

In the following chapters, all aspects of belief associated with the trinity will be set out in detail based upon the Qur'an, the Bible, and other Christian sources.

BELIEF IN THE TRINITY EMERGED CENTURIES AFTER PROPHET JESUS (PBUH)

Christians believe in the Holy Bible, which consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament. Although these texts have been corrupted, one can still find in them some facts about Christianity, rules about how they are to live, and examples of Christian moral values. However, *no Biblical passage mentions belief in the trinity, and neither this word nor one similar to it appears in the New Testament. The New Catholic Encyclopedia states that the trinity was unknown to the first Christians and only assumed this form in the fourth century:*

It is difficult, in the second half of the 20th century, to offer a clear, objective, and straightforward account of the revelation, ... and the theological elaboration of the mystery of the Trinity. Trinitarian discussion, Roman Catholic as well as other, present a somewhat unsteady silhouette... There is recognition on the part of exegetist and Biblical theologians, including a constantly growing number of Roman Catholics, that one should not speak of Trinitarianism in the New Testament without serious qualification. There is also the closely parallel recognition - that when one does speak of unqualified Trinitarianism, one has moved from the period of Christian origins to say, the last quadrant of the 4th century. It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma 'one God in three persons' became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought. ²

Trinitarianism only became Church dogma in the fourth century. Before that time, there had been lengthy debates between its proponents and its detractors. These debates came to a head at the Council of Nicaea in 325.

The Council of Nicaea (325), the largest gathering of Church officials until that time, brought together more than 300 clergy members from Rome, Asia Minor, Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, and Egypt. It was called by Roman Emperor Constantine I, who wanted to end this divisive debate for the sake of Byzantium's future and security. *At this Council, the belief that constituted the basis of Christianity would be defined for the security of the Empire, according to a decision to be taken by human beings.* Saint Gregory of Nyssa describes the ensuing debates in these terms (Surely God is beyond the expressions employed in this extract):

Every corner of Constantinople was full of their discussions: the streets, the market place, the shops of the money-changers, the victuallers. Ask a tradesman how many obols he wants for some article in his shop, and he replies with the disquisition on generated and ungenerated being. Ask the price of bread today and the baker tells you: "The son is subordinate to the father." Ask your servant if the bath is ready and he makes an answer: "The son arose out of nothing." "Great is the only Begotten," declared the Catholics, and the Arians rejoined: "But greater is He that begot."³

Constantine permitted the Empire's Christians considerable freedom of belief and worship, despite the fact that he was not a Christian and continued to protect Rome's traditional pagan beliefs. In his quest to further the empire's interests, he worked for a compromise between, or even a coming together of, all of its various religions, particularly between the cult of Sol Invictus, based on Sun worship, and Christianity. Concerned over how the Christians had embarked on an internal theological debate just

when he was trying to bring the religions together, he convened this council. One side were those who believed that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was God made flesh on Earth. (Surely God is beyond that!) The leader of this group was Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria. On the other side was the celebrated Egyptian priest Arius.

Arius was the son of an Egyptian family of Libyan origins who grew up in Alexandria, one of the most important cities of the time, and joined the Church, becoming a priest in 312. *Arius believed in God's oneness and preached that the current Church view of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) as God was mistaken.* He said that the title the *Son of God* used to describe Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was a metaphor and had nothing to do with his supposed divinity. To prove this, he pointed to: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God* (Matthew 5:9). He emphasized that this title applied to everyone who behaved according to God's wishes, and thus could not be limited to Prophet Jesus (pbuh). In one of his works, Arius wrote: "We can all become the sons of God."⁴ He also pointed to the prayers of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) in the New Testament, which began with "*My God,*" and said that such prayers showed that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was devoted to God and, like other people, His helpless servant. Arius also noted that in the New Testament Prophet Jesus (pbuh) frequently referred to himself as *the son of man*, and emphasized that this indicated Prophet Jesus' human nature.

As the priest in residence at Baucalis, a district of Alexandria, Arius communicated these ideas to a wide audience. Due to the consistence and convincing nature of what he said, and also to his modest and simple lifestyle, those who listened to him easily accepted his ideas. However Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, who was loyal to the Church in Rome which regarded Prophet Jesus as the son of God, not in the metaphorical sense, but as a true deity (Surely God is beyond that), became uneasy with such ideas. After failing to convince Arius to alter his opinions, he initiated a fierce assault against him. He described this in his own writings:

This movement has spread ever wider, to all of Egypt, Libya and Upper Thebes. At this, we too met with the bishops of Egypt and Libya, and cursed this movement and all its followers at an assembly of around a hundred people...⁵

The condemnation was not solely verbal. In 318, Arius and his followers were excommunicated. Arius, his two closest assistants (Bishop Theonas and Secundus), and 12 priests were exiled to Palestine. Before going into exile in Palestine, Arius collected his ideas in a lyrical book called *Thalia*.

However, here too Arius found sympathizers. And so his movement, which strongly opposed many of the ideas of the Roman Church, continued to spread. When reports of this reached Constantine, who had taken the Church of Rome under his protection in order to build religious unity, he realized that he was dealing with a major problem: internal division of the Church. He therefore decided to re-establish unity without further loss of time. This was why he convened the Council of Nicaea, one of Christianity's major turning points.

The Council of Nicaea

Constantine first sought to resolve the conflict by sending letters to both sides explaining that unity was more important than anything else. When he saw that his letters were not having the desired effect, he decided, at the suggestion of Bishop Hosius, to call a *World Church Council*, or *synod*, at Nicaea to give an exact definition of the trinity. *Those who rejected this belief were declared heretics.*

Although the council members sought to give the impression of a democratic forum, in reality the emperor brought enormous pressure to bear on the participants. Not surprisingly, the side that he supported, the Church of Rome, emerged victorious. Of the 300 or so participating priests, only around 20 were close to Arius. One reason that there were so few priests from the Arian-influenced Eastern Church, was that the council was moved to Nicaea, instead of held in Ankara as originally planned, which was further to the north-west.⁶ In addition, the council took place in the emperor's summer palace located in Nicaea. For that reason, the emperor attended all of the council sessions, and his authority was naturally reflected in the decisions taken.

The Nicene Creed, the clearest and most concrete expression of the alleged deification of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), says: (Surely God is beyond all the expressions follow!):

We believe... in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance [ek tes ousias] of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of the same substance with the Father [homoousion to patri], through whom all things were made both in heaven and on earth; who for us men and our salvation descended, was incarnate, and was made man, suffered and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven and cometh to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit. Those who say: There was a time when He was not, and He was not before He was begotten; and that He was made out of nothing (ex ouk onton); or who maintain that He is of another hypostasis or another substance [than the Father], or that the Son of God is created, or mutable, or subject to change, [them] the Catholic Church anathematizes.⁷

The first paragraph clearly denies Arianism. The Church of Rome, which awarded itself the title of Catholic (Universal) Church, declared the Arians and those who shared the same views to be heretics.

From this time on, the Nicene Creed became the basis of the Christian faith, and those who opposed it were considered heretics. *The Roman Catholic Church declared that "God has manifested His will in this council" for which reason the Nicene Creed was regarded as a sacred and infallible text, just like a revelation.* But in reality, this was nothing more than the Church of Rome asserting its will.

Following the council, the Arianis came under great pressure, and supporters of Arius who refused to sign the Nicene Creed were anathematized. However, they held out for another 50 years or so, before gradually withdrawing from the stage of history toward the end of the fourth century due to continued Church repression. Yet objections to the official Nicene Creed continued, which meant that more councils had to be held to debate the new ideas being put forward. Despite all of the arguments, however, the superstitious belief in *One in Three and Three in One* was never attacked. (This superstitious belief referred to God having three different identities, all of which were equal, infinite and in common.) During Constantine's reign, not only were such beliefs as the Nicene Creed expanded, but the New Testament also assumed its current form. *No complete version of the New Testament in our possession today is any older than the time of Constantine.*⁸

Throughout the 50 years that followed the Council of Nicaea, Athanasius defended and further developed the Nicene formula, because the belief in the trinity had not yet assumed its final form. The third member of the trinity, the Holy Spirit, remained vague. In the fourth century, a second general council chaired by Macedonius, Patriarch of Constantinople, met in the city (modern-day Istanbul). At its

conclusion, the council declared that the Holy Spirit was the third member of the trinity, and that all three members were equal in terms of greatness.⁹ (Surely God is beyond all that!) Therefore, trinitarianism assumed its final form only four centuries after Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was raised to God's presence. At this council, another belief not found in the Bible was put forward: *homoousion*, that the trinity's three members had the same essence and equal powers. (Surely God is beyond that!)

Another important matter is how belief in the trinity was first put forward.

Among Christians, belief in the trinity is generally seen as being difficult to comprehend and impossible to understand, but one that must absolutely be accepted. The reason for this is that the proponents of the trinity also claim to be monotheists. Yet it is clear that no Christian has ever been able to explain how trinitarianism and monotheism can exist together. The questions arising in people's minds have not been satisfactorily answered. Neither is it possible for them to be. Therefore, they maintain that *the trinity is an article of faith that does not need to be thought about or understood, for it must be accepted as it stands.*¹⁰ For hundreds of years, this has prevented any serious discussion on this belief's clear errors and inconsistencies. To summarize: *Belief in the trinity is a matter of blind faith concerning which any debate or discussion is prohibited.*

Many Biblical scholars describe the period between Prophet Jesus (pbuh) being raised to God's presence and the Council of Constantinople as *the deification of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), the messenger of God.* This theological concept went through a number of specific stages, at the end of which it was assumed that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was divine. (Surely God is beyond that!) This process will be examined in more detail in later chapters.

PROPHET JESUS (PBUH) IS GOD'S PROPHET, NOT HIS SON

All prophets preached monotheism and had superior moral values and sincere faith. God reveals that His messengers were entrusted with calling their people to monotheism:

We sent a Messenger among every people saying: "Worship God and keep clear of all false deities..." (Surat an-Nahl: 36)

After the prophets, however, monotheism was gradually corrupted and altered by human beings. Thus, God would send a new messenger to recite His verses, warn them of the Day of Judgment and unite them again under monotheism. Following the corruption of the revelation brought by Prophet Moses (pbuh), Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was sent to call his people to God's oneness and to depart from their bigoted traditions, abandon their superstitions, and submit solely to God. For example:

And when Jesus came with the Clear Signs, he said: "I have come to you with wisdom and to clarify for you some of the things about which you have differed. Therefore have fear [and respect] of God and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path." (Surat az-Zukhruf: 63-64)

I come confirming the Torah I find already there, and to make lawful for you some of what was previously forbidden to you. I have brought you a Sign from your Lord. So have fear [and respect] of God and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path." (Surah Al 'Imran: 50-51)

When Prophet Jesus (pbuh) began to lead his people and their religious leaders, many of whom had departed from the Mosaic Law, invented their own ideas of what was lawful and prohibited, and developed a formalist and bigoted form of religion, they mocked him and became hostile:

When an example is made of the son of Mary, your people laugh uproariously. They retort: "Who is better, then, our deities or him?" They only say this to you for argument's sake. They are indeed a disputatious people. (Surat az-Zukhruf: 57-58)

Despite mounting obstacles, the number of Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) followers rose rapidly, especially among the poor. In order to put an end to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and his message, the local Roman administrators and several Jewish religious leaders set a trap for Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and eventually decided to crucify him. The Qur'an records our Lord's response to this move:

They [the unbelievers] plotted and God plotted. But God is the best of plotters. (Surah Al 'Imran: 54)

Just as our Lord saved Prophet Abraham (pbuh) from the fire, He rescued Prophet Jesus (pbuh) from this trap by raising him to His presence:

And their saying: "We killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Messenger of God." They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to seem so to them. Those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him." (Surat an-Nisa': 157)

Clearly, those who sought to kill Prophet Jesus (pbuh) failed. As is revealed in other verses of the Qur'an, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) did not die but is alive in God's presence. God has revealed that He foiled the plot against Prophet Jesus (pbuh), which serves as important evidence that the prophet is alive in His presence. Our Lord foiled the plot intended to kill Prophet Jesus (pbuh). The claims made by those who maintain that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was killed consist of nothing more than speculation. The Romans, imagining that they were crucifying Prophet Jesus (pbuh), actually crucified someone else. (*For more details concerning his life and ascent to God's presence, see Harun Yahya, Jesus (pbuh) Did Not Die [Istanbul:Global Publishing, 2005]*)

After his ascent, however, Christianity gradually degenerated with the belief in the trinity. However, we can learn about the monotheistic revelation that he brought, part of what he experienced during his time on Earth, and his elevation into the sight of God from the Qur'an, which was sent to mankind by means of the Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) and is valid until the Day of Judgment. It must not be forgotten that the Qur'an is a divine book whose words cannot be changed unless God wills them to be changed: **"The Words of your Lord are perfect in truthfulness and justice. No one can change His Words. He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing."** (Surat al-An'am: 115)

Several verses state that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is not the son of God (Surely God is beyond that!), but only one of His prophets. Some of these verses are as follows:

Our Lord Has No Son

The basic logic behind trinitarianism is that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is the *son of God*. However, God's names invalidate these claims, for in His capacity as the Lord of the Worlds, He is far removed from such comparisons ignorantly made by human beings. He is unsullied by any flaw or deficiency. The Qur'an reveals:

It is not fitting for God to have a son. Glory be to Him! When He decides on something, He just says to it: "Be!" and it is." (Surah Maryam: 35)

They say: "God has a son." Glory be to Him! He is the Rich beyond Need. Everything in the heavens and everything on Earth belongs to Him. Have you authority to say this, or are you saying about God that which you do not know? (Surah Yunus: 68)

It is enough for our Lord to say *Be!* for something to come into existence. All entities are His property and His creations. All things have bowed their heads to Him and surrendered to His infinite power and might:

...Everything in the heavens and Earth, willingly or unwillingly, submits to Him... (Surah Al 'Imran: 83)

God is free of all causes, because He created whatever exists and happens, as well as their underlying causes. Everything happens in accordance with specific causes. For example, birth, death, learning, and ageing happen as the result of specific causes, such as time and space. Human beings live dependent on time and space. But our Lord is independent of time and space. He, Himself created time and space. It is our Lord Who created fatherhood, being a son, and having children, which are features peculiar to human life. Therefore, those who say that "**God has a son**" (Surely God is beyond that!) forget our Lord's incomparable names and think within the bounds of their own limited human perceptions. However, such claims are a huge lie in the sight of God. The Qur'an reveals that:

... and to warn those who say: "God has a son." They have no knowledge of this, neither they nor their fathers. It is a monstrous utterance that has issued from their mouths. What they say is nothing but a lie. (Surat al-Kahf: 4-5)

In another verse, our Lord reveals that "**If God had desired to have a son, He would have chosen whatever He wished from what He has created. Glory be to Him! He is God, the One, the All-Conquering**" (Surat az-Zumar: 4). In this verse, our Almighty Lord reveals that He has the power to create everything in the form that He wills. God's response to people's misguided belief in the trinity, which is founded on baseless human comparisons, is emphasized in the verses given below:

They say: "God has a son." Glory be to Him! No, everything in the heavens and Earth belongs to Him. Everything is obedient to Him, the Originator of the heavens and Earth. When He decides on something, He just says to it, "Be!" and it is. (Surat al-Baqara: 116-117)

They say: "The All-Merciful has a son." They have devised a monstrous thing. The heavens are all but rent apart, Earth split open, and the mountains brought crashing down at their ascription of a son to the All-Merciful! It is not fitting for the All-Merciful to have a son. There is no one in the heavens and Earth who will not come to the All-Merciful as a servant. He has counted them and numbered them precisely. Each of them will come to Him on the Day of Resurrection all alone." (Surah Maryam: 88-95)

As stated in the verses, this concept is a *monstrous thing*. Our Lord, the Lord of all in heaven and Earth, is unsullied by such fabrications.

Believers in the trinity also make another deviant assertion saying that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) has the same powers as God. The verse "**...He has no partner in the Kingdom. He created everything and determined it most exactly**" (Surat al-Furqan: 2) unequivocally denies this claim. Given that He is the absolute ruler of the universe, He has no need of any partner or helpmate. As one verse states:

And say: "Praise be to God, Who has had no son and no partner in His Kingdom, and Who needs no one to protect Him from abasement." And proclaim His Greatness repeatedly! (Surat al-Isra': 111)

God commanded Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) to tell those who believe in the trinity:

Say: "If the All-Merciful had a son, I would be the first to worship him". (Surat az-Zukhruf: 81) This response in the verse shows that the proponents of the trinity are in grave error. In the continuation of the above verse God reveals:

Glory be to the Lord of the heavens and Earth, the Lord of the Throne, beyond what they describe. So leave them to plunge and play around until they meet their Day, which they are promised. He is God in heaven and God on Earth. He is the All-Wise, the All-Knowing. (Surat az-Zukhruf: 82-84)

In these verses, God draws attention to the fact that believers in the trinity do not properly appreciate God's grandeur. They are depicted as people who play and plunge, heedless of the Hereafter's existence.

All of creation belongs to God and needs Him

According to the trinitarian belief, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is described as being uncreated and having powers equal to those of God. (Surely God is beyond that!) The fact is, however, that this false concept is a terrible slander in the face of the monotheistic faith revealed by our Lord to the prophets. As the Qur'an states:

God, there is no deity but Him, the Living, the Self-Sustaining. He is not subject to drowsiness or sleep. Everything in the heavens and Earth belongs to Him. Who can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before them and what is behind them, but they cannot grasp any of His knowledge save what He wills. His Footstool encompasses the heavens and Earth, and their preservation does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Magnificent. (Surat al-Baqara: 255)

Our Lord is the only deity and ruler. All the universe, everything, living or not, in the heavens and Earth, animals, plants and inanimate objects, all belong to Him, for He is the One Who created them. Everything acts in accordance with His decree and exists for as long as He wills. He feeds and nourishes all living things, turns the night dark, makes the Sun bright, and creates the seasons. He created all human beings that have lived and that will ever live, and so they all owe their existence to God and depend upon Him totally. The prophets that He sent to humanity are also servants created by Him to guide their people and follow His decree so that they may serve as models to humanity. Among

them is Prophet Jesus (pbuh), a servant created by God, a worthy messenger of high esteem (Surah Al 'Imran: 45). Indeed, God says this of Prophet Jesus (pbuh):

The Messiah would never disdain to be a servant to God, nor would the angels near to Him. If any do disdain to worship Him and grow arrogant, He will in any case gather them all to Him. (Surat an-Nisa': 172)

As revealed in the verse, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is a very devout individual who is proud to fulfill his duty of service to God and submit to Him fully. All references to his supposed divinity were produced long after he was raised to God's presence. Our Almighty Lord possesses complete dominion over all beings. Everything apart from Him needs our Lord to exist and to survive.

God created the universe from nothing. All living things are born and die, and everything has an allotted life span. There is nothing in the universe that will not come to an end one day, nor any living thing that will not finally die. As the Qur'an reveals, however, "**God is the First and Last**" (Surat al-Hadid: 3). In other words, He has no beginning and no end. He existed before everything and will continue to exist after everything. Before the universe and its contents were created, there was only God; after the universe and its contents cease to exist, there will be only God. God, the Creator of life and time, is independent of all features of matter.

God created the concepts of space and time, and thus decrees that human beings should be bound by them. No person can know what will happen a day or even an hour later. When He decrees a thing, however, He knows what its end result will be, regardless of how far in the future it will occur. Therefore, His decrees are always the truest, the best, and the wisest.

All things in the universe will one day cease to exist. A human being is born, lives, and inevitably dies at the end of his or her limited lifespan in this world. This is also true for all members of the animal and plant kingdoms. Every living thing will die and will return to the ground. Our Lord, however, is Everlasting and exists at all times. Eternity belongs to Him alone.

Human beings need constant care and interest throughout their lives. They spend much of their lives looking after their own bodies, making sure that they are clean, fed, and get enough sleep. God, on the other hand, has no such worries. As the Creator of all living and non-living things, He is Everlasting, Omniscient, and Almighty. He has no need of anything; rather, He gave various needs to those things He created and then told them to be aware of these needs, serve only Him, and seek everything from Him. A person's duty is to turn to God in the knowledge that he or she can continue to live and have his or her needs met only if He so wills. God reveals, with examples of the greatest wisdom, that He is the one God:

Everyone in the heavens and Earth belongs to Him. Those in His presence do not consider themselves too great to worship Him and do not grow tired of it. They glorify Him by night and day, without ever flagging. Or have they taken deities out of the earth who can bring the dead to life? If there had been any deities besides God in heaven or Earth, they would both be ruined. Glory be to God, Lord of the Throne, beyond what they describe! He will not be questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned. Or have they taken other deities besides Him? Say: "Produce your proof! This is the message of those with me and the message of those before me." But most of them do not know the truth, so they turn away. (Surat al-Anbiya': 19-24)

The fact is that We have given them the truth and they are liars. God has no son and is accompanied by no other deity, for then each deity would have gone off with what he or she created, and one of them would have been exalted above the other. Glory be to God above what they describe, Knower of the Unseen and the Visible! May He be exalted above all they associate with Him! (Surat al-Muminun: 90-92)

Prophet Jesus (pbuh), a devout human being who believed fully in Our Lord's attributes, also believed in God's infinite might and ascribed no partners to Him. It is revealed in the Qur'an that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is the servant of God:

He [Jesus] said: "I am the servant of God, He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet." (Surah Maryam: 30)

It is revealed in another verse that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is mortal, and that like all other human beings He will be resurrected in the Hereafter:

Peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die, and the day I am raised up again alive." (Surah Maryam: 33)

God created him, gave him an allotted span on Earth to preach monotheism, and then raised him to His presence to save him from those who plotted against him. When the time appointed by God comes, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) will return to Earth and, in the manner decreed by God, complete his duties as messenger, for God has shaped his entire destiny, just as He has done for all people. God created every miracle performed by Prophet Jesus (pbuh), and allowed him to display them through His mercy. Throughout his earthly life, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) expressed his deep faith in God and called people to His straight path, as the following verse states:

God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path. (Surah Maryam: 36)

Prophet John's (pbuh) birth was also a miracle from God

One of trinitarianism's alleged foundations is the miracles in the life of Prophet Jesus (pbuh). Our Lord imparted a blessing by giving Prophet Jesus (pbuh) extraordinary miracles. His life was full of miracles, from his birth until his elevation to God's presence. One of these miracles was that he was born of a virgin. The birth of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is truly a great miracle of our Lord. The Qur'an describes how Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary as *a handsome, well-built man* and informed her of God's will for her: although no man had ever touched her, by the will of God she became with child with Prophet Jesus (pbuh). Her pregnancy took place in a miraculous manner, independent of any earthly cause:

She asked: "How can I have a son when no man has touched me and I am not an unchaste woman?" He [Gabriel] said: "It will be so. Your Lord says: 'That is easy for Me. It is so that We can make him a Sign for humanity and a mercy from Us.' It is a matter already decreed." So she conceived him and withdrew with him to a distant place. (Surah Maryam: 20-22)

As can be seen from the clear language in this verse, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) came into the world by means of a creation outside the known causes, without a father. Before he was born, God had the angels inform Mary of many his attributes and that He was sending him as a blessing to his people:

He [Gabriel] said: "I am only your Lord's messenger so that He can give you a pure son" ... We can make him a Sign for humanity and a mercy from Us." (Surah Maryam: 19-21)

This miraculous creation is one of the so-called proofs for belief in the trinity. Although the extraordinary nature of this birth is plain to see, the birth of Prophet John (pbuh) was also miraculous. His father, Prophet Zachariah (pbuh), had prayed for an inheritor with the following words:

Remember your Lord's mercy to His servant Zachariah, when he called on his Lord in secret and said: "My Lord, my bones have lost their strength and my head is crowned with white. But in calling on You, My Lord, I have never been disappointed. I fear my relatives when I am gone, and my wife is barren. So give me an heir from You to be my inheritor and the inheritor of the family of Jacob, and make him, my Lord, pleasing to You." (Surah Maryam: 2-6)

Then and there, Zachariah called on his Lord, saying: "O Lord, grant me, by Your favor, an upright child. You are the Hearer of Prayer." (Surah Al 'Imran: 38)

Apparently, Prophet Zachariah (pbuh) and his wife could not have a son under normal conditions. Yet he prayed with a sincere heart to our Lord for a helpmate and an inheritor. And, our Lord answered his prayer:

Zachariah! We give you the good news of a boy named John, a name we have given to no one else before. (Surah Maryam: 7)

The angels called out to him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber: "God gives you the good news of John, who will come to confirm a Word from God. He will be a leader and a chaste, a Prophet and one of the righteous." (Surah Al 'Imran: 39)

Our Lord gave Prophet Zachariah (pbuh) the glad tiding he would have a son called John (pbuh). Like the birth of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), this too is a miraculous state of affairs—since on account of their age and health, it appeared impossible for Prophet Zachariah (pbuh) and his wife to have children. Prophet Zachariah (pbuh) said the following when he learned of the impending miracle: **"My Lord! How can I have a boy when my wife is barren and I have reached advanced old age?"** (Surah Maryam: 8). But our Lord, Who created the entire universe from nothing and can do whatever He wills, told him:

He [God] said: "It will be so. Your Lord says: "That is easy for me to do. I created you before, when you were nothing." (Surah Maryam: 9)

He [Zachariah] asked: "My Lord, how can I possibly have a son when I have reached old age and my wife is barren?" He [God] said: "It will be so. God does whatever He wills." (Surah Al 'Imran: 40)

The New Testament contains a similar account:

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and gripped by fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son, and you are to name him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the holy spirit even from birth. He will bring many of the people of Israel back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Zechariah asked the angel: "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years." (Luke 1:11-18)

Our Lord presented Prophet Zachariah (pbuh) and his wife with Prophet John (pbuh), a miracle from His presence, and endowed him with obedience, wisdom, love, sensitivity, and cleanliness right from childhood. The following is said of Prophet John (pbuh):

...he had fear of God – and devotion to his parents – he was not insolent or disobedient. Peace be upon him the day he was born, and the day he dies, and the day he is raised up again alive. (Surah Maryam: 13-15)

As these verses reveal, Prophet John's (pbuh) birth was a great miracle. Independently of earthly causes, God answered Prophet Zachariah's (pbuh) prayer for a son and an inheritor in the person of Prophet John (pbuh). This great news was imparted by means of an angel, just as Mary was informed of her impending pregnancy. Given that Prophet Zachariah's (pbuh) wife was too old to become pregnant, we can see a great similarity in the birth of these two great prophets. This shows just how invalid this particular claim of the trinitarians is.

The creation of Prophet Adam (pbuh)

The extraordinary creation of Prophet John (pbuh) and Prophet Adam (pbuh) are proof that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was not created to be part of a triune God. According to the Qur'an, Prophet Adam (pbuh) was also created in a miraculous manner.

... when your Lord said to the angels: "I am creating a human being out of dried clay formed from fetid black mud. When I have formed him and breathed My Spirit into him, fall down in prostration in front of him." (Surat al-Hijr: 28-29)

These verses point to a most extraordinary creation: Prophet Adam (pbuh) had no parents, for he was created out of *dried clay formed from fetid black mud*. Other verses regarding creation from mud and the like read as follows:

O humanity. If you are in any doubt about the Resurrection, know that We created you from dust, then from a drop of sperm, then from a clot of blood, and then from a lump of flesh, formed yet unformed, so We may make things clear to you. (Surat al-Hajj: 5)

Among His Signs is that He created you from dust and here you are now, widespread human beings. (Surat ar-Rum: 20)

God created you from dust, and then from a drop of sperm, and then made you into pairs. No female becomes pregnant or gives birth except with His knowledge. And no living thing lives long or has its life cut short without that being in a Book. That is easy for God. (Surah Fatir: 11)

The creation of Prophet Adam (pbuh) is also similar to that of Prophet Jesus (pbuh):

The likeness of Jesus in God's sight is the same as that of Adam. He created him from earth and then He said to him "Be!" and he was. It is the truth from your Lord, so do not be among the doubters. (Surah Al 'Imran: 59-60)

In these verses, God reveals that He created Prophet Adam (pbuh) and Prophet Jesus (pbuh) in a similar manner: Prophet Adam (pbuh) was created out of clay and had no ancestors, and Prophet Jesus (pbuh) had no father. Both of them were created through God's command of *Be!* This great truth, which leaves no room for doubt, makes it clear that both prophets were God's servants who, despite their exalted status, were still completely dependent upon Him to meet all of their needs.

As revealed in the Qur'an, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is fully human

In the Qur'an, God reveals to our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) that the other prophets before him were all human:

We never sent any Messengers before you who did not eat food and walk in the marketplace. But We have made some of you a trial for others, to see if you will be steadfast. Your Lord sees everything. Those who do not expect to meet Us ask: "Why have angels not been sent down to us? Why do we not see our Lord?" They have become arrogant about themselves and are excessively insolent. (Surat al-Furqan: 20-21)

In other verses our Lord states:

We have only sent before you men who were given Revelation. Ask the People of the Reminder if you do not know. We did not give them bodies that did not eat food, nor were they immortal. But We kept Our promise to them and rescued them and those We willed, and destroyed the profligate. (Surat al-Anbiya': 7-9)

All of the prophets' human characteristics are described in the Qur'an through numerous examples. Mary conceived Prophet Jesus (pbuh) in a miraculous manner. However, the stages of his birth and Mary's birth-related experiences clearly reveal that his stages of birth were the same as those of all other human beings. It is not possible to interpret the Qur'anic account of his birth in any other way:

So she conceived him and withdrew with him to a distant place. The pains of labor drove her to the trunk of a date-palm. She exclaimed: "Oh, if only I had died before this time and was something discarded and forgotten!" A voice called out to her from under her: "Do not grieve. Your Lord has placed a small stream at your feet. Shake the trunk of the palm toward you, and fresh, ripe dates will drop down onto you. Eat and drink and delight your eyes. If you should see anyone at all, just say: "I have made a vow of abstinence to the All-Merciful, and today I will not speak to any human being." She brought him to her people, carrying him. They said: "O Mary, you have done an unthinkable thing! Sister of Aaron, your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman!" (Surah Maryam: 22-28)

God created Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and blessed him with various miracles, such as raising the dead, making a bird from mud and breathing life into it, and curing the blind from birth and lepers. Such events, together with his miraculous birth without a father, are outside the laws of life to which we are subject in this world. In the Qur'an, our Lord refers to other prophets' miracles. For example, He states that Prophet Adam (pbuh) was created from dried mud without a father, and that Prophet Salih, Prophet Abraham, and Prophet Moses (peace be upon them all) performed many miracles. When Prophet Moses (pbuh) encountered Pharaoh's sorcerers, our Lord turned his staff into a serpent (Surah Ta Ha: 69). Prophet Moses (pbuh) and his people were able to cross the Red Sea, which divided so that they could escape Pharaoh and his army, all of whom drowned (Surah Ta Ha: 77-78). Like the birth of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), this too is a miraculous state of affairs—since on account of their age and health, it appeared impossible for Prophet Zachariah (pbuh) and his wife to have children.

In Surat al-Isra' God reveals that He carried our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) to the place upon which Al-Aqsa mosque now stands in a single night and showing it to him (Surat al-Isra':1). It is God, the Lord of the worlds, Who enabled such miracles to take place. The fact that the prophets were able to perform such miracles does not imply that they enjoyed divine status. (Surely God is beyond that!) In fact, all of them knew that they could perform these miracles only because God willed them:

Remember when God said: "Jesus, son of Mary, remember My blessing to you and to your mother when I reinforced you with the holy spirit so that you could speak to people in the cradle and when you were fully grown; and when I taught you the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel; and when you created a bird-shape out of clay by My will, and then breathed into it and it became a bird by My will; and healed the blind and the leper by My will; and when you brought forth the dead by My will; and when I held back the tribe of Israel from you, when you brought them the Clear Signs and those of them who did not believe said: "This is nothing but downright magic." (Surat al-Ma'ida: 110)

The Qur'an also refutes all claims regarding the supposed divinity of Mary and Prophet Jesus (pbuh):

The Messiah, the son of Mary, was only a Messenger, before whom other Messengers came and went. His mother was a woman of truth. Both of them ate food. See how We make the Signs clear to them! Then see how they are perverted! (Surat al-Ma'ida: 75)

The reference to eating is particularly wise, because eating, hunger, thirst, and the need to sleep are all characteristics of living things and expressions of helplessness. Given this, it is a grave error to ascribe divine status to Prophet Jesus (pbuh), who possessed all of the human characteristics mentioned in the verse. With his title of the Provider (*al-Razzaq*), God, the Lord of all, nourishes and imparts blessings to all living things. He is the One Who has need of nothing and nobody. However, all living things stand in need of our Lord in order to exist and survive.

Another piece of wisdom connected to this matter may be the information provided about the angels who appeared to Prophet Abraham (pbuh) in human form (God knows best!) and did not eat any food:

Has the account reached you of the honored guests of Abraham? When they entered his dwelling and said: "Peace." he replied: "Peace to people we do not know." So he slipped off to his household and brought a fattened calf. He offered it to them and then asked: "Do you not then eat?" He felt afraid of them, but they said: "Do not be afraid," and gave him the good news of a son imbued with knowledge. (Surat adh-Dhariyat: 24-28)

Our messengers brought the good news to Abraham. They said: "Peace," and he also said: "Peace" and brought in a roasted calf without delay. When he saw that their hands were not reaching for it, he suspected them and felt afraid. They said: "Have no fear. We have been sent to the people of Lot." (Surah Hud: 69-70)

God warns those who believe in the trinity and who ascribe divine status to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) in various ways in several verses, among them the following:

Those who say: "God is the Messiah, son of Mary" do not believe. Ask: "Who possesses any power at all over God if He desires to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone else on Earth?" The kingdom of the heavens and Earth, and everything between them, belongs to God. He creates whatever He wills. God has power over all things. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 17)

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is no more than a helpless and needy servant created by God, despite his being someone beloved of, honored, and chosen by God. The Qur'an says that those who deify him are unbelievers:

Those who say that the Messiah, son of Mary, is God are unbelievers. The Messiah said: "O Tribe of Israel. Worship God, my Lord and your Lord. If anyone associates anything with God, God has forbidden him the Garden and his refuge will be the Fire." The wrongdoers will have no helpers. Those who say that God is the third of three are unbelievers. There is no deity but the One God. If they do not stop saying what they say, a painful punishment will afflict those among them who do not believe. Why do they not turn to God and ask for His forgiveness? God is Ever-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Surat al-Ma'ida; 72-74)

Thus, as God is the sole Lord of all things, no other power can delay or turn a thing back that He wills to happen. The Qur'an reveals the following about those who say that there is another deity apart from God or that *God has a son*:

We sent no Messenger before you without revealing to him: "There is no god but Me, so worship Me." They say: "The All-Merciful has a son." Glory be to Him! No, they are honored servants! They do not precede Him in speech and they act on His command. He knows what is in front of them and what is behind them. They only intercede on behalf of those with whom He is pleased, and even they are apprehensive out of fear [and respect] of Him. Were any of them to say: "I am a deity apart from Him," We would repay him with Hell. That is how We repay wrongdoers." (Surat al-Anbiya': 25-29)

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is only a prophet

The Qur'an mentions many subjects, such as the birth of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), some events in his life, his family, and the people around him. He is depicted as the Messiah, son of Mary and prophet of God. For example, he told the Children of Israel that he was sent for the following reason:

I come confirming the Torah I find already there, and to make lawful for you some of what was previously forbidden to you. I have brought you a Sign from your Lord. So have fear [and respect] of God, and obey me. God is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. That is a straight path. (Surah Al 'Imran: 50-51)

A few disciples heeded his call and are referred to in the following terms:

We are God's helpers. We believe in God. Bear witness that we are Muslims. Our Lord, we believe in what You have sent down and have followed the Messenger, so write us down among the witnesses. (Surah Al 'Imran: 52-53)

Throughout his life, Prophet Jesus (pbuh), sent to lead a community that had gone astray to the true path, called on his people to have sincere faith and submit themselves to God. It also appears, from various verses of the Qur'an that he acted as a guide to those who had fallen into religious disagreements. Certain New Testament passages indicate that he primarily called on hypocritical, insincere religious figures and those who deceived the public behind a mask of devotion to cease what they were doing and believe in God. The Qur'an reveals this in the following terms:

And when Jesus came with the Clear Signs, he said: "I have come to you with Wisdom and to clarify for you some of the things about which you have differed. Therefore, have fear [and respect] of God and obey me." (Surat az-Zukhruf: 63)

Like all of the prophets, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) targeted moral degeneration and atheism. He told people to abandon their injustice, immorality, and superstitions; to live by God's ordained moral values and for His good pleasure alone; to fear [and respect], love, and submit to God; and to turn away from superstitious laws and hollow traditions, to worship only God, and to turn to Him at all times. The miracles that he performed revealed that God had chosen him as His messenger, and that He supported

him with knowledge and power. His depth of faith, high moral values, superior understanding, and wise explanations inspired great admiration among his people.

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) displayed great patience with his opponents, put his trust in God and continued to inform his people of God's revelation despite the hostile environment in which he was living. Although he had very few helpers, he endeavored to restore his people's religion to its essence and cleanse it of all meaningless rituals and superstitious practices. Thanks to his superior understanding and wisdom vouchsafed to him by our Lord, he made highly affective addresses to the Children of Israel and told them very wise parables.

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) confirmed the Torah and issued his commands according to the Gospel, sent by God as a guide and advice:

And We sent Jesus son of Mary following in their footsteps, confirming the Torah that came before him. We gave him the Gospel containing guidance and light, confirming the Torah that came before it, and as guidance and admonition for those who guard against evil. The people of the Gospel should judge by what God sent down in it. Those who do not judge by what God has sent down are deviators. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 46-47)

At first, only a few people responded to his call, for it demanded the end of privilege for the priestly class, who made a living out of nonsense and tradition, and for the ruling class, who denied God's sovereignty. With the spread of Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) message and his growing number of followers, the cunning snares and plans laid by his opponents also increased. All of the prophets have encountered such plots, for as the Qur'an relates, the people to whom they are sent have the following attitude:

Why then, whenever a Messenger came to you with something your lower selves did not desire, did you grow arrogant, deny some of them, and murder others? (Surat al-Baqara: 87)

Gradually, a division began to emerge in society between the followers and the opponents of Prophet Jesus (pbuh). On the one hand was God's messenger, who described the true religion and called on people to believe in the one God; on the other was a group who was determined not to believe, no matter what miracles or evidence they were shown. The enemies of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) made themselves apparent. It is likely that some unbelievers also had initially listened to and supported him. Indeed, God reveals that: **The various factions among them differed...**" (Surat az-Zukhruf: 65). For that reason, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) described those who had faith and who he could trust:

When Jesus sensed unbelief on their part, he asked: "Who will be my helpers to God?" The disciples said: "We are God's helpers. We believe in God. Bear witness that we are Muslims." (Surah Al 'Imran: 52)

The Qur'an reveals that the unbelievers plotted to kill Prophet Jesus (pbuh). According to the New Testament, several bigoted religious leaders convinced one of Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) disciples to

betray him, after which they would have him arrested and delivered up to the Romans. According to that same source, these leaders could not carry out a death sentence and so prepared a trap to incite the Roman authorities, known for their cruelty and sensitivity in this matter to do it for them: They depicted Prophet Jesus (pbuh) as being an opponent of Rome:

They planned and God planned. But God is the best planners. (Surah Al 'Imran: 54)

Thus, his opponents sought to kill him. But they failed to do so, for God foiled their plot, raised him to His presence and caused someone else to be killed in his place. Yet the erroneous belief that the Romans crucified and killed Prophet Jesus (pbuh) remains the fundamental essence of Christianity. A large part of the Christian world accepts this, but believes that he was resurrected and then ascended to heaven. When we look at the Qur'an, however, we see that this is not the case:

... and their saying: "We killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Messenger of God." They did not kill him and they did not crucify him, but it was made to seem so to them. Those who argue about him are in doubt about it. They have no real knowledge of it, just conjecture. But they certainly did not kill him. (Surat an-Nisa': 157)

In the continuation of this verse the situation of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is revealed thus:

God raised him up to Himself. God is Almighty, All-Wise. (Surat an-Nisa': 158)

The truth revealed in the Qur'an is clear. Incited by the Jews, the Romans sought to kill Prophet Jesus (pbuh) but failed to do so. The expression **"but it was made to seem so to them"** makes their failure to do so crystal clear. God showed people someone who resembled Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and then raised him to His presence. Furthermore, our Lord also states that those who claim that he actually died have no knowledge of the truth of the matter. (For details, see Harun Yahya, *Prophet Jesus (pbuh) Did Not Die*, Istanbul: Global Publishing, 2005]

In the early years of Christianity, several ideas emerged regarding the crucifixion. It is known that, just as revealed in the Qur'an, some Christian sects believed that he was not crucified at all.

From what we know of his life, message, and prayers, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was a prophet of God, a guide to the true path, and a messenger sent down by God to warn his people. This is confirmed by **He said: "I am the servant of God. He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet"** (Surah Maryam: 30), as well as the following verses:

And when Jesus son of Mary said: "O Tribe of Israel, I am the Messenger of God to you, confirming the Torah that came before me and giving you the good news of a Messenger after me, whose name is Ahmad." When he brought them the Clear Signs, they said: "This is downright magic." (Surat as-Saff: 6)

It is not right for any human being that God should give him the Book and Judgment and Prophethood, and then that he should say to people: "Worship me rather than God." Rather he will say: "Be people of the Lord, because of your knowledge of the Book and because you study." (Surah Al 'Imran: 79)

The Qur'an and the hadiths of our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace) make it very clear that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) did not die and was not killed, but that he was raised to God's presence

and will one day return to Earth. In fact, the hadith literature contains a great many signs regarding his second coming. (For more details regarding the second coming of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) see Harun Yahya, *The Signs of Jesus' Second Coming* [Istanbul: Global Publishing, 2004].)

TRUE CHRISTIANITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Many phrases in the New Testament leave no room for belief in the trinity. In fact, they actually support the monotheistic belief of God as the One and Only. Indeed, groups opposed to the trinity have drawn attention to these down the ages, while proponents of the trinity have offered interpretations based on no evidence at all.

Trinitarian belief ascribes the same divine status to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) as to God (Surely God is beyond that!), although the New Testament describes God's oneness and eternal sovereignty over all things in great detail. People are called to monotheistic faith in both the message of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) to his people and followers, and in the words of his disciples. *In addition, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) constantly makes it clear that everything he does is the result of God's infinite power and might, that it is God Who causes him to say everything he says, and that he performs these miracles only because God wills them to occur.* He also invites those who elevate him to elevate God, remember His infinite might, and submit to Him. We shall look at this in the pages that follow.

Several Qur'anic verses reveal the kind of message communicated by Prophet Jesus (pbuh). For example:

And when God asks: "Jesus son of Mary. Did you say to people: 'Take me and my mother as deities besides God?'" he will exclaim: "Glory be to You! It is not for me to say what I have no right to say! If I had said it, You would have known it. You know what is in my self, but I do not know what is in Your Self. You are the Knower of all unseen things. I said to them nothing but what You ordered me to say: 'Worship God, my Lord and your Lord.' I was a witness against them as long as I remained among them, but when You took me back to You, You were the One watching over them. You are Witness of all things. If You punish them, they are Your servants. If you forgive them, You are the Almighty, the All-Wise." (Surat al-Ma'ida: 116-18)

As is revealed in the verses, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) called on his people to believe in God alone and live for Him. Monotheism constitutes the basis of *true Christianity*, just as it does of Islam. (The word *Father* in the extracts from the New Testament in this chapter has been changed to *God*, the word *Son to prophet –messenger*, and the title *Lord* used to address Prophet Jesus (pbuh) to *teacher*.)

Monotheism in the Old Testament

The mistaken belief in the *son of God*, which emerged 30-40 years after Prophet Jesus (pbuh) had been raised to God's presence, gradually began to spread. However, this concept could not be clearly defined for a long time. Some interpreted it as a metaphorical concept referring to his honored position in God's sight and continued to believe in His oneness, while others deified Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and began to consider him the actual *son* of God.

As we know, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was a Jew who was sent to the Children of Israel, who had been monotheists for the last two centuries. Our Lord sent His revelation to them through a long series of prophets, beginning with Prophet Abraham (pbuh), all of whom had warned the Jews to abide scrupulously by His revelation. They had known the Torah, "**a guidance and light**" (Surat al-Ma'ida: 44), ever since the time of Prophet Moses (pbuh). Prophet Jesus (pbuh) came to confirm the Torah, which is also accepted by Christians. The Torah and other books of the Old Testament contained reports concerning his coming.

This fact reveals just how mistaken the belief in the trinity, which was accepted by majority vote at the Council of Nicaea, actually is. *Nowhere in the Torah or the New Testament is this doctrine even mentioned. All of the prophets of Israel called on their people to believe in God as the One and Only, and none of their statement can possibly be equated with trinitarian belief.* No such statement was ever heard from Prophet Abraham (pbuh), nor Prophet Moses (pbuh) nor any of the other prophets. All of the prophets taught only one message: know that God is the One and Only and take no other deity but Him. The following passage from the Torah, most frequently repeated by the Jews, says: "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One*" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

This same truth is also emphasized in the Old Testament:

The LORD is God; besides Him there is no other... Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on Earth below. There is no other. (Deuteronomy 4:35-39)

The LORD our God, the LORD is One. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

Given the above statements from the Old Testament, our Lord's infinite might and power, as well as His dominion over the universe, is a basic truth of Judaism.

Anyone who reads the Old Testament can clearly see that it refers only to a single deity: God, the Lord of the worlds. Nowhere is there any mention of the trinity.

Given these facts, the trinity is a mistaken belief that somehow found its way into the Divine religion at a later date.

The New Testament is based on belief in the One and Only God

The Qur'an reveals that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) called on his people in the following manner:

...O Tribe of Israel. Worship God, my Lord and your Lord... (Surat al-Ma'ida: 72)

Such statements by Prophet Jesus (pbuh) calling people to belief in the one God are still to be found in the otherwise corrupted Gospels of the New Testament. For instance, according to the Gospel of Saint Mark, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) gave the following reply to a Jew who asked him which commandment was the most important:

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' (Mark 12:29-30)

Another passage in the Gospel of Saint Mark shows that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) objected to being praised, let alone deified:

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good except God. (Mark 10:17-18)

This passage alone is sufficient to show that doctrine of the trinity violates the most basic teaching of Christianity. In rejecting praise and stressing that God is the only One worthy of praise, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is clearly stating that he is a servant of God.

The truth that he related to the people of Israel is the same truth related by all prophets since the beginning of time: Our Lord, Almighty God, created the universe from nothing, creates flawlessly in the most beautiful manner, is the great and superior, knows the inner face and secret aspects of all things, is the first and the last, was not born, is unsullied by any imperfection, is the Omniscient and All-powerful, the Glorious, the Ruler, the Beneficent, and the Forgiver. Everything in heaven and Earth has submitted to Him.

Indeed, *the "oneness of God" appears as an essential article of faith in the New Testament - both in the four Gospels and in the writings and letters of the apostles, which condemns all forms of polytheism, trinitarianism, and paganism, as does the Old Testament.* Those who think that there are other deities besides God are called to monotheism throughout the New Testament. Some of these passages read as follows:

... [Jesus said to him:] "The Lord our God, the Lord is One." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is One and there is no other but Him. (Mark 12:29-32)

... God is One. (Galatians 3:20)

[They] exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles...They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator, Who is forever praised. (Romans 1:23-25)

... for us there is but One God, from Whom all things came and for Whom we live. (1 Corinthians 8:6)

We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but One.. (1 Corinthians 8:4)

And the twenty-four elders, who were seated on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One Who is and Who was ... (Revelation 11:16-17)

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. (1 Timothy 1:17)

There is one God. (1 Timothy 2:5)

You believe that there is One God. Good! (James 2:19)

To the only God our Savior be glory ... (Jude 24)

How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God? (John 5:44)

Nothing is impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

The New Testament contains many other statements that describe God as the One and Only. For example, consider the messages communicated by Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) disciples. Following his ascension, Christians traveled throughout the region to report his words and call on the people to surrender to God. The New Testament reports that they called on those whom they addressed to become Christians believing in the One and Only God:

But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, Who made heaven and Earth and sea and everything in them... He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; He provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." (Acts 14:14-17)

The God Who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and Earth, and does not live in temples built by hands. He is not served by human hands, as if He needed anything, because He himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man He made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole Earth; and He determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him ...though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being. (Acts 17:24-28)

God possesses infinite power and might

According to trinitarian belief, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was not created; rather, he has always existed and has the same powers and abilities as God. (Surely God is beyond that!) This is a grave error. Those who believe in the trinity believe that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) will save them and answer their prayers, thanks to which they will be freed from all of their sins. (The misguided belief in the atonement for sins will be examined in detail in due course.) This deception, which the Qur'an describes in detail, is not supported by any of the New Testament's passages. On the contrary, it is rejected.

Trinitarians offer several pieces of "evidence" for this belief from the New Testament. Heading this list is the miracles performed by Prophet Jesus (pbuh). However, this is no proof at all of his supposed divinity, for all of the miracles associated with him (e.g., being born without a father, speaking from the cradle, and curing the sick and blind, which are facts separately set out in the Qur'an) were no more than a blessing from our Almighty Lord, the ruler of the universe, and the expression of His will. God also willed Prophets Moses, Solomon, Abraham, and Zachariah (peace be upon them all), among many other prophets, and our Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) to perform miracles. The proponents of the belief in the trinity, however, point to their own view of these miracles in ascribing alleged divinity to Prophet Jesus (pbuh). Yet this claim is in open contradiction to these and many other statements in the New Testament.

As the New Testament records, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) always praised God and stated that all power belonged to Him. For example, he stated that *I do exactly what God has commanded me (John 14:31), The words I say to you are not just my own (John 14:10), and I tell you the truth, the apostle can do nothing by himself (John 5:19).*

Other passages refer to God's infinite might and power:

... from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. (Romans 11:36)

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. (Luke 12:6-7)

Jesus looked at them and said: "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."(Matthew 19:26)

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33)

Fear [and respect] God and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come. Worship Him Who made the heavens and Earth, the sea and the springs of water. (Revelation 14:7)

Great and marvelous are Your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are Your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear [and respect] You, O Lord, and bring glory to Your name? For You alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before You, for Your righteous acts have been revealed. (Revelation 15:3-4)

Everything comes from God. (1 Corinthians 11:12)

Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are His judgments... For our Lord God Almighty reigns. (Revelation 19:1-6)

There is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. (Romans 13:1)

It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God."(Romans 14:11)

... our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, Who alone is immortal and Who lives in unapproachable light, Whom no one has seen or can see. To Him be honor and might forever. (1 Timothy 6:15-16)

Be careful not to do your "acts of righteousness" before people, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Lord in heaven... But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Lord, Who is unseen. Then your Lord, Who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Lord knows what you need before you ask him... And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil ... for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. (Matthew 6:1-8, 13)

These facts revealed in the New Testament are in complete harmony with those revealed in the Qur'an, and are expressions of the absolute truths taught by all of God's prophets since the beginning of history down to the present day: God created time, space, human beings, all the worlds, and all that exists within them. Our Lord, Who is unsullied by any imperfection or deficiency, is the Superior and Great. Everything takes place according to His will and with His permission. As the Qur'an reveals, not a leaf falls to the ground unless He wills it to do so, and no female conceives and no living thing gives birth without His knowledge. God knows everything, whether secret or open, and is Almighty. God has the power to do whatever He wills, for He is the Lord of infinite might and power. It is sufficient for Him to

say, *Be!* for a thing to come into being. Nothing is impossible in His sight, for He is the sole authority and sole Lord of might in the universe.

The New Testament proclaims His absolute dominion over the universe through examples indicating that God, the Lord of the Worlds, gives human beings all of their powers and abilities, creates everything that happens, and gives life to all living things.

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One Who can destroy both soul and body in Hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Lord. (Matthew 10:28-29)

A person can receive only what is given to him from heaven. (John 3:27)

It is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but my Lord, Who gives you the true bread from heaven. (John 6:32)

But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but rather the Spirit of your Lord speaking through you. (Matthew 10:19-20)

...to Him Who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before His glorious presence without fault and with great joy... (Jude 24-25)

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven. (Matthew 24:36)

...Who alone is immortal... Whom no one has seen or can see ... (1 Timothy 6:16)

Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, Who raises the dead. (2 Corinthians 1:9)

All of these passages from the New Testament clearly show that true Christian belief is a sincere one directed only toward God. However, the misguided belief in the trinity was added to these true beliefs, and this corrupted Christianity itself.

PROPHET JESUS (PBUH), THE PROPHET OF GOD DESCRIBED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Christianity is divided into various denominations, which, over time, became divided into different branches. Each of these different branches interprets the New Testament in its own way and has developed its own practices. However, the great majority of them consider the trinity to be the essence of their belief.

A few of these groups rejected this belief and, as a result, were fought and persecuted as heretics by the proponents of the trinity, who were always in the majority and gradually converted the Christian world, forcibly or otherwise, to this belief. Apart from certain minority groups we shall be seeing in the sections that follow, the belief in the trinity was generally accepted in, or imposed on, the Christian world.

As has been made clear from the start of this book, belief in the *trinity* is in complete contradiction to the Qur'an. Statements in the New Testament clearly reveal that at no time did Prophet Jesus (pbuh) ever make such a claim, or even implied that he was part of a triune God. Personally, he always praised and glorified God. In any case, this is one area on which present-day opponents of belief in the trinity concentrate the most—on the fully human nature of Prophet Jesus (pbuh).

The life of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) refutes the Trinity

For centuries, the information in the New Testament about Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) life, message, and wise advice has been ignored, because belief in the trinity confuses people to such an extent that they accord him divine status and hope that he will help them.

According to the Qur'an, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is a messenger sent by God to warn people and to perform the miracles that He willed until his ascension to God's presence. Although born in a miraculous fashion, he lived like all other people. Like them, he came into existence by God saying *Be!* and, as a human being, realized his complete dependency upon God. His human characteristics are described, with various examples, in the Qur'an and the New Testament. For example, our Lord states in Surat al-Ma'ida:75 that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and Mary ate food, meaning that they were not angels, but human beings just like everyone else.

There are many examples of references to Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) human characteristics in the New Testament. Some of these are as follows:

The birth of Prophet Jesus, his lineage, and family

The New Testament contains several statements about Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) lineage and birth: He (pbuh) is descended from the line of Prophet David (pbuh), and was born and raised (in other words, known) among his people.

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us ... (Luke 1:69-71)

A record of the genealogy of Jesus the son of David, the son of Abraham ... (Matthew 1:1-2)

Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. (Mark 3:31)

The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked: "Who is this?" The crowds answered: "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." (Matthew 21:9-11)

... Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas, and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" (Mark 6:3)

Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) human characteristics

A mentality that ignores Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) human characteristics lies at the heart of trinitarianism. The fact is, however, the New Testament makes it clear that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) *is not the Son of God, but rather His messenger* who lived a regular human life. He was born and lived as an infant, a child, and an adult. When he felt hungry, he ate with his disciples and thanked God for the food. After a long day of activity, he felt tired and needed to sleep. In addition, the people around him saw him wash and cleanse himself. All of these are natural needs that a person has to meet. Moreover, meeting such needs completely contradicts his supposed divinity.

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and people. (Luke 2:52)

When he [Jesus] was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and began to give it to them. (Luke 24:30)

And while they still did not believe it, because of [their] joy and amazement, he asked them: "Do you have anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. (Luke 24:41-43)

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked: "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" (Matthew 26:17)

While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house ... (Mark 2:15)

Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. (Mark 3:20)

While they were reclining at the table eating, he [Jesus] said: "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me." (Mark 14:18)

Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. (Luke 7:36)

Jesus, tired from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus asked her: "Will you give me a drink?" (John 4:6-7)

Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. (Mark 4:38)

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he [Jesus] said to them: "Come with me to a quiet place and get some rest." (Mark 6:31)

These passages reveal that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was a human being who stood in need of God's mercy, just like every other person. He was a servant of God with very superior moral values, and was made superior to the worlds by Him, honored with the rank of prophet, and blessed with miracles. He was a man with select characteristics, and yet at the same time a helpless servant in need of His mercy. But God, the Creator of all that exists, whether living or not, is eternal, controls all things, knows everything, has the power to do anything, and never sleeps. Unsullied by any helplessness, He gave various forms of helplessness to all members of creation and told them to be aware of these inadequacies, serve only Him, and seek everything from Him.

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was a servant in need of God's mercy

Both the Qur'an and the New Testament relate Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) miracles, which were performed with God's infinite blessing. After every miracle, however, he made it clear to everyone that these miracles occurred because God willed them to occur. He frequently stated that God was speaking, not him, and that He caused everything to happen, for He is the Only Lord over all living things. He emphasized that he was no more than a servant who had been sent to tell his people of God's message, that what he did he did by the will of God, and that all of his actions were under God's control. For example:

All things have been given to me by my Lord. (Matthew 11:27)

I do exactly what God has commanded me [to do]. (Matthew 14:31)

The words I say to you are not just my own. (John 14:10)

I tell you the truth, the apostle can do nothing by himself. (John 5:19)

My teaching is not my own. It comes from Him Who sent me. (John 7:16)

My Lord, Who has given them to me, is greater than all. (John 10:29)

For I did not speak of my own accord, but God, Who sent me, told me what to say and how to say it. I know that His command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what God has told me to say. (John 12:49-50)

Jesus knew that God had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God. (John 13:3)

The One Who sent me is with me; He has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases Him. (John 8:29)

By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but He Who sent me. (John 5:30)

No one can come to me unless the Lord has enabled him:her [to do so]. (John 6:65)

The above extracts from the Gospels are of the greatest importance in terms of the belief in the trinity, for they were all spoken by Prophet Jesus (pbuh) to let the people know that he was not a deity (Surely God is beyond that!), but rather a servant who needed God, acted in the way desired by God, decided in the manner commanded by God, spoke with the inspiration of God, and performed deeds of which God will approve. Moreover, all of these wise and sincere statements deny trinitarianism, whose followers seek to portray Prophet Jesus (pbuh) as a superior being who has no need of anything in order to exist. Not only does such a mistaken assertion not reflect the truth, but it

also reflects a disrespectful attitude toward the glorious essence of our Lord and toward Prophet Jesus (pbuh), His great messenger. Our Lord is unsullied by such comparisons, for He is God, Who needs nothing, is without any flaw or deficiency, and is the eternal and only power. No thing or person can be equivalent to Him.

From this statement, it can be seen that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) meets only those stipulations regarding serving God. You can see, then, how truly superstitious the belief in the trinity is, since it regards Prophet Jesus (pbuh), who merely serves God, as being equivalent to God himself. (Surely God is beyond that!)

Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) prayers to God

Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) prayers also refute the belief in the trinity. People who pray is assumed to have accepted God's existence and Oneness, their helplessness before Him, and that only He can help them and is worthy of their worship. Prayer is one of the most pleasing forms of submission to God and of awareness of one's helplessness. Our Lord is unsullied by any imperfection, for He is the Lord of infinite might, Who possesses all power and therefore has no needs. Aid and forgiveness can be sought only from God. Everyone stands in need of Him, but He Himself stands in need of no one. The prayers of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) are the most devout indications of his submission to God and his powerful fear [and respect] of Him. According to the Gospels, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) prayed both to thank our Lord and to seek His help, for he knew that only God could grant his requests:

Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed. (Matthew 26:39)

... and he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks. (Matthew 14:19)

After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone. (Matthew 14:23)

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. (Mark 1:35)

After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray. (Mark 6:46)

Jesus said to his disciples: "Sit here while I pray." (Mark 14:32)

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. (Luke, 6:12)

One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him: "Teacher, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1)

But I have prayed for you... that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers. (Luke 22:32)

One of his prayers, as recorded in the Qur'an, recalled the most beautiful titles of God:

Jesus son of Mary said: "God, our Lord, send down a table to us out of heaven to be a feast for us, for the first and last of us, and as a Sign from You. Provide for us! You are the Best of Providers!" (Surat al-Ma'ida: 114)

And God replied:

God said: "I will send it down to you. But if anyone among you does not believe after that, I will punish him with a punishment the like of which I will not inflict on anyone else in all the worlds." (Surat al-Ma'ida: 115)

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) called upon God to perform this miracle, for he knew that he had no personal or independent power to perform it. He was only a servant charged with showing the people God's infinite art of creation.

The New Testament calls him the prophet of God

Trinitarianism's core belief consists of asserting that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is not just a messenger sent to his people, but that he is the actual physical *son of God*. (Surely God is beyond that!) The fact is, however, that the New Testament describes him as a messenger who calls people to believe and submit to God. In his message, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) always insists that he is *a sent messenger*. The way that he tells God, *I have given them Your word...* (John, 17:14) is particularly striking. He is a prophet, just as Solomon, Moses, David (peace be upon them all), and Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) were, a messenger who only communicates the message of God. Indeed, the New Testament records that Moses (pbuh) said: *God will send you a prophet like me from your own people* (Acts, 7:37). Some of the statements in the New Testament verifying Prophet Jesus' status as a prophet are as follows:

He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to God, Who sent me. (John 14:24)

Do not believe me unless I do what my Lord does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles. (John 10:37-38)

After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say: "Surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world." (John 6:14)

He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. (Luke 24:19)
They do not know the One Who sent me. (John 15:21)

He [God] sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways. (Acts 3:26)

Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus, whom You have sent. I have brought You glory on Earth by completing the work You gave me to do...I have revealed You to those whom You gave me out of the world. They were Yours; You gave them to me, and they have obeyed Your word. Now they know that everything You have given me comes from You, for I gave them the words You gave me, and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from You, and they believed that you sent Me. (John 17:3-8)

I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the One Who sent me. (John 13:20)

I am not here on my own, but He Who sent me is true. You do not know Him, but I know him because I am from Him and He sent me. (John 7:28-29)

Jesus replied: "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come. (Mark 1:38)

Jesus answered: "The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent." (John 6:29)

... for the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God. (John 3:34)

He Who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from Him I tell the world. (John 8:26)

But he [Jesus] said to them: "I have food to eat that you know nothing about." Then his disciples asked each other: "Could someone have brought him food?" "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of Him Who sent me and to finish His work." (John 4:32-34)

The essence of Prophet Jesus' message: believe in and serve God

According to trinitarian belief, faith in Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is the precondition of Christianity, and whoever rejects this doctrine is not a true Christian. Yet there are clear statements in the New Testament that undermine these claims. In particular, Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) message is built on calling people to have faith in God alone, for he resolves the people's questions and doubts by calling on them to submit to God. For example:

Jesus answered: "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'" (Luke 4:8)

I tell you the truth. Whoever hears my word and believes Him Who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. (John 5:24)

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. (Matthew 6:24)

Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37)

A teacher of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him: "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." "Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is One and there is no other but Him." (Mark 12:28-32)

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said: "Lord, I thank you that You have heard me. I knew that You always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that You sent me." (John 11:41-42)

Then Jesus cried out: "When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the One Who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the One Who sent me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him, for I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word that I spoke will condemn him on the Last Day, for I did not speak of my own accord, but God, Who sent me, told me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what God has told me to say." (John 12:44-50)

These statements clearly state that Prophet Jesus (pbuh), like all the other prophets, was no more than God's chosen servant and that he submitted to Him completely. He related the message of God to his people and called on them to have faith in God, the One and Only. Throughout his life, he encountered very difficult circumstances. But despite the large numbers of opponents who sought to impede his message, he continued to expound it, exhibiting a very superior patience. With his powerful fear and respect of God, he continued to call people to believe in God, the Creator of the universe, and to be His servant until he was raised to His presence. All this makes it quite clear that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was not the actual physical son of God (Surely God is beyond that!), but only a prophet who brought glad tidings from God to his people, who warned them about the Day of Judgment, invited them to acquire and then live according to the proper moral values, and called on them to free themselves from all sorts of misguided beliefs. Not only the Prophet himself, but also those Jews who heeded his message, adopted his recommendations, and followed his path are all *muwahhidun* (Unitarians). The oppression they suffered never wore them down, and as true monotheists, they never departed from the path of Prophet Jesus (pbuh). They are known to us as the Nazareans.

Sincere Christians who adhered to the message of Prophet Jesus (pbuh): The Nazareans

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) left behind a small community of loyal believers. According to the New Testament, the members of this community, which consisted of his 12 disciples, his family, and those Jews who believed in him, were called *Nazareans* by other Jews.¹¹ This term is believed to have come from the expression *Jesus of Nazareth* in the New Testament, or from the source of this expression.

The Nazareans continued to abide by the Mosaic Law and other commandments and prohibitions that the Jewish rabbis had developed over time. One important difference between the Nazareans and the other Jews is that the former adopted the new religion brought by Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and regarded him as a Messiah. They believed that he was the prophet foretold by Prophet Moses (pbuh),¹² a man sent by God to turn the Jews to the true path and purify their religion from its deviant beliefs. Following his ascension to God's presence, the Nazareans made great effort to spread his message. The Book of Acts, the most important text in the New Testament after the four Gospels, provides important information on this subject.

The Nazarean Message

According to the Book of Acts, the Nazareans began coming under pressure after God raised Prophet Jesus (pbuh) to His presence. Orthodox Jews regarded them a heretical sect and sought to silence and intimidate them. The Nazareans were also in a difficult position with regard to the Roman occupiers. However, oppression and intimidation failed to silence them, for such policies could not defeat their belief in God and the ensuing firm solidarity, brotherhood, and sisterhood. As we read in the Book of Acts:

All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he [she] had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere

hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:44-47)

In another section the solidarity and loyalty among the Nazareans is described in these terms:

All of the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his [her] possessions was his [her] own, but they shared everything they had ... much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time, those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales, and put it at the apostles' feet. It was distributed to anyone, as he [she] had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned, brought the money, and put it at the apostles' feet. (Acts 4:32-37)

With such great discipline the Nazareans continued to tell other Jews about Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) message, saying that he was the last prophet sent by God to the Jews. The words of Apostle Peter to a group of Jews at the Temple of Solomon are reported as follows:

"Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders... Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that He may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through His chosen prophets. For Moses said: 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.' Indeed, all of the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your fathers. He [God] said to Abraham: 'Through your offspring, all peoples on Earth will be blessed.' When God raised up His servant, He sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways." (Acts 3:17-26)

In these expressions, Peter refers to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) as *a servant of God and stresses that he is a prophet. People are told that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is a prophet foretold by Prophet Moses (pbuh). And furthermore, there is no mention of a "son" of God.* There is no reference to the trinity or of Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) alleged divine status. (Surely God is beyond that!)

Oppressing the Nazareans

According to the Book of Acts, the Nazareans made Jewish religious figures uneasy. This unease grew as their message continued to spread. Both the Jewish religious establishment and the Roman occupation administration incited by them came to regard the Nazareans as *a political* threat and began targeting them. According to historical records, the policy of oppressing the Nazareans grew apace. They were subjected to arrest and flogging, and were warned not to talk about Prophet Jesus (pbuh). This oppression increased considerably in 48-49. Finally, around 62-65, the Nazarean leader was arrested and executed. According to the New Testament, the Nazareans were unable to reach an understanding with the other Jews, particularly the religious establishment (the Sadducees and Pharisees), because the latter group consisted of those who *nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down.* (Mark 7:13)

According to the New Testament, the distinguishing feature of this community, led by Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) family and the apostles, was their belief in God as *the One and Only*. For the Nazareans, *Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was a chosen messenger of God. Belief in the trinity meant nothing to them*, for what mattered to them was his message. Indeed, Nazarean texts – such as the Epistle of James – all call on belief in God and concentrate on matters of faith.

Between 48 and 49, the Roman governor crucified many Nazareans, for it was thought that they played a role in every uprising against Rome. This oppression continued during the 50s. In 65, the Nazarean community left Jerusalem and migrated to Mesopotamia.

Heretics and Ebionites

From the second century on, the Church Fathers began to call the Nazareans a *heretical* sect. One of these, Justin Martyr, in a text written in 150, referred to a sect that recognized Prophet Jesus (pbuh) as a Messiah but nevertheless regarded him as a man; in other words, not as the *son of God*. (Surely God is beyond that!) Justin Martyr further stressed another matter. These people were criticized by those who believed in the trinity, and relations between the two sides were irretrievably damaged.¹³

Approximately fifty years later, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, published a text called *Adversus Haereses* (Against the Heretics). Heading the list of the *heretics* condemned by Irenaeus was a community described as the *Ebionites*. The word Ebionites, or Ebionæans (Ebionaioi), is a transliteration of an Aramean word meaning *poor men*.¹⁴

According to Irenaeus, the Ebionites were *heretics* because they believed that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was a normal human being. Moreover, according to Irenaeus, they still adhered scrupulously to the Mosaic law and accepted only one of the four gospels: the Gospel of Matthew.¹⁵ It appears from the written sources that the Ebionite community was actually the Nazareans. Church leaders used the words *Ebionite* and *Nazarean* as synonyms for each other. According to Epiphanius, *the heresy of this group lay in their rejecting the so-called divinity of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and describing him as a normal human being*. Epiphanius stressed that these people did not use the New Testament books approved by the Church, but used *other versions* of these books.¹⁶

The fact that the Ebionites believed that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was human and possessed no divine nature was emphasized in an article, "The Lost Gospels," published in the 22 December 2003 edition of *Time* magazine:

They believed in Christ but saw him, as Ehrman puts it, "as the Jewish Messiah sent ... to the Jewish people in fulfillment of Jewish Scripture." The Ebionites' Jesus was not a member of an eternal Trinity. They claimed he was a man whose original distinction was that he kept the entire Jewish law – with its hundred of commandments handed down from God through Moses – to perfection...¹⁷

Over the following centuries, the Nazareans who left Jerusalem migrated to Syria and lived in Mesopotamia. Although they lived in this region as a community, Nazarean teachings rapidly spread far and wide. At least during the first four centuries of Christianity, Christian sects adhering to Nazarean beliefs developed in those regions not reached by the Catholic Church in Rome. The best known "heretical" group to emerge from the Nazarean teachings, or at least to be influenced by it, was the *Arianist* movement, named after Bishop Arius of Alexandria.

THE AUTHORS OF THE FOUR GOSPELS NEVER MET PROPHET JESUS (PBUH)

People often assume that the four Gospels were written at time of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and are entirely based on his words. Yet this is not true. In fact, *Biblical scholars estimate that the Gospel of Mark was written around 70, the Gospel of Matthew around 80, the Gospel of Luke around 90, and the Gospel of John around 90-100.* The other books of the New Testament were written around the same time. Moreover, the canonical Gospel as we know it today consists of writings that were selected from hundreds of selected texts and was established only at the Council of Nicaea.

The basic Christian texts to which we refer for information about the life of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) are the four Gospels, the first four books in the New Testament. These books of the New Testament began to be written down around 30 to 35 years after the ascension of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) into the sight of God.

As can be seen from historical sources and the accounts in the New Testament, the first Christians began telling people about Prophet Jesus' words and deeds in an oral form after his elevation to God's presence. According to researchers, it is very likely that under the conditions in which they found themselves, the early Christians attached new meanings to the words of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), and changed some information when they debated with the Jewish religious figures or the Romans who rejected Prophet Jesus (pbuh). According to this view, the early Christians wished to keep the belief in the Messiah alive, strengthen belief in Prophet Jesus (pbuh), bring about a rapid spread of Christianity, and eliminate the despair caused by persecution. Thus, they sought to create a new source of enthusiasm and excitement by interpreting Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) words and deeds. They could have done this just by transmitting God's words and the wise message of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) to people. But that is not how it happened, and God's revelation was subsequently altered and Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) words were misinterpreted and diverted from their true essence. During this time, some Christians may have mistakenly raised their respect for him to such a high level that they began to consider him to be divine. (Surely God is beyond that!) This view is generally shared by modern-day Western researchers.¹⁸ After a while, the Apostles began dying off and, in order to prevent the disappearance of Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) message, some Christians may have set about forming the texts of the New Testament by collecting and then combining his words and deeds according to their own understanding.¹⁹

Rudolf Bultmann, one of the foremost twentieth-century experts on the New Testament, offers various interpretations about the writing of the Gospels. He says that the synoptic Gospels (those of Matthew, Mark and Luke) were formed in order to set out consecutive tales regarding the life of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) by the authors of the Gospels bringing together and adding unordered anecdotes. According to Bultmann, these words, constantly repeated in different societies by the individuals who comprised those societies assumed different forms from one society to another and even within one society and the words and deeds of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) assumed various forms from being used by people for different purposes. In the early period, for instance, they were sometimes used for preaching purposes, to give people advice, and to establish the moral principles by which the members of a

community had to abide. Bultmann thus reveals that as a consequence of this oral tradition, the words and deeds of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) were partially altered by the early Christians. Furthermore, he suggests that the Gospels contain words that were actually produced by early Christians and then ascribed to Prophet Jesus (pbuh).²⁰ He does not think that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) referred to himself as the *son of God*. In his view, that title was developed after Prophet Jesus (pbuh) under the influence of paganism's motifs of *divine figures portrayed as the sons of the gods, divine offspring worshipped in secret religions and savior figures in gnostic mythology*, and was then erroneously ascribed to the prophet. (Surely God is beyond that!)²¹

For that reason, the great majority of Western researchers today believe that *the Gospels are not individual texts comprising the accurate collection of the words of Prophet Jesus (pbuh); rather, they are texts consisting of the collection, after Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) ascension, of his words and deeds under the conditions prevailing after his time.*

The Gospel's authors

Although they are today known by the names of the authors Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Gospels were actually penned anonymously. It is not known whether the individuals behind these names actually wrote the Gospels or not. The Gospels only began to be known by their present names in the second half of the second century. Matthew and John are accepted as true disciples of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), Mark as a follower of Paul, and Luke as one of Paul's students. In other words, the authors actually existed, but there is no evidence that the Gospels are really their work.²² In his *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, E. P. Sanders, a noted Biblical researcher, describes the writing of the Gospels in these terms:

*Present evidence indicates that the gospels remained untitled until the second half of the second century... The gospels as we have them were quoted in the first half of the second century, but always anonymously. Names suddenly appear about the year 180. By then there were a lot of gospels, not just our four, and the Christians had to decide which ones were authoritative. This was a major issue, on which there were very substantial differences of opinion. We know who won: those Christians who thought that four gospels, no more and no fewer, were the authoritative record of Jesus.*²³

In another article, he describes the process of the naming of the *anonymously* penned Gospels:

In the first half of the second century there were a lot of gospels, and the Christians had to decide which ones were authoritative. So they named them, and thus the four gospels considered today by the Church as authoritative were named Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John.²⁴

Paula Fredriksen, author of *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament, Images of Jesus*, summarizes the position thus:

Eventually, some of Jesus' sayings, now in Greek, were collected and written down in a document, now lost, which scholars designate Q (from the German *Quelle*, "source"). Meanwhile, other oral traditions – miracle stories, parables, legends, and so on – grew, circulated, and were collected in different forms by various Christian communities. In the period around... 70 C.E., an anonymous Gentile Christian wrote some of these down. This person was not an author – he did not compose de novo... He

organized these stories into a sequence and shaped his inherited material into something resembling a historical narrative. The result was the Gospel of Mark.²⁵

She also notes the language used in the Gospels:

Jesus spoke Aramaic; his original early first-century audience was, for the most part, Jewish, Palestinian, and rural. The evangelists' language was Greek... Traditions from and about Jesus spanning this temporal, cultural, and linguistic circulated orally; and the reliability of oral traditions, in the absence of independent or convergent lines of evidence, is nearly impossible to assess. Further, as psychological and anthropological studies of oral materials show, even reports going back to eyewitnesses are far from historically secure. Interpretation or distortion between an event and the report of an event occurs almost inevitably, first of all because the observer is human. If the report is communicated through different people over a period of time before it achieves written form, revision can occur at every human link in the chain of transmission. In brief, though the oral transmission of traditions about Jesus allows us to assume some relation between what the gospels report and what might actually have happened, it also requires that we acknowledge an inevitable – often incalculable – degree of distortion in those traditions as well.²⁶

In his important work *The Birth of Christianity: Discovering what happened in the years immediately after the execution of Jesus*, another Biblical scholar, John Dominic Crossan, quotes Marcus J. Borg and Barry Henaut about the authors of the Gospels:

How are the Gospels to be used as sources for constructing an image of the historical Jesus? ... *The Gospels are literally the voices of their authors. Behind them are the anonymous voices of the community talking about Jesus.* And embedded within their voices is the voice of Jesus, as well as the deeds of Jesus. Constructing an image of Jesus—which is what the quest for the historical Jesus is about—involves two crucial steps. The first step is discerning what is likely to go back to Jesus. The second step is setting this material in the historical context of the first-century Jewish homeland.²⁷

*The Oral phase of the Jesus tradition is now forever lost. The spoken word is transitory by nature and exists for but a moment. It lives on only in the memory of the audience and its recovery is entirely dependent upon the accuracy of that memory to bring it back into being ... Even the written tradition continues to be edited and improved. This warns us against assuming that the Gospels offer a directly transcribed orality: the tradition may have been thoroughly textualized and altered in the transmission process, a process that did not end with the synoptic evangelists!*²⁸

Neither the authors of the Gospels nor those of the New Testament's other books were actual eye witnesses to the events they describe. They were people who made texts out of the oral and written traditions transmitted from generation to generation for a few decades after Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) ascension. For that reason, various experts who have researched the texts over the centuries have stressed that various factors played a role in the texts of the Gospels assuming their present forms. In one article, this influence is described as follows:

The original first-hand memories of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) were preserved by various means, edited, developed, elevated, and partially destroyed 1) by the early Christians' efforts to gain a universal religious identity for their own religion by elevating its leaders; 2) by allowing the pagan deity motifs of the time to enter their texts; 3) by the first Church established by Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians opposing the Judaism from which it had broken away; 4) by the debates that led to serious disputes

within the Christian community itself; and 5) by portraying the promises of events given by the Old Testament prophets as being fulfilled in the life of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), thereby claiming that he was the final component of Old Testament prophethood... *In addition, since the Gospels were written by the early Church that was struggling to survive Jewish pressure and Roman persecution, and because of the prevailing circumstances, they are not an account of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and his life, but the early Church's interpretation of Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) words and deeds in connection with its struggle against its opponents.* Based on that fact, it can be seen that the Gospels do not provide enough information to write the biography of Prophet Jesus (pbuh). Therefore, in examining his position and status in the interpretation of the four Gospels, we have to take into account the lives of the first Christian communities, the beliefs, ideas, opinions, preconceptions, and debates of which are reflected both in the Gospels and the other books of the New Testament ... *Again in examining his position, we must not forget that the Gospels, our essential source, were written 40-60 years after Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) ascension, in a rather different climate to that of the original events that took place in his life. Moreover, they were not written in Aramaic, his mother tongue, but in Greek ...* In short, the Gospels are books collected not by the Disciples who personally witnessed the words and deeds of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), but by people who became Christians at a later date, in a manner appropriate to the new circumstances that gradually emerged. *In other words, the Gospels are not first-hand accounts of Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) words and deeds, but are based on second- and third-hand accounts.*²⁹

These historical facts are extremely important. Independent researchers who have compared the Gospel texts stress that the four Gospels are very different from one another.

The differences among the four Gospels

The generally accepted view is that the four Gospels were written between 65 and 100. (Some researchers propose later dates, such as 75-115.³⁰) This means that the earliest Gospel was written some 30 years after Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was raised to God's presence. Researchers also believe that the texts do not fully reflect his life and message, but rather concentrate on the authors' imagination of how he was.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke largely parallel each other, and thus are known as the *Synoptic Gospels*. *Synoptic* means *from the same eye*, and thus expresses their common perspective. Of these, the earliest one is Mark, despite its being in second place in the New Testament. It is accepted that Matthew and Luke wrote their gospels based upon Mark's as a source, making a few additions.

The Gospel of John, is very different from the Synoptic Gospels. Furthermore, one incident described in John may be described very differently in the other Gospels. The Synoptic Gospels also contradict one another from time to time.

New Testament scholars note that the four Gospels concentrate on rather different subjects, that the texts were written in different styles, that they contain historical inconsistencies, and emphasize that every passage cannot be considered a direct quotations from Prophet Jesus (pbuh). According to this claim, the four Gospels were written for different purposes and for different communities. Therefore, Christian scholars define the Gospels according to their style, as follows:

Matthew was aimed at the Jews, for which reason it generally refers to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) *as the King, Messiah, son of Abraham and David*.

Mark was written for the Greeks and therefore concentrates mainly on power, rule, and service. Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is referred to in terms of *the servant of God who performs great deeds*.

Luke was written for everyone else and so concentrates on Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) moral values and human aspects. The prophet is referred to as *the son of Adam, the friend of man*.

John was written much later and as a response to the reactions and questions arising during that period. Therefore, it concentrates on the miraculous aspect of his life. Expressions along the lines of *the son of God* (Surely God is beyond that!) appear more frequently in this gospel. Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is referred to as *coming from the skies*.³¹

Historically speaking, Mark is the earliest of the gospels and John is the latest, and there are considerable differences between them. If the accounts in Mark and John are to be regarded as historical records, these differences can be easily explained by saying that they are two separate depictions of the same event written by two different people. One of these was written 40-45 years later, and the other up to 60-65 years later.

Faced with such differences, some Christians say things like *despite the minor differences, at the end of the day they all describe the same event*. Yet these differences actually matter, because they reveal that the New Testament authors wrote their texts by normal, human means. They heard various oral accounts regarding Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and then penned the Gospels under the influence of their own cultures, beliefs, knowledge, or preconceptions. For that reason, *these texts are human, not divine. That means they need to be regarded as historical sources likely to contain divine elements*.

According to Christian belief, the texts of the Gospels were written by different people under *divine inspiration*. Accordingly, every line in the New Testament is regarded as true. However, the contradictions between the Gospels make this impossible and refute the claim of divine inspiration. The fact that the same event is described in different ways shows that the account in question is the product of human memory, understanding, prejudice, and expectations.

When looking at the Christian sources, one notices an attempt to interpret these very different accounts in the four Gospels as *complementary to one another*. According to this logic, each Gospel provides *a different view of Prophet Jesus (pbuh)*. Yet that is mistaken. We are dealing with four different texts and four different accounts, because the authors have four different ideas about Prophet Jesus (pbuh). According to contemporary Biblical scholars, they employed the true facts about Prophet Jesus (pbuh), and even used the true gospel imparted to him as a source, but they interpreted that revelation in the light of their own beliefs and then reshaped or broadened it with additional material. In *Who Is Jesus? Answers to Your Questions about the Historical Jesus*, co-authored with Richard G. Watts, one of the most important of these researchers, John Dominic Crossan, comments on these differences:

Actually, the fact that we have four Gospels lies at the very heart of our problem. Because as we read particular parables or sayings or stories in several different versions, we can't miss the *disagreements* between them. At first we are tempted to say, "Well, witnesses simply remember the same things differently." But it is clear that, when Matthew and Luke wrote their gospels, they had

copies of Mark (the earliest of the New Testament gospels) in front of them. *That means that for much of their story of Jesus, Matthew and Luke are not independent sources, but variations of Mark.* It also means that the variations reflect the theologies of the individual gospel writers. *In other words, each gospel is a deliberate interpretation of Jesus—rather than a biography...* With all of the differences between Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and with numerous other gospels existing, we have an obvious problem. Each gospel has a particular way of seeing Jesus. How close to the historical facts are they?³²

Another important fact is how the four Gospels were selected from a large number of copies of the Gospels. *Different Gospels, such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary, the Gospel of Peter, the Childhood Gospels of James and Thomas, the Secret Gospel of James, the Egerton Gospel, and the Oxyrhynchus Gospel all contain different information and interpretations about Prophet Jesus (pbuh).* Scholars think that all of these Gospels come from a common, but lost, original *Q Gospel* (from the German word *quelle* or *source*). As they collected the words of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), the first Christian community and the first compilers of the Gospel produced new interpretations based on their own situations, political pressures, and the conditions prevailing at the time, and gradually moved away from the true message. Present-day historians researching the Gospels agree on this. Fredriksen summarizes the period in which the New Testament authors wrote thus:

From oral to written; from Aramaic to Greek; from the end of time to the middle of time; from Jewish to Gentile; from the Galilee and Judea to the Empire.³³

A great deal of research has been done on how the Gospel texts developed. The vast majority of the researchers share the ideas given above. In other words, they agree that the actual authors of the Gospels are unknown, that the Gospels may or may not contain Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) actual words, and that the authors were not his contemporaries. For example, Elaine Pagels of Princeton University's theology faculty, states that "the gospels of the New Testament – no one knows who actually wrote any of them."³⁴ Randel McGraw Helms, author of *Who Wrote the Gospels?*, says: "Mark himself clearly did not know any eyewitnesses of Jesus."³⁵

A research file called "Who Wrote the Bible?" by Jeffery L. Sheler, was published in the 10 December 1990 edition of *U.S. News & World Report* magazine. According to Sheler, who interviewed many Biblical scholars: "Other scholars have concluded that the Bible is the product of a purely human endeavor, that the identity of the authors is forever lost and that their work has been largely obliterated by centuries of translation and editing"³⁶ and:

Yet today, there are few Biblical scholars — from liberal skeptics to conservative evangelicals — who believe that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John actually wrote the Gospels. Nowhere do the writers of the texts identify themselves by name or claim unambiguously to have known or traveled with Jesus... Some scholars say so many revisions occurred in the 100 years following Jesus' death that no one can be absolutely sure of the accuracy or authenticity of the Gospels, especially of the words the authors attributed to Jesus himself.³⁷

Many other scholars share this view. Jerome Neyrey of the Weston School of Theology's faculty, for instance, says: "The bottom line is we really don't know for sure who wrote the Gospels."³⁸ This subject was given wide coverage in the 8 April 1996 edition of *Time* magazine. David Van Biema, author of the book *The Gospel Truth*, aired his views, as follows:

There are, after all, four Gospels, whose actual writing, most scholars have come to acknowledge, was done not by the Apostles but by their anonymous followers (or their followers' followers). Each presented a somewhat different picture of Jesus' life. The earliest appeared to have been written some 40 years after his Crucifixion.³⁹

E. P. Sanders summarizes why he believes that the Gospels departed from their original forms:

(1) The earliest Christians did not write a narrative of Jesus' life, but rather made use of, and thus preserved, individual units – short passages about his words and deeds. These units were later moved and arranged by editors and authors. This means that we can never be sure of the immediate context of Jesus' sayings and actions.

(2) Some material has been revised and some created by early Christians.

(3) The Gospels were written anonymously.⁴⁰

The Fourth Gospel

The fourth Gospel is a very important piece of evidence for researchers of the Greek influence on Christian beliefs. Most academics prefer to call the *Gospel of John as the Fourth Gospel*, for they reject John's authorship of it.

This author's interpretation of Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) identity is very different, as are his style and the words and events he reports. It is more philosophical, more symbolic, and more mystical than the Synoptic Gospels. Indeed, most of the contradictions among the Gospels are between the fourth Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels. In his *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, Sanders concentrates on the differences between the Synoptic Gospels and that of John. He takes several very important incidents from Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) life and notes how very differently they are depicted in the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of John. After saying that we need to accept one or the other, he states:

We must, however, entertain another possibility altogether: *perhaps none of the authors knew what took place when. Possibly they had scattered bits of information, from which they constructed believable narratives that contain a fair amount of guesswork.*⁴¹

In his important study *The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology*, Maurice Casey offers the following interpretations:

In John, Jesus uses terms of this kind [the son of God] no less than 23 times, in public debate as well as in private teaching. Mark however attributes such a term to Jesus no more than once ... If the historical Jesus had used this key term extensively as John says he did, the faithful Christians who transmitted the synoptic tradition would have transmitted it extensively... *If "the Son" had been the main term which the historical Jesus used to express his divinity, the earliest apostles were bound to have used it too, and it would have been transmitted to Luke who would not have had reason to leave it out.*⁴²

Casey examines why some of the expressions in John, and which form the basis of trinitarian belief, are not found in the Synoptic Gospels. He concludes that if the claim that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is the *son of God*, and the belief in the trinity based on that, actually represents the basis of true Christianity, then there should be far more evidence of this in Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) words and message. Yet it is impossible to find the bases of trinitarian belief in the Synoptic Gospels. On the contrary, the

term the *son of Man* is used so often in both John and the Synoptic Gospels that it seems that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) may well have employed it himself. (God knows best.) Biblical scholars who state that the *son of God* was never used by Prophet Jesus (pbuh) think the exact opposite about the *son of Man*.

Another noteworthy aspect of the Gospel of John is its relationship to Greek philosophy. Biblical scholar James Still says this in his important paper "The Gospel of John and the Hellenization of Jesus":

John was written for the Greek Christian of the beginning of the second century. These recent converts were more educated, wealthy, and despised the Diaspora Jews who resided in their cities and who enjoyed the respect of Rome. *John removes the offensive references to Jesus as a Jewish Messiah that are particular to the earlier gospels ... In so doing, John creates a simulacrum that is barely human.* The earlier Synoptic traditions are emphatic in presenting Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, descendent of David, and eschatological messenger of the end of the world... John removes the unpleasantness of Jewish genealogy as well as all references to Palestinian and Davidic descent.⁴³

Others of his interpretations are as follows:

In John we find the culmination of Greek philosophy that has created the Jesus that we are the most familiar with today. A fully-formed Hellenized Jesus has emerged to become an equal with God. The Gospel of John (ca. 120 CE) is complex and mystical. Its purpose is to propagandize the message that Jesus is God Himself.⁴⁴ (Surely God is beyond that!)

Those passages in the Synoptic Gospels that ascribe divine status to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) are both very few in number and questionable. However, as Still points out, this erroneous belief prevails throughout John. In the same paper, he says the following about how this Gospel sought to deify Prophet Jesus (pbuh):

Notably, the birth narrative of Jesus is missing, we are told in the prologue only that "in the beginning" Jesus coexisted with God and that he is "full of grace and truth." John feels that to inform us of the particularly human trait of birth, even if virginal ..., would not be fitting of a God who is the Word. Human characteristics that Mark informs us of... are conspicuously absent from John... *By the time John was first written at the end of the first century, the tales of Jesus grew to such an extent that Jesus was now fully transformed into a Hellenized god.*⁴⁵ [Surely God is beyond that!]

THE USE OF “FATHER” AND “SON”

Before considering the use of these two terms, we ask our Lord's forgiveness for using the description, incompatible with any form of respect, used by those who defend the belief in the trinity, which we use here to define the belief in question.

When one looks at Mark, the earliest gospel, one sees that the concepts of *Father* and son are used but not emphasized: *Father* is used only four times to refer to God. Three of these are actually uttered by other Jews, and not by Prophet Jesus (pbuh). It is therefore impossible to use this Gospel to support belief in the trinity. Furthermore, again in Mark, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) opposes any expression that might lead to his being awarded divine status:

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. (Mark, 10:17-18)

The number of references rises significantly in Matthew, written 10-15 years after Mark, with God being described as *Father* (Surely God is beyond that!) 50 times. Twenty-eight of these are directed toward the Jews in general terms, such as *Pray to your Father, or Love your Father*. The remaining 22 are spoken by Prophet Jesus (pbuh) in the form *My Father*. The emphasis laid upon this concept has been elevated to a most surprising extent.

A similar emphasis is found in Luke, regarded as having been written around the same time as Matthew. *Father* is used 18 times in this gospel. Twelve of these have to do with Prophet Jesus (pbuh) himself and are prayers beginning *Father...*, or statements opening with *My Father...*

In the Fourth Gospel, however, the belief in the *son of God* in the sense that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is divine is expressed very clearly and unmistakably. *Father* is used 122 times to describe God, and all of these, apart from 3, belong to Prophet Jesus (pbuh). On the other hand, son is used in reference to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) 17 times. Furthermore, he is described as the *one son of God* on four occasions. (Surely God is beyond that!)

The greater the distance between the writing of the Gospels and the elevation of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) to God's presence, the greater the tendency to depict him as someone who addresses God as *Father*. To put it another way, the belief that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is the *Son of God* secured a greater foundation with every new Gospel. This tendency gains greater strength in John. This is an indication of an ever-increasing corruption. Surely God is beyond all these comparisons!

WHY MIGHT THE CHRISTIANS HAVE MADE THIS GROUNDLESS CLAIM?

Trinitarianism has been the cause of considerable debate from the time of its appearance right up to the present day. In fact, these arguments have spread to ever wider areas since the eighteenth century. Biblical researchers of that time first asked why belief in the trinity was not openly expressed in the Gospels, and then questioned under what conditions it appeared. *Today, many theologians, scientists, researchers, writers, and independent Christian movements reject many traditional beliefs, particularly the trinity and the belief in the atonement for sins.* Some of them, examples of which we shall consider in due course, adopt an Arianist understanding instead of trinitarian belief based upon the Bible and research into surviving works by the earliest Christians.

Following the decisions taken at the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Chalcedon (451), belief in the trinity became Christianity's foundation stone, and refusal to accept it made one a heretic. Those who said that such an idea contradicted faith in a monotheistic God, *who maintained that the trinity did not appear in the Gospels or who had reservations on the subject, were either silenced or pressured into acceptance.* In his *Articles of the Apostolic Creed*, Theodore Zahn says that "the article of faith up until about 250 AD was, 'I believe in God, the Almighty'. Between 180 and 210 AD the word 'Father' was added 'the Almighty'. This was bitterly contested by a number of the leaders of the Church ... since they regarded it an unthinkable sacrilege to add or subtract any word to the Scriptures."⁴⁶

Duncan Heaster, known for his Biblical research, set out his views in a debate on the trinity in 1988:

*I would suggest to you that the Trinity is a conception of God which is impossible to understand and which completely contradicts the clear teaching of the word of God. Can you understand a God who is one and yet three and three and yet one? Can you conceive of a son who existed before he was born? A son who is as old as his father? I suggest that the doctrine of the Trinity finds no place at all in the Word of God. There is no mention of the word *trinity* in the Bible, and it was introduced into Christianity, **as most of us here will be aware, in the 3rd century A.D.** ... The word "God" occurs about 1,300 times in the New Testament, and in not one of those passages where the word "God" occurs is there any suggestion of a plurality of persons in the Godhead... But that God, I submit, is unknown to the pages of the Scriptures."⁴⁷*

Heaster's words are unequivocal, and many other scholars today express the same views. John Hick, for example, author of *The Rainbow of Faiths*, reaches the following conclusion: (Surely God is beyond all the expressions in the following summary):

1. When we look at the research carried out in recent years, we see that Prophet Jesus did not teach that *he was God, or the Son of God, the second element in the Trinity.* In complete contrast to that belief, he always taught that he was the *son of Man.*

2. Christian authorities and theologians are unable to expound the traditional Christian belief that Prophet Jesus is both fully God and also fully human in a comprehensible manner.

3. Belief in incarnation does irreparable harm to Christians' relations with other religious traditions and their adherents. That is because this belief implies that Christianity is superior to other religions.⁴⁸

One matter needs to be clarified here. *This book does not seek to judge either those people who first proposed this belief or those sincere Christians who adhere to it, but to reveal the truth about trinitarian belief according to the Qur'an and to explain how it came to be produced and adopted.* It must not be forgotten that true Muslims believe in all of the prophets and books sent by God, and respect Christians beliefs and values. Muslims feel great affection for all Christians who sincerely believe in God, fear and respect Him, are sincerely devoted to Him, and who respect His messenger, Prophet Jesus (pbuh), and approach such Christians in a spirit of friendship and tolerance.

There may be people who propagate belief in the trinity with secret designs of their own, who look to only their own interests. In much the same way, others of sincere intent may possibly have moved away from the true path gradually, without being aware of it. The belief in question, originally expressed in a different form, may have become distorted over time. Communities of individuals who supported beliefs similar to the trinity and played a role in its becoming accepted must have held very different ideas from one another. Some may well have supported such claims, with the aim of emphasizing the superior moral values of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), while others may have misinterpreted metaphorical expressions. Still others, influenced by the prevailing political and cultural conditions of the time, may have wanted to ensure a more rapid spread of Christianity. In rejecting the trinity, therefore, we need to bear in mind the possibility that the first Christians may have fallen into error through being influenced by the historical, political, and cultural conditions of their time, or else may have been adversely affected by the persecution and oppression to which they were subjected. The probable reasons for the claim about the trinity being put forward are revealed in this chapter. (Surely God is beyond all the superstitious expressions employed in this chapter to describe Christians' mistaken beliefs. We once again state that Prophet Jesus [pbuh] has nothing to do with such ascriptions.)

The word "son" in the New Testament was not used to support the Trinity

At the heart of the belief in the trinity lies the erroneous belief that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is the *son of God*. (Surely God is beyond that!) However, when one examines how and why *son* was used when Christianity was born and in earlier periods, a very different picture emerges.

Son is used to refer to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) in four very different ways in the New Testament: the son of Mary, the son of David, the son of man, and the son of God.

The term *son of Mary* refers to the fact that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was physically born through by Mary, and the *son of David* denotes his lineage.

The term the son of man is of enormous importance, both from the point of view of how he described himself and how those around him regarded him. In fact, this term appears more frequently in the New Testament than the Messiah and the son of God. The term the son of man is unique to Jewish theology and is used far more in the Old Testament, particularly in the Book of Psalms. It refers directly to human beings and is a very familiar expression. For instance, it is used 90 times in reference to Prophet Ezekiel (pbuh), who is certainly depicted as a mortal human being.

The Aramaic equivalent of this term, *bar nash(a)*, was used for everyone also at the time of Prophet Jesus (pbuh). However, the New Testament term *the son of man is not used for everyone*, as in Judaic scriptures, but is employed many times to refer to Prophet Jesus (pbuh)⁴⁹. The term *the son of man* is used 69 times in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and 13 times in John. In only one place it is used for humanity in general (Hebrews, 2:6-8). The description is used several times both regarding and by Prophet Jesus (pbuh), in the sense of I. Some of these passages are as follows:

And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples: "Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men." (Luke, 9:43-44)

For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. (Luke, 11:30)

We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be handed over to the Gentiles. (Luke, 18:31-32)

While he [Jesus] was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him: "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke, 22:47-48)

As stated above, the term *the son of man* was used by the first Christians in the sense of *human being*, for most of the first Christians were Jewish and had always used this term in that sense. Its use in the Old Testament supports that view and reveals that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was a human being created by God and in need of His mercy.

The New Testament's expression *the son of God* constitutes one of the so-called foundations of trinitarianism. This interpretation has led to centuries of debate in the Christian world, however. In fact, every researcher familiar with Jewish culture and language at that time has stated that the expression is metaphorical. The widespread view is this: *The son of God was a metaphorical term already in wide use in Jewish society and frequently used to refer to important individuals.*

In 1977, seven biblical experts including Anglican theologians published *The Myth of God Incarnate*, which provoked considerable interest. In the foreword, editor John Hick, wrote:

The authors of this book are agreed on the need for a major religious development to take place in this final period of the 20th century. This need stems primarily from an increase in information concerning the origins of Christianity. Moreover, it depends on the acceptance of Prophet Jesus as a human being sent by God with a special duty and for a holy purpose. And it is based on accepting that the belief that Prophet Jesus was the incarnation of God and that he is the second element in the Trinity is a poetic and mythological expression of what Prophet Jesus means to us.⁵⁰

Throughout the book, Hick concentrates on the fact that the term *the son of God* is a belief put forward after Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) death, one that he never communicated himself.⁵¹

Jesus did not make the claim to deity that later Christian thought was to make for him... [I]t is *extremely* unlikely that the historical Jesus thought of himself in any such way. Indeed he would probably have rejected the idea as blasphemous; one of the sayings attributed to him is, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone' (Mark, 10.18). Of course no statements about what Jesus did or did not say or think can be made with certainty. But such evidence as there is has led the historians of

the period to conclude, with an impressive degree of unanimity, that Jesus did not claim to be God incarnate.⁵²

Among the Jews of that time, the *son of God* had the metaphorical meaning of *belonging to God*. Someone referred to in this way was considered close to God, one who served Him with all his heart, and who lived the kind of life that would be pleasing to Him. It never meant that the person in question possessed attributes resembling or equivalent to His, or implied any divine status. (Surely God is beyond that!) Indeed, there was no room for such a belief in Judaism.

Therefore, the first Christians may have used this term to express their respect for Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and their belief that he was His servant and close to God. In fact, many Christian theologians say that the term *the son of God* was given to him by his followers to honor and praise him. Moreover, they stress that it is a metaphor.

The title *son* was a particular form of expression in Hebrew and was used, together with other concepts, to indicate that he had a particularly close relationship to something. According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*:

The word "son" was employed among the Semites to signify not only filiation, but other close connexion or inmate relationship. Thus, "a son of strength" was a hero, a warrior, "son of wickedness" a wicked man, "sons of pride" wild beasts, "son of possession" a possessor, "son of pledging" a hostage, "son of lightning" a swift bird, "son of dead" one doomed to death, "son of a bow" an arrow, "son of Belial" a wicked man, "son of prophets" disciples of prophets etc. The title "son of God" was applied in the Old Testament to persons having any special relationship with God. Angels, just and pious men, were called "sons of God".⁵³

Dr. Mahmut Aydın of the 19 Mayıs University Theology Faculty in Turkey reports John Hicks' views on this subject in these terms:

This expression was already very widespread at the time of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and was frequently used for important individuals. Therefore, his disciples adopted the *son of God* and used it to describe their leader: Prophet Jesus (pbuh). Accordingly, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was described as the *son of God*, just like the kings from the line of David and persons of religious and moral importance living in Jewish society. According to Hick, in Jewish thought those kings and important people who were awarded this title were never literally regarded as being God's son. Rather, they were honored by being regarded as such, and were revered and praised, solely on account of their personal characteristics. In other words, the title in question was never used in a literal sense in Jewish thought. The term *son of God* was used for people throughout Jewish history. The Messiah, for example, was regarded as an earthly king who would have to be descended from the line of Prophet David, regarded as the son of God... The followers of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) were able to adapt this term to him very easily. The way that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was seen as an entity with divine attributes is first of all the result of the culture in which he lived. Accordingly, at the time of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), certain individuals with important characteristics were known as the *son of God* in the symbolic sense."⁵⁴

After considering Hick's views in some detail, Aydın says this about the use of the term *the son of God*:

Neither Prophet Jesus (pbuh) himself ever suggested that he was divine, nor did the disciples ever ascribe to him any form of divinity or god-likeness. On the contrary, the idea of his divinity was put

forward inside the first Christian community and gradually developed, assuming the nature of doctrine and dogma. That is because expressions regarding the divine sonship gradually left the Jewish context and entered that of Hellenistic Roman culture.⁵⁵

P. M. Casey, a New Testament scholar and author of several books on the origins of early Christianity, says: "... Jesus could have been called a son of God by anyone who thought that he was a particularly righteous person."⁵⁶ He also draws attention to how, within the Jewish tradition, important individuals and events were referred to by mythological and metaphorical expressions, either individually or socially.⁵⁷

According to the concept of the *Messiah* in Jewish belief, the Messiah, a king, would be descended from the line of Prophet David (pbuh). The kings descended from that line were regarded as "the sons of God in the sense of being appointed to the rank of kingship..."⁵⁸ Those who believed in Prophet Jesus (pbuh) as the Messiah may have seen nothing improper in referring to him by that term as an extension of this belief.

In *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, Sanders also notes that the Jews never understood *the son of God* in the literal sense. According to him, they used the term the *sons of God* in a metaphorical sense for both men and women and as a symbolic statement of one's devotion to God.⁵⁹ Sanders interprets the *son of God* by the first Christians in the following way:

The early Christians, used "Son of God" of Jesus, but they did not think that he was a hybrid, half God, and half human. They regarded "Son of God" as a *high* designation ... The first followers of Jesus, however, when they started calling him "Son of God," would have meant something much vaguer: a person standing in a special relationship to God, who chose him to accomplish a task of great importance. When Gentile converts started entering the new movement, they may have understood the title in light of the stories about Alexander the Great, or of their own mythology.⁶⁰

As Sanders states, when Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) words and deeds passed from the Jews to the Gentiles, at that time the pagan world, this metaphorical expression began to acquire a new meaning and to be used to refer to his alleged divine status. In this way, by being regarded as the Messiah by the first Christians and as having a fully human identity, he gradually became divine. (Surely God is beyond that!) William C. Varner examines how the first Christians perceived this term:

It is also true that the New Testament calls each one who believes in Jesus a "son of God." (John, 1:12) How then does Jesus being the *son of God* differ from my being a *son of God*? Does the title son of God clearly express Jesus' deity, or do Christians read more into it than the Bible intends? The only way to answer these questions is to comprehend how the first hearers and readers of the Christian message understood the title when they encountered it. Who were those first hearers/readers? On the most basic level, some were Gentiles and others were Jews. Both already had the expression *son of God* in their first-century linguistic and cultural backgrounds.⁶¹

Proponents of the trinity do not accept the interpretation that the concept of the *son of God* in the New Testament is an expression of honor and respect, even though many New Testament statements clearly use it in that very sense. For example, the *sons of God* is used for all who have faith in God and follow Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) path:

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Lord in heaven. He causes His Sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain

on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors [of the Romans] doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Lord is perfect. (Matthew, 5:44-48)

... those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Romans, 8:14)

I will be God to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. (2 Corinthians, 6:18)

Your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. (Luke, 6:35)

As is apparent from the examples above, the term "the sons of God" is used in many passages in the New Testament. Clearly, the meaning is the same as that in which it is used in Jewish culture in general: people who have taken God as their friend, who endeavor to draw close to Him, and who live by His laws. Indeed, Luke's Gospel mentions Prophet Adam (pbuh) as *the son of God* (Luke 3:38). The term *the son of God* is also used many times in the Old Testament. For example, son is used for the Israelite people in the Old Testament:

When Israel was a child I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. (Hosea, 11:1)

In another extract from the Old Testament the same expression is used to describe angels:

One day the sons of God [the angels] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. (Job, 1:6)

At the beginning of the Book of Exodus, Chapter 6, the term *the sons of God* is employed to describe humans multiplying on the face of the Earth. Other passages along these lines read: (Surely God is beyond all the expressions that follow!)

Then say to Pharaoh: "This is what the LORD says: 'Israel is my firstborn son.'" (Exodus, 4:22)

They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am Israel's Lord, and Ephraim is my firstborn son. (Jeremiah, 31:9)

I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me [David], "You are My Son; today I have become your Lord." (Psalm, 2:7)

The term *son of God* is also used to refer to Prophet Solomon (pbuh) in the Old Testament. The relevant passage reads:

When your days are over and you go to be with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons [Solomon], and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for Me, and I will establish his throne forever. I will be his Lord, and he will be My son. I will never take My love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. I will set him over My house and My kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever. (1 Chronicles, 17:11-14)

This holy individual referred to by the title "son of God" is the Prophet Solomon (pbuh), one of the sons of Prophet David (pbuh).

[David said to Solomon, "God said to me:] But you will have a son who will be a man of peace and rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side. His name will be

Solomon, [1] and I will grant Israel peace and quiet during his reign. He is the one who will build a house for My Name. He will be My son, and I will be his Lord. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever. Now, my son, the LORD be with you, and may you have success and build the house of the LORD your God, as He said you would." (1 Chronicles, 22:9-11)

The same chapter continues:

Of all my sons—and the LORD has given me many—he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. He said to me: "Solomon your son is the one who will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Lord. I will establish his kingdom forever if he is unswerving in carrying out My commands and laws, as is being done at this time." (1 Chronicles, 28:5-7)

All of the above statements make it clear that in the Jewish tradition, *the son of God* was used to refer to people *who took God as their friend, who were sincere and devout*. This is why it was used to refer to Prophet Jesus (pbuh). Just as in the cases of Prophet Adam (pbuh) and Prophet Solomon (pbuh), it is a metaphorical term that stems from Jewish traditions. It was chosen by the first Christians, who were Jewish and who knew the Torah and lived by the Mosaic Law until becoming followers of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), to express Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) respect, devotion, and closeness to God.

Another piece of evidence showing that the term *the son of God* provides no basis for belief in the trinity concerns the use of the name of God in the New Testament. In his paper "Who is Jesus? Do the creeds tell us the truth about him?" Anthony Buzzard writes:

Thousands upon thousands of times in the Bible (someone has calculated over 11,000 times), God is described by personal pronouns in the *singular* (I, me, you, He, Him). These pronouns in all languages describe *single persons*, not three persons. There are thus thousands of verses which tell us that the "only true God" is One Person, not three. There is no place in the New Testament where the word "God" can be proved to mean "God-in-Three-Persons." The word God, therefore, in the Bible never means the Trinitarian God. This would immediately suggest that the Trinitarian God is foreign to the Bible.⁶²

As we have emphasized throughout this chapter, the term *son* was widely employed in Jewish culture and bore no divine significance. Therefore, those who use it in the belief that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was literally the son of God, who claim that he has powers equal to God's (Surely God is beyond that!), are making a serious mistake in terms of Jewish belief. The Qur'an warns people several times not to use this term to ascribe divine status to Prophet Jesus (pbuh). This is a grave sin in the sight of God. For example:

Those who say: "God is the Messiah, son of Mary," are unbelievers. Say: "Who possesses any power at all over God if He desires to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone else on Earth?" The kingdom of the heavens and Earth, and everything between them belongs to God. He creates whatever He wills. God has power over all things. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 17)

The use of Father in the New Testament

One common New Testament term used by Christian theologians who defend belief in the trinity is *father*. (Surely God is beyond all the expressions used in this chapter to reflect the Christians' erroneous beliefs.) But, in fact, like the term son, this word also has a metaphorical significance. In addition, it appears that the word is not only used by Prophet Jesus (pbuh), but by all people of sincere faith who fear and respect God, and pray to Him for help. The word father refers to the fact that God is these people's only Lord, friend, and parent, and thus does not support belief in the trinity.

Some of the ways in which this word is used are as follow: (Surely God is beyond all these expressions)

The Father is greater than I. (John 14:28)

... that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Matthew 5:45)

Go, instead, to my brothers and tell them: "I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." (John 20:17)

Then the righteous will shine like the Sun in the kingdom of their Father. (Matthew 13:43)

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father, Who is unseen. Then your Father, Who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:6)

Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. (Matthew 6:8)

Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:32-33)

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

Be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. (Matthew 6:1)

This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father, Who is in heaven, hallowed be your name." (Matthew 6:9)

For if you forgive people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. (Matthew 6:14)

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:36)

Clearly, the authors of the New Testament use *Father* to refer to the essence of God. It is no more than a sign of respect that applies to all people, rather than giving one particular person divine status. The term does not merely express a special bond between God and Prophet Jesus (pbuh), but is addressed to everyone who has submitted to God and lives the kind of life that meets with His approval. Indeed, even today many Christians begin their prayers with *Our Father*. Similar prayers of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), recorded in the New Testament, should not be interpreted any differently. Once again, we need to emphasize that these statements do not eliminate the errors of those who use the term *Father* to ascribe divine status to Prophet Jesus (pbuh). They are committing a grave sin in the sight of God, and verses of the Qur'an describe their situation as follows:

Those who say that the Messiah, son of Mary, is God are unbelievers. The Messiah said: "O Tribe of Israel. Worship God, my Lord and your Lord. If anyone associates anything

with God, God has forbidden him the Garden and his refuge will be the Fire." The wrongdoers will have no helpers. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 72)

Our Lord's infinite might and power, and the fact that He is unsullied by any imperfection, are clearly emphasized in the Bible. John Hick sets this out in an interview:

Classic Christian theology developed a long time after the death of Prophet Jesus. Contemporary historical criticism of the New Testament seeks to enlighten us as to which of the words ascribed to Prophet Jesus in the New Testament texts in our possession may really have been spoken by him ... It is impossible to interpret the term "Father" (in the Gospels) literally. The expression "the son of God" appears many times in the Old Testament. For example, Adam is the son of God; the angels are the sons of God; the kings of Israel are the sons of God and the nation of Israel, as a whole, is also the son of God. Clearly the concept of "Father" and "Son" in these expressions does not express a literal relationship, but symbolizes only a metaphorical expression of God-human relationship. Let us immediately add that seeking to interpret these expressions literally is considered a major sin in Judaism. Metaphorical expressions of this kind were, in any case, in existence in the time of Prophet Jesus. The metaphorical description of any human being as the "son of God" dedicated to any deity can be regarded as a part of the general religious symbolism at that time. In short, the expression "son" is a symbolic reference to closeness to God. As far as I know, it is the literal interpretation of this term that disturbs Muslims. Similarly, I must say that as a Christian I, too, will feel uneasy at such a literal interpretation.⁶³

Many other New Testament passages need to be understood in a figurative sense, such as *God's Children*: (Surely God is beyond all the expressions in the extracts that follow.)

They are God's children, since they are children of the resurrection. (Luke 20:36)

Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. (John 11:51-52)

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with the Messiah, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. (Romans 8:16-17)

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed. (Romans, 8:19)

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life. (Philippians 2:14-16)

How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. (John 3:1-2)

This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God, nor is anyone who does not love his brother. (John 3:10)

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. (John 5:2)

Clearly, the use of father and son in these statements do not impart any kind of divine status. (Surely God is beyond that!) People who are obedient and loyal to God, who take Him as their friend and live in a way designed to earn His good pleasure, are referred to as *children of God* in the New Testament. Thus, in accordance with the contemporaneous Jewish understanding of these terms, the people beseeched God by saying *father*, out of love and respect. These figurative terms were understood within the monotheistic framework of "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is One.*" (Deuteronomy, 6:4)

They may have used it in the sense of God is the Lord of all

Prophet Jesus (pbuh), who possessed deep faith and superior moral values, trained his disciples and the first Christians to be his helpers on God's path. Therefore, they interpreted everything that happened to them and his message according to their deep faith. They were perfectly aware that God possesses infinite might and power, is the Sole Lord of the universe, that nothing can be unless He so wills, and that nobody has any power to do anything. Thus, they may have thought of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) as the *son of God* in the same sense when using the term. They may have wished to make it clear that our Lord had created all fathers and mothers, as well as all sons and daughters, and that He is the Lord of all.

Given that parents cannot have a child unless God sets the appropriate causes in motion, He is the One Who creates everything that exists. In that sense, mothers, fathers, and their children all belong to God. All the entities you see around, living or inanimate, belong to Him. The chair you are now sitting in, the building you live in, all cities, countries and nations all belong to God. If you see a river, it is God's river. It is His sea, His mosque, His church and His fountain. Therefore, all sons and daughters also belong to God.

Our Lord has no need of a mother, a father, or anything else to bring a human being into existence. It is sufficient that He say Be! It is our Lord Who created all physical, biological and chemical laws. It is therefore also our Lord Who brought into being all the laws and causes assumed to be necessary for the creation of a new human being. Almighty God created Mary, as well as all the mothers who have ever lived, and all those mothers' reproductive systems. It is God Who brings about each and every birth. It is God Who creates a mother and father.

Our Lord is unsullied by any flaw, deficiency or need. This is revealed thus in verses:

He has created hearing, sight, and hearts for you. What little thanks you show! He dispersed you throughout Earth, and you will be gathered to Him. He gives life and causes to die, and His is the alternation of the night and day. So will you not use your intellect? (Surat al-Muminun: 78-80)

He created you from earth, then from a drop of sperm, then from a blood clot, then He brings you out as infants, then so you may achieve full strength, then so you may become old men [and women] – though some of you may die before that time – so that you may reach a

predetermined age and so that, hopefully, you will use your intellect. He gives life and causes to die. When He decides on something, He just says to it: "Be!" and it is. (Surah Ghafir: 67-68)

He brings about both laughter and tears; He brings about both death and life; He created the two sexes – male and female – out of a sperm-drop when it spurted forth; He is responsible for the second existence. (Surat an-Najm: 43-47)

The Qur'an records one of Prophet Abraham's (pbuh) prayers thus:

He created me and guides me, gives me food and drink; when I am ill, He heals me; He will cause my death, then give me life; He, I sincerely hope, will forgive my mistakes on the Day of Reckoning. (Surat ash-Shu'ara': 78-82)

In the context of the above verses, certain Christian concepts acquire significance. Prophets Jesus, Moses, Salih, Noah, Hud (peace be upon them all) and Prophet Muhammad (may God bless him and grant him peace) are all God's servants, for all prophets belong to Him. It is revealed in verses that the Jews referred to Prophet Ezra (pbuh) as *the son of God*. In fact, both they and Prophet Ezra (pbuh) are His servants. Our Lord created Prophet Adam (pbuh), from soil and without parents, and the angels. It is a serious mistake to say otherwise. Not only Prophet Jesus (pbuh), but every mother, every father and every son belongs to God. The early Christians may have used *the son of God* in this sense. A similar explanation can be found on a Christian web site:

Son is not intended to mean a physical relationship or birth by procreation. We only say Christ is the *Son of God* to mean that Christ came from God... In many linguistic expressions, the word son is not used to indicate physical generation. For example, we say that students are sons of knowledge; citizens are sons of the homeland; an Egyptian is a son of the Nile; and an Arab is a son of the desert... Sura al-Baqara 2:215, "Whatever you bestow in charity must go to your parents and to your kinsfolk, to the orphan and to the poor man and to the stranger." Interpreters say that stranger (Ibn al-Sabil, the son of the path) indicates the traveler... Therefore, the term son of God does not mean procreation in human terms...⁶⁴

Some Christians say that *the son of God* (Surely God is beyond that!) needs to be regarded as a manifestation. This is both understandable and compatible with what the Qur'an says.

God created the universe from nothing and has absolute dominion over it. The heavens and the earth belong to Him. He is everywhere, and all parents and children are manifestations of Him. His essence may be manifested in many places and in many forms. Indeed, such an idea is found in the Qur'an:

When Moses came to Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said: "My Lord, show me Yourself so that I may look at You!" He replied: "You will not see Me, but look at the mountain. If it remains firm in its place, then you will see Me." But when His Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, He crushed it flat and Moses fell unconscious to the ground. When he regained consciousness, he said: "Glory be to You! I repent to You and am the first of the believers!" (Surat al-A'raf: 143)

The expression *manifested Himself* is used in the sense of *to appear, emerge, be expressed ...* In his Qur'anic commentary, Hamdi Yazir of Elmali writes as follows:

The Lord said to him (Moses): "You will never be able to see Me, but look at the mountain. If it remains firm in its place, then you will see Me." At this the Lord manifested Himself to the mountain, in a relative fashion. In other words, He did so not with all of the grandeur and absolute power of His Essence, but with the appearance of a spark of that grandeur and majesty, and with the strike of a fragment of His command and will, He smashed the mountain, making it as nothing. As we read in the reciting of Hamze, Kisaî and Halef-i Âğir, He "crushed it flat." In other words, the mountain disappeared, and the ground was leveled and became like a humpless camel ... Two events took place with the manifestation in question: One is the smashing and crumbling of the mountain, and the other is the fainting and falling to the ground of Prophet Moses (pbuh). This means that Prophet Moses (pbuh) was unable to withstand even a relative manifestation. Had there been a full and absolute Essential manifestation, the whole world and in all probability the entire universe, would have been obliterated in a single moment. This was the real wisdom behind Him saying: "You will not see Me."⁶⁵

Other verses reveal that:

We called out to him from the right hand side of the Mount, and We brought him near in close communication. (Surah Maryam: 52)

Then when he reached it, a voice called out: "Moses!" (Surah Ta-Ha: 11)

But when he reached it, a voice called out to him from the valley's right hand side, the part that was full of blessing, from out of the bush: "Moses, I am God, the Lord of all the worlds." (Surat al-Qasas: 30)

Therefore, God can manifest Himself where and as He wills. Everything that exists is a manifestation of God. As He revealed to Prophet Moses (pbuh), human beings can never see His true essence. However, they can have dealings with His manifestations. For example, when dealing with Prophet Moses (pbuh), He manifested Himself in a bush and in his staff. God never manifests Himself wholly, but only in the manner and in the entity that He wills. His presence pervades all things, for as the Qur'an reveals:

God, there is no deity but Him, the Living, the Self-Sustaining. He is not subject to drowsiness or sleep. Everything in the heavens and Earth belongs to Him. Who can intercede

with Him except by His permission? He knows what is before and behind them, but they cannot grasp any of His knowledge save what He wills. His Footstool encompasses the heavens and Earth, and their preservation does not tire Him. He is the Most High, the Magnificent. (Surat al-Baqara: 255)

As is also seen in the New Testament, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) called on his people to believe only in God. He answered his critics with very fine examples and explanations. Thus, it is quite possible that *the son of God* is a particular explanation used to counteract the pagan style in wide usage at that time. One who wished to tell people that God is the sole friend and helper of all people may have used the phrase *I am the son of God, not of my father* in this sense to overcome the pagans' persistence and attitude that valued and expected assistance from beings other than God. God knows best.

The Meaning of the Word of God

One baseless foundation of trinitarian belief is the word (logos), which is used right at the beginning of John's Gospel. Here, John asserts that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is the Word of God and has existed, together with Him, for all time: (Surely God is beyond that!)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (John, 1:1-5)

John then writes:

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John, 1:14)

In short, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is depicted as *the Word of God*, as a result of which divine status is ascribed to him. (Surely God is beyond that!)

However, this concept rests on a serious misinterpretation of the facts. As the Qur'an reveals:

People of the Book! Do not go to excess in your religion. Say nothing but the truth about God. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only the Messenger of God and His Word, which He cast into Mary, and a Spirit from Him. So believe in God and His Messengers. Do not say: "Three." It is better that you stop. God is only One God. He is too Glorious to have a son! Everything in the heavens and on Earth belongs to Him. God suffices as a Guardian. (Surat an-Nisa': 171)

John's mistake lies in his expression *and the Word was God*. This expression, which portrays the Word of God as being equivalent to His essence, is a serious error. Surely God is beyond all such terminology.

The problem lies in how the *word* (logos) is understood. In reality, this belief has been around since the sixth century bce, at which time the Greek philosopher Heracleitus taught that there was an intellect—the *logos*—in the universe similar to the human mind. In the third

and fourth centuries bce, the Stoics used *logos* in such senses as God, nature and the soul of the universe.⁶⁶

The fact that John's Gospel, written in Greek and evidently addressed to a Greek audience, begins with this concept, and that it is understood in the sense accorded to it by Greek philosophy, is no coincidence. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* says: "The author of The Gospel According to John used this philosophical expression, which easily would be recognizable to readers in the Hellenistic (Greek cultural) world, to emphasize the redemptive character of the person of Christ..."⁶⁷ To put it another way, the author of John's Gospel constructed a false meaning for the truth of *Prophet Jesus is the Word of God* by confusing it with Greek philosophy.

The misinterpretation of expressions and metaphorical explanations that are open to interpretation

One of the subjects most concentrated on by Biblical scholars is the need to interpret gospel expressions in a figurative sense. Looked at from this point of view, it appears that the expressions in question bear very different meanings. The Qur'an also uses many terms that are open to interpretation. Indeed, many Christian researchers are seeking to establish a relationship between Qur'anic expressions and certain New Testament terms as they make their interpretations. In the book *Three Gods or One? The Trinity in Monotheism*, Carlos Madrigal comments:

In describing Himself, God employs symbolic expressions that will be easily understandable to human beings. These are called terms of "human resemblance" (anthropomorphic). Physical attributes such as the face, hands etc. are used to refer to God in both the Holy Book and in the Qur'an. The expression "Nothing is like Him" (Surat ash-Shura, 11) expresses a truth. Yet we must not confuse this with analogies employed by God Himself in order for us to understand. Terms such as "the hand of God," "the palm of God," "the face of God," and "the eyes of God" can be found in the Qur'an... Nobody has any difficulty in interpreting these metaphorically. Won't we interpret the expression "the Father" or "the Son" metaphorically? Terms peculiar to human beings that are ascribed to God present us not with a true depiction, but only with hints and suggestions. These are not therefore depictive analogies, but associative ones. No one has the right to compare God to something by giving a physical meaning. (That would be paganism)... He, however, can compare Himself to any symbol He considers appropriate. God has created everything with love. He is the source of everything. "Father" is an excellent description to express that everything was created with His love.⁶⁸

This is important with regard to the Gospels' metaphorical expressions employed. Our Lord reveals the following regarding the Qur'an: "**We have sent down the Book to you making all things clear, and as guidance, mercy, and good news for the Muslims**" (Surat an-Nahl: 89) and "**We have not omitted anything from the Book – then they will be gathered to their Lord.**" (Surat an-Nahl: 38) Everything in the Qur'an is explained in the most perfect, wise, and compact way. In some verses, our Lord guides us according to such figurative terms:

God's hand

Those who pledge their allegiance to you pledge allegiance to God. God's hand is over their hands. He who breaks his pledge only breaks it against himself. (Surat al-Fath: 10)

Say: "All favor is in God's hand, and He gives it to whoever He wills. God is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing." (Surah Al 'Imran: 73)

The Jews say: "God's hand is chained." Their hands are chained, and they are cursed for what they say! No! Both His hands are open wide, and He gives however He wills. (Surat al-Ma'ida: 64)

... so that the People of the Book may know that they have no power at all over any of God's favor and that all favor is in the Hand of God. He gives it to anyone He wills. God's favor is indeed immense. (Surat al-Hadid: 29)

God's palm

They do not measure God with His true measure. The whole Earth will be a mere handful for Him on the Day of Resurrection, and the heavens will be folded up in His right hand. Glory be to Him! He is exalted above the partners they ascribe! (Surat az-Zumar: 67)

God's face

Do not call on any other deity besides God. There is no deity but Him. All things are passing except His Face. Judgment belongs to Him. You will be returned to Him. (Surat al-Qasas: 88)

Everyone on it will pass away; but the Face of your Lord will remain, the Master of Majesty and Generosity. (Surat ar-Rahman: 26-27)

Both East and West belong to God, so wherever you turn, the Face of God is there. God is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Baqara: 115)

The Qur'an also reveals:

You did not kill them, but it was God Who killed them. And you did not throw, when you threw, but it was God Who threw, so He might test the believers with this excellent trial from Him. God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Surat al-Anfal: 17)

In this verse, God states that as the Lord of infinite might and power, only He can bring all events and actions into existence. A human being has no power to do anything unless God wills it, for everything that he or she does, says, and thinks belongs to God. No human being can possess any strength or will independently of our Lord. In the Qur'an God reveals, "**But you will not will, unless God wills**" (Surat al-Insan: 30).

Each expression in the above verses tells of His infinite might and power in the finest possible terms. People who meditate on these verses will find beautiful and wise advice in them.

They may have been used to emphasize Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) superior servitude and closeness to God

The Disciples and the first Christians witnessed Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) devotion to God, his sincerity, deep faith, patience, courage, determination to implement God's revelation, the miracles he performed through God's will, and his superior moral values. His entire life was full of miracles: his conception and birth, his speaking from the cradle, his healing the sick, raising the dead, and ascending to God's presence all clearly reveal his extraordinary position. Such information is provided in detail in both the New Testament and the Qur'an. Our Lord emphasizes that Prophet Jesus (pbuh), his mother Mary, and the family of Imran were all chosen individuals.

The first Christians' enthusiastic tone when referring to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) has been noted by many Christian theologians. In his work *Jesus in His Lifetime*, New Testament expert John Marsh emphasizes that: "The earliest followers of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) used the term 'the son of God' to describe how he had been chosen by God for a very special task and therefore had a very special bond with God."⁶⁹ Sanders states: "Jesus is a special 'Son of God', living in a nation of 'Sons of God'."⁷⁰

In his work *No Other Name*, Paul Knitter writes:

In talking about Jesus, the New Testament authors use the language not of analytic philosophers but of enthusiastic believers, not of scientists but lovers. It is, as Krister Stendahl urges, "religious language"—that is, "love language, caressing language." In describing Jesus as "the only," Christians were not trying to elaborate a metaphysical principle but a personal relationship and a commitment that defined what it meant to belong to this community... Christian dogmatic definitions, in the way they have been understood and used, have perhaps done just that to the love language of the early church. The languages of the heart and the head are not necessarily contradictory, but they are different. And their differences must be respected.

The many texts that presents Jesus as "the Son of God," even "the only begotten Son" (John 1:14), will also be heard differently. Their primary intent will... urge all hearers to take this Jesus seriously, as authoritative. The point these texts are making... Jesus is a reliable revelation of God. In translating the Greek, *Uios tou Theou* ("son of God"), therefore, we must not insist on the definite article "the"; it does not appear in the original Greek and the phrase could as well be translated "a son of God." And the descriptive qualifier "only begotten" could perhaps be better rendered according to the Hebrew usage as "first-born" or "beloved". It could then be understood not to affirm the exclusivity but the reliability, the urgency, of Jesus' role as God's instrument.⁷¹

Behind this persistent defense of belief in the trinity probably lies a concern that Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) position might be overshadowed. However, even without belief in the trinity it is still possible to make this same emphasis. Indeed, the Qur'an reveals the miraculous aspects of Prophet Jesus (pbuh)

and his ascension in detail, as well as the fact that he and his family have been made superior to the worlds:

When the angels said: "Mary, your Lord gives you good news of a Word from Him. His name is the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, of high esteem in this world and the Hereafter, and one of those brought near." (Surah Al 'Imran: 45)

They may have been used to accelerate Christianity's spread

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) faced great opposition when he began to disseminate religious moral values. Jewish society at that time consisted of many sects, such as the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the Zealots, and the Essenes, all of which interpreted their religion in different ways. The first three in particular had fallen into grave error by distancing themselves from the divine religion brought by Prophet Moses (pbuh), and their superstitious traditions and distorted beliefs continued to multiply. In addition, pagan Hellenic culture had also spread among them, causing some Jews to compromise their monotheistic belief by adopting pagan beliefs.

Leaving all of these superstitious ideas behind, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) called on the Jews of his time to adopt a pure and sincere faith. All religious figures intent on maintaining the status quo were made very uneasy by his message, for he told people to fear, respect, and love God, and to abandon all of the superstitious laws and fanatical practices that had no basis in the message brought by Prophet Moses (pbuh).

After Prophet Jesus (pbuh) had been raised to God's presence, the first Christians used all of the methods at their disposal to spread his message. Christians traveled widely, displaying great patience when faced with opposition and poverty, telling people of His existence and that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was His messenger. Christianity spread widely and quickly. Despite Roman persecution and torture, people flocked to Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) true message. However, some converts could not fully free themselves from established pagan beliefs. As a result, *the son of God* acquired a pagan, as opposed to a traditional Jewish, meaning.

In *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, Sanders interprets the methods employed by the first Christians to spread the message of Prophet Jesus (pbuh):

In trying to convince others, they sometimes told stories of things that Jesus had said and done. In the early years this material was probably not written, but was simply passed on orally. When the disciples used incidents from Jesus' life, they wanted to illustrate points, points that were important at the time... Besides winning new adherents, the disciples also instructed one another and their growing number of converts by recalling incidents from Jesus' life. Sometimes they debated with Jewish teachers who rejected Jesus; these disputes provided a third context in which material from and about Jesus was employed.⁷²

Just as during Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) own lifetime, many groups and individuals strongly opposed Christianity after his time. Thanks to the disciples' efforts after Prophet Jesus (pbuh) had been raised into the sight of God, its spread caused them great concern, and perhaps caused them to make groundless claims or take other measures to prevent its rise. In his book, Paul Knitter concentrates on

the conditions under which the early Christians lived. He emphasizes that they developed a different style in order to survive and preserve their communities:

Another aspect of the historical context of the early church was its *minority status* within the larger Jewish community and especially within the vast, threatening Roman Empire. Cultural and religious pluralism was experienced otherwise than it is today ... [T]he community of Christians faced the danger either of being stomped out by larger groups for whom it was a threat or a nuisance, or of being absorbed by an all-consuming syncretism. To defend itself against these dangers, the community needed to arm itself with clear identity and total commitment. It did this especially through its beliefs, particularly its christological beliefs. Such doctrinal language, therefore, can be called "survival language"; it was necessary for the survival of the community. By defining Jesus Christ in absolute terms, by announcing him as the one and the only savior, the early Christians cut out for themselves an identity different from that of all their opponents or competitors. Such language also evoked a total commitment that would steel them in the face of persecution or ridicule... This language was more moral than metaphysical. Its purpose was more to define identity and membership within the community than to define the person of Jesus for all time.⁷³

The influence of the existing political- cultural climate

Researchers who study trinitarianism also study the cultural and political environment of those times. As we emphasized earlier, Jewish society at the time of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was under the influence of both Jewish and Greek culture. Most of the land bordering on the Mediterranean Sea was ruled by Rome, due to its military conquests and power. Rome was experiencing one of its most powerful periods, both in terms of its culture and its military strength. It had inherited the cultural legacy of ancient and classical Greece and carried it forward with its own additions. This trend, known as Hellenism, pervaded many areas of life, including religion. The Romans regarded themselves as far superior to other societies and sought to spread their own lifestyles into their new territories.

As with the other Mediterranean societies, Roman religion was polytheistic. The mythological Greek deities entered Roman mythology under different names. Their greatest deity (Jupiter) and many deities, which were symbolized by statues, were worshipped. Some Roman emperors even had laws passed including themselves in this pantheon. Statues of these mythological Greek deities, such as Zeus, Hermes, and Venus, were found throughout the empire, most often in the public squares of large cities. Every city and district, as well as every home, featured various statues, pictures, and special shrines to these deities. Roman administrators used these polytheistic religions as a way to spread their own rule, and thus did not interfere in anyone's religion as long as they did not threaten Roman rule. In fact, it encouraged paganism by building temples, altars, and statues. For them, religion was a way to encourage the loyalty of and regulating communities, and belonged to an abstract sphere that had no direct relationship with this world.

Whenever the Romans encountered another culture, they looked for the equivalents of their own deities and thus sought to establish a parallel that would ensure their superiority. Particularly in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes IV (d. 163 bce), they aberrantly sought to make Jews who believed in the One and Only God accept their head god Zeus, although this led to major struggles among them. Devout

Jews refused these Roman deities that spiritually polluted the holy land and strongly resisted the Romans' attempts to spread their pagan beliefs. Even so, Greek culture still had a profound influence on Jewish society.

Prophet Jesus (pbuh) preached to this Jewish society that was under Hellenistic influence. The Disciples and the first Christians grew up in the same society, and their lives and Hellenistic culture were intimately entwined. In his article "Jesus in Historical Context," Sanders examines Hellenism's influence on Galilee, where Prophet Jesus (pbuh) lived. He cites the views of many academics and makes the following comment:

Galilee was urbanized, cosmopolitan, and prosperous. In the view of one scholar [Burton Mack] "Galilee was in fact an epitome of Hellenistic culture"... The villagers could see and hear Greek plays and philosophers by nipping into one of the nearby cities. For holidays, they could go to larger cities in Syria, where they could soak up still more Greek culture. Rome, finally, is very important in this view. Roman soldiers abounded in Galilee; there were Roman officials and administrators; ... Not only was there a theatre, there was a pagan temple in Sepphoris "dedicated to Augustus and to Rome"; farmers raised pigs for Roman appetites and sacrifices...⁷⁴

Greek culture and religion was based on pagan mythology. Its adherents often used figurative expressions and mythological terms in their speech and references. It was as if mythology and real life had become mixed together. Biblical scholars examining the term *the son of God* used to refer to Prophet Jesus (pbuh) also draw attention to the influence of Greek culture in establishing this term. Greek mythology depicted its deities as entities that established friendships with human beings and eventually produced new generations. For example, Alexander the Great (d. 323 bce) was regarded as the son of Zeus. Sanders states that Greek traditions were widespread throughout the Empire at that time and that the use of *the son of God* (Surely God is beyond that!) for Prophet Jesus (pbuh) spread still further.⁷⁵ In fact, researchers highlight parallels between the pagan Greek trinity of Zeus-Hera-Apollo and belief in the trinity. Greek culture especially contained a large number of so-called *father god and son gods*. Plato (d. 347 bce) formulated this threesome into various trinities and maintained that these deities had a son (*logos*) and a daughter (*sophos*). According to Plato, the so-called god, the logos and the sophos constituted a *trinity*. Christianity adopted this pagan concept of a trinity, as well as many other beliefs and practices that it still retains today from the Greek culture or other pagan cultures. For that reason, it moved away from the pure monotheistic religion brought by Prophet Jesus (pbuh), which was the basis of the Mosaic Law.

Paula Fredriksen, author of *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament, Images of Jesus*, makes the following comment after emphasizing that the Gospels and the societies in which the Gospels were written were Greek ones:

In brief, the milieu of Christianity, and thus its interpretive context is the world of Hellenism. They [the writers] do so partly in language that would have been familiar, whether from pagan tradition or from the LXX, to their Hellenistic audiences: Jesus is "Lord," "Savior," "Son of God," and God's "Logos." But other, unfamiliar language also appears... even predominates—"Son of David," "Son of Man," "Kingdom of God," "messiah". This language, variously interpreted and deployed by these New Testament writers, is an inheritance from the earliest years of the Jesus movement in Palestine.⁷⁶

Dr. Paul R. Eddy writes in an article entitled "Was Early Christianity Corrupted by Hellenism?":

Throughout the ancient world, as far back as Babylonia, the worship of pagan gods grouped in threes or triads, was common. That influence was also prevalent in Egypt, Greece and Rome in the centuries before, during, and after Christ. After the death of the apostles, such pagan beliefs began to invade Christianity... While [Plato] did not teach the Trinity in its present form, his philosophies paved the way for it.⁷⁷

In his important work *The Christianity of the New Testament*, Oscar Cullmann examines how *the Son of God* was used in the East and in the Hellenistic culture when the Gospels were written. He states that Egyptian, Babylonian, and Assyrian kings and their people regarded themselves as holy beings and had themselves referred to as *the son of God*. He also notes that in Greek religions, everyone believed to possess sacred powers was referred to as *the son of God*.⁷⁸ The miracles performed by Prophet Jesus (pbuh) were enough for him to acquire this title. Varner says that the Gentiles who heard Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) message shaped their opinion of him within the framework of these ideas and adds: (Surely God is beyond the expressions that follow)

Their idea of a son of God was rooted deeply in polytheistic thought and was, therefore, difficult to transform into the monotheistic message of Jesus and His apostles. Whereas kings and other holy men in Oriental and Hellenistic thought claimed to be sons of God, Jesus claimed and was proclaimed to be the Son of God.⁷⁹

The tendency towards the so-called deification of human beings in pagan beliefs

One fundamental characteristic of the paganism found in the Roman Empire is the so-called concept of the man-god. Mythological Roman and Greek deities, such as Zeus and Hermes, Venus and Jupiter, were depicted in human form via statues erected in temples or public squares of large cities. Pagans considered their deities to be *touchable and visible*, and so regarded their depictions and appearances to them in human form as quite natural.

This man-god concept was so open to interpretation that people claiming to possess the power of *working miracles* and preaching on religious matters could easily claim to be such a being. Interesting examples of this are reported in the New Testament's Acts of the Apostles. Paul and Barnabas cured a sick man in the city of Lystra (near present-day Konya in Turkey), whereupon the astonished public imagined them to be gods:

When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language: "The gods have come down to us in human form!" Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them. (Acts, 14:11-13)

A similar incident took place on Malta. When pagans speaking with Paul saw him bitten by a snake they believed to be poisonous, but that he did not die, they again resorted to the man-god idea:

The people expected him [Paul] to swell up or suddenly fall dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god. (Acts, 28:6)

The early Christians, who addressed to people with such a mentality, spoke to them of a Messiah who performed miracles, healed the sick, and brought the dead back to life. And so these pagans saw this messenger, who was blessed with all these miracles by God, as a divine being like Zeus or Hermes. (Surely God is beyond that!)

In the Qur'an, God reveals that those who defend the trinity saying that the Messiah is the son of God, are "copying the words of those before them who did not believe" (Surat at-Tawba: 30). In other words, the Christians inherited this concept from earlier pagan societies.

Christians Opposed the Belief in the Trinity, from Nicaea to the Present Day

Throughout Christian history, many Christian sects have rejected belief in the trinity, either in whole or in part. And, because of this, they have historically encountered severe repression in the form of exile, excommunication, burning at the stake, and torture unto death. However, such oppression has not succeeded in erasing them from the pages of history. Most of them remained loyal to their beliefs and never denied the fact that there is only One God. The Arians, which we looked at in some detail earlier, were the fore-runners of the numerous anti-trinitarian Christians. Many more groups then emerged in their wake.

The Anti-Trinitarians

One anti-trinitarian movement that appeared in the wake of Arius was the Celtic Church of Ireland. Although totally isolated from continental Europe, this Church was built and developed along Arian lines. Until 664, when the Catholic Church finally secured official dominion over the Celtic Church, belief in the trinity was foreign to Ireland.

One very important feature of the Irish Church ran parallel to Nazarean teachings: loyalty to Jewish sources. The Celtic Church believed that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) adhered scrupulously to Judaic rules, and thus attached great importance to the Old Testament.⁸⁰ So powerful was this tendency that it continued even after its church came under Roman dominion. In 754, several Catholic priests complained that Irish priests attached no importance to the Church's holy scriptures and rejected the writings and ignored the Council's decisions.⁸¹ However, this resistance was soon broken. Over the course of a long campaign that began in the fourth century, the Catholic Church finally eliminated all of those had *turned onto a false path*. Yet these movements just described rejected the superstitious teachings that deified Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and instead, preached faith in God as the One and Only. As a result, the Catholic Church became western world's greatest religious authority.

Orthodox and Protestant Churches

The Catholic Church's control of the Christian world was rocked by an internal division in the ninth century. For a long time, the Eastern Churches, affiliated to the patriarchs of Constantinople, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, had disagreed with the Catholic Church. Finally, they broke away from Rome. This conflict, which was actually political in origin, had emerged following the division of the Roman Empire into eastern (Greek) and western (Latin) sections. The various disagreements between the two sides became a permanent schism when the Roman Church consecrated the Holy Roman

Empire. The most distinguishing of the many differences between the two sides is that the Roman Church used Latin as its liturgical language, while the Eastern Churches used Greek.

After breaking with Rome, the Eastern churches, also known as the Orthodox churches, could not establish any internal hierarchy. The Patriarch of Constantinople was always regarded as senior, but the others were independent entities. Furthermore, new divisions gradually emerged and national Churches were formed, such as the Armenian, Greek, Bulgar, Serb, and Russian national churches.

The Catholic Church maintained its hegemony in Europe until the sixteenth century, when the German priest Martin Luther (d. 1546) shattered that hegemony by launching the Protestant movement. Developed first under the leadership of Luther and then of such priests as John Calvin (d. 1564) and Huldreich Zwingli (d. 1531), it sparked off a huge rebellion against the Church of Rome and papal authority. For over a century, Europe was the scene of endless bloody wars between Catholics and Protestants. Behind these wars, which were superficially *religious*, lay political calculations and conflicts of interest between European monarchs who wanted to be free of the papacy and its related taxes and those who sought to maintain the status quo. The bloodiest squaring of accounts between the two sides, the Thirty Years War (1618-48), caused the deaths of more than a third of the European population. The end result was a permanent mutual understanding that the new order, established under the Treaty of Westphalia and signed at the end of the Thirty Years War, was now the norm. And so it has remained, largely unchanged, ever since.

After rejecting papal authority, however, the Protestants were unable to replace it with another authority. Thus, Protestantism developed as a dispersed and *liberal* religion without a central hierarchical structure. Just about every country established its own national church, and many sects and movements emerged over time. As a result, today there are hundreds of forms of Protestantism and churches. Most of these are active in northern Europe and the United States.

The emergence of Protestantism was also important as regards anti-trinitarian movements. After their overthrow of papal authority, Christians were now able to read and interpret the Good Book for themselves. The Catholic Church had never allowed this freedom to its members. As a result of this, some Protestants came to realize that there was no New Testament foundation for the trinity, which constituted the basis of Catholic belief. Indeed, it was evident that some passages rejected that belief. God is described as the *One and Only* in these passages, and belief in the *Three in One* had no place in the fundamental logic of the New Testament.

A very few Protestants therefore rejected the trinity. This gave rise to the Unitarian Church.

Christians Who Support Monotheism

Following the Protestant Reformation, Christians began reading the New Testament independently of Catholic beliefs. The first modern anti-trinitarian Christian movement developed in Italy. Founded by Lelio Socinus (d. 1562) and his nephew Faustus Socinus (d. 1604), the movement took the name Socinianism, from the surnames of its two founders, and spread by means of secret meetings. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* summarizes their beliefs as follows:

[According to the Socinians] that there was no Trinity; that Christ was not consubstantial with the Father and holy spirit; that His Death and Passion were not undergone to bring about our redemption.⁸²

The Socinians were oppressed, and Rome lost no time in excommunicating the two founders. Fausto Socianus said: "The holiness of Prophet Jesus' life, the revelation of God, will naturally be different to that of other people. He possessed divine vision and divine inspiration, but certainly was not a creator. He was equipped with a matchless authority and sent to humanity with a duty to discharge."⁸³ Socianus maintained that God had only one essence and that it was irrational to speak in terms of a trinity. Socinian teachings spread as far as England, a development that caused Rome great unease, an unease expressed by the Union of Norwegian Bishops:

Socinianism, turned from the true path by anti-Trinitarians and neo-Arianists who, it is feared, will destroy Christianity, is corrupting the thoughts of Christians."⁸⁴

At the same time, Michael Servetus (d. 1553), a Spanish theologian and physician, who propagated similar ideas, was burned at the stake by Calvin because of his rejection of the trinity. As he was burned, his anti-trinity book was hung round his neck. Servetus maintained that Christianity has been corrupted at the Council of Nicaea, and wrote that it was necessary to return to pre-Council of Nicaea sources. Attacks aimed at the Socinians began in 1638. Their college in Rakow was closed, and many adherents were burned alive.

The Unitarian movement, which assumed the mantle of the Socinians, was born in Transylvania towards the end of the sixteenth century, later spread all over Europe and particularly in Poland. Its emergence is described in the following terms on a Unitarian church website:

Early Christians held a variety of beliefs about Jesus, including the belief that he was not divine but Wayshower. However the doctrine of the Trinity – God as Father, Son and Holy Ghost – was enforced all those who believed differently were denounced as heretics. Sixteenth century, Christian humanists studied the Bible closely and could not find the Trinity in the scriptures. They affirmed – as did Jesus, according to the Gospels – the unity, or oneness, of God. Hence they acquired the name Unitarian. Unitarians preached and organized churches according to their own rational convictions in the face of overwhelming orthodox opposition and persecution. They reacted by advocating religious freedom for all. Since "faith is the gift of God," people should not be forced to adhere to a faith they did not choose.⁸⁵

A document known as the Racovian Catechism, which was published by Polish Unitarian priests and laid special emphasis on the idea of the One God, became one of the movement's most important texts. Belief in the atonement of sins was rejected in the catechism, which also said:

The opinion of those who attribute divinity to Jesus Christ is not only repugnant to right reason but likewise to the Holy Scriptures, and they are in gross error who believe that not only Father but also the Son and the Holy Ghost are three persons in one deity... God is... absolutely One, and therefore it is a downright contradiction for one to generate another if they are three independent persons... Always till the times of the Nicene Council and some time later as appears by the writings of those who lived then, the Father... alone was acknowledged for the true God, and those who were of the contrary mind... were accounted heretics...⁸⁶

The Unitarians were particularly influential in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world. Unitarian churches were first established in England and then in the United States. These people, who believed that not only Christians but all people can achieve salvation if they believe in God, described themselves as Universalists. The Unitarian and Universalist churches, which

developed separately, merged in 1961. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia* summarizes the common beliefs of the Unitarian Churches thus:

Jewish religious teacher, prophet, regarded by the Unitarians as an example to follow, a master of religious and ethical life in teaching and acting... The Bible is a collection of man-created writings, including teachings of Jewish and Christian teachers, historical accounting and literature. These works were inspired by God but we are not to forget that this inspiration was grasped by those who lived long-long time ago in a certain historical time and place. This is why each writing has the marks of a cultural trend from ancient times, with that characteristic world-view, containing precious intuitive insight but mistakes too. This is why the Unitarian theology follows and accepts the results of the scientific criticism of the Bible in adopting its ethics in life and philosophy. ⁸⁷

In short, Unitarians take Prophet Jesus (pbuh) for what he actually was: a Jewish prophet who as God's son only in a figurative sense. The bases of Unitarian belief are described in the following terms on one website:

The basic tenets of Unitarian belief consist of the oneness of God, love of God and human beings, and eternal life ... They respect the memory of Prophet Jesus, but deny his divinity and do not regard him as *infallible*. They regard the Christian scriptures as a document of human experience, but maintain that since the authors were human they were capable of error ... They agree that God has sent prophets at all times in order to show people the true path. They regard the Messiah Jesus as the greatest of these ... ⁸⁸

Unitarians express their ideas about Prophet Jesus (pbuh) on their own sites as follows:

He was, and still is for many UU's, an exemplar... Among us, Jesus' very human life and teaching have been understood as a product of, and in line with, the great Jewish tradition of prophets and teachers. He neither broke with that tradition nor superceded it. ⁸⁹

Unitarians reject one part of traditional Christianity and base their own beliefs on proper moral values, reason, common sense, and the oneness of God. They describe their beliefs thus on their websites:

In the first place, we believe in the doctrine of God's UNITY, or that there is One God, and One only. To this truth we give infinite importance, and we feel ourselves bound to take heed, lest any man spoil us of it by vain philosophy. The proposition, that there is one God, seems to us exceedingly plain. We understand by it, that there is one being, one mind, one person, one intelligent agent, and one only, to whom underived and infinite perfection and dominion belong... We do... protest against the irrational and unscriptural doctrine of the Trinity. ⁹⁰

However, some of the views now propounded under the name of Unitarianism contain elements that are incompatible with God and His revelation. Some Unitarians possess a *humanist* conception of religion, in which religious rules and worship are eliminated. Some do not believe in miracles, such as the virgin birth, or that Prophet Jesus (pbuh) actually performed miracles. This is another deviation away from Divine truth. Unitarians are not presented in this book as a community that represents true Christianity as it was at the time of Prophet Jesus (pbuh); the author merely cites their beliefs concerning the trinity and the atonement of sins. Other of their beliefs, however, conflict with what the Qur'an teaches.

Servetus: A Monotheistic Christian

Another theologian who met with great opposition was Michael Servetus (d. 1553), who stated many things taught by the Church for hundreds of years could not be found in the New Testament at all. While still in his 20s, he published two books, *De Trinitatis erroribus libri vii* (The Errors of the Trinity) and *Dialogorum de Trinitate libri ii* (Two Dialogues on the Trinity), both of which elicited a powerful reaction in Europe. Until then, nobody had written such a courageous book. Servetus, who said that he was following the footsteps of the first disciples linked to the Antioch school, was subsequently hounded by Rome from country to country for many years. He changed his name, but never his ideas. For that reason, he was burned at the stake at Genoa on 26 January 1553.

Servetus had an affection for and interest in Islam. In his works, he devoted a great deal of space to the words of the Prophet Muhammed (may God bless him and grant him peace) and Islam's powerful monotheistic belief. In *De Trinitatis erroribus libri vii*, he emphasized that belief in the trinity was incompatible with reason:

How much this tradition of the Trinity has alas, alas! been the laughing stock of Muhammedans only God knows. The Jews also shrink from giving adherence to this fancy of ours, and laugh at our foolishness about the Trinity... And not only the Muhammedans and the Hebrews but the very beasts of the field, would make fun of us, did they grasp our fantastic notion, for all the workers of the Lord bless the One God.⁹¹

His writings and teachings led to his inhuman murder. However, today he is still regarded as the *founder of modern monotheism* by many Christians.

The Jehovah's Witnesses

The Jehovah's Witnesses also reject belief in the trinity. Although they agree with traditional Christianity in many areas, their rejection of the trinity has caused many Christians to view them as non-Christians, despite their obvious Judeo-Christian basis.

According to the Jehovah's Witnesses, belief in the trinity is a non-Biblical belief. They say that if people read the Bible without any preconceived notions, they will never encounter any such idea, for this idea was added long after Prophet Jesus' (pbuh) had been raised to God's presence. Although this sect resembles Judaism in terms of its conception of God, their beliefs concerning Prophet Jesus (pbuh) distinguish them from it. The Jehovah's Witnesses stress that they are the real Christians and that all others are all in error:

The teachings of the Bible about God and his purposes are clear, easy to understand, and reasonable. But the teachings of Christendom's churches are not. Worse, they contradict the Bible... Also, Christendom's Trinity doctrine portrays God as some mysterious three-in-one God. But that teaching is not found in the Bible either.⁹²

According to Jehovah's Witness statistics for 2001, this sect has approximately 6 million members.

Islam strengthened the Unitarian Church

When we look at how the Unitarian Church gained strength, we encounter a most interesting connection: the influence of the Ottoman Empire. In Transylvania, which was part of the Ottoman

territories in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, monotheistic beliefs grew very powerful. In a sermon entitled "Islam, the US, and Yeats' Dilemma," Jack Donovan, a priest in the Florida Unitarian Church, emphasizes this development:

In Poland, Hungary, and Transylvania, some Reform Protestant Christians began asserting as a matter of faith, "God is one. There is no god but God." Dangerous heresy in Christendom in those days. Where did dead-defying statement come from?... In 1520s and '30s, when Protestantism was still very new and trinitarian, the Islamic Ottoman Empire conquered Croatia, Hungary, and Transylvania.⁹³

As expressed by many historians and Unitarian clergy, the reason why this monotheistic sect located in Ottoman territories gained in strength was because Islam brought a climate of tolerance. Susan Ritchie of the North Unitarian Universalist Church emphasizes this fact in a sermon entitled *The Promise of Postmodernism for Unitarian Universalist Theology*:

Most moderate international historians accept not only that the political protection of the Ottomans allowed for the development of progressive Protestantisms, but also that the infamous permissiveness of Ottoman administrative practice regarding local customs and religions must have had some influence with regards to the issue of toleration.⁹⁴

Islam's powerful monotheism was an enormous guarantee for anti-trinitarian Christians, for within the Ottoman Empire they could express their opinions freely, enjoy official tolerance, establish their own churches, and reinforce the Christian monotheistic tradition.

The links between Islam and the Unitarian Church have attracted the interest of researchers for hundreds of years. For example, in his *The Hungarian Protestant Reformation in the Sixteenth Century under the Ottoman Impact*, Alexander Sándor Unghváry concentrates on the importance attached to Islam by Servetus, an earlier proponent of monotheism.⁹⁵ In his work, based on the relationship between Socinianism and Islam, Mathurin Veyssiére de la Croze claims that the Unitarians of Transylvania accepted the similarity between the oneness of God as taught by Unitarianism and that taught in the Qur'an.⁹⁶

Unitarian clergyman Jack Donovan also draws attention to these matters in a sermon:

Two Islamic teachings would have become common knowledge and would have been much noted. One, the words of the daily call to prayer sung from the minarets to the general public: "God is One. There is no god but God. There is no god but God." And two, the explicit requirement of the Quran, emphasized by Muhammad, that respect and tolerance be given to all religions because each is a response to God. When those teachings are applied to the gospel of Jesus, you get 16th century Unitarianism. It is my hypothesis that our tradition has a 450 year old debt to Islam for a center we share in common...⁹⁷

Later in the same sermon, Ritchie stated that Unitarian leaders throughout history have always held a positive view toward Islam:

The 17th and 18th century European Socinians were not so shy about praising theological Islam as a pure monotheism that had corrected many of the theological corruptions that had befallen the Christian church since its early days of honest, non-doctrinaire practice. Andrew Ramsey in 1727 spoke of Socinianism approvingly as the sublime religion which stems from "Ideal Islam" (Bastianensen 21). Henry Stubbe, John Toland, Arthur Bury, William Fexe and Stephen Nye were similarly all Socinian authors who strategically employed a sympathetic stance towards theological Islam as means of

highlighting the deviations from primitive Christian practice that they found bothersome especially in the form of Anglican orthodoxy.⁹⁸

Mark D. Morrison-Reed of the Toronto Unitarian Church also describes Islam in a sermon entitled *The Islamic Connection*:

Houston Smith writes that Islam's "innovation was to remove idols from the religious scene and focus the divine on a single invisible God for everyone." [p. 236- Houston Smith, *The World's Religions*] Unlike Christianity Islam is unmistakably monotheistic, and unlike Judaism was not confined to one people. We might begin any effort to connect with Islam with this: acknowledge that we share common historical ground in this intuition about and understand of God's singularity. In the Middle Ages it was Islam tolerance that allowed a cultural bridge between Christianity and Islam to develop. This Spanish Renaissance influenced a person we claim as our intellectual forebear, Michael Servetus. Servetus was born in 1511 in northern Spain and while we know some of the details and influence upon his life, we don't know exactly how his ideas developed or what precipitated the publishing in 1531 of his book *On the Errors of the Trinity*... While Islam had created the political and intellectual conditions that contributed to the emerging of Servetus' ideas in the West, it was also responsible for the political conditions that allowed Unitarianism to germinate, blossom and spread in eastern Europe... In a sense we are indebted to Islam. For me that suggest that we need to stop viewing Islam as something foreign and incomprehensible. Instead, it is time to recognize that not only are we historically connected but that we share some common values, as well.⁹⁹

These statements of different Unitarian clergymen reveal the climate of tolerance in Ottoman territories and the common values shared by these two revealed religions.

CONCLUSION

The religion brought by Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is *a revealed religion believing in God as the One and Only*. However, the message brought by him was gradually diverted from its essence after he was raised to God's presence, thereby becoming a new religion based on such mistaken beliefs *as the trinity and the atonement of sins*. This belief was then portrayed as an *absolute law* that had to be accepted *without thinking, questioning, or researching*.

However, many people now openly question belief in the trinity accepted "by majority vote" at the various historical councils. In the past, such people were hauled before the courts of the Inquisition and sentenced to death. Such questioning is now no longer a crime. The belief in the trinity, which went unquestioned—and unquestionable—for centuries, appears nowhere in Christian scriptures. In fact, it entered Christianity three centuries after Prophet Jesus (pbuh) had begun to be spoken about in different parts of the Mediterranean world. Various theologians, writers, and researchers, some of whom have been mentioned in this book, are now informing people of these facts, and independent churches that reject trinitarian belief are preaching the truth about this belief all over the world. There is an important reason why this trend has gathered speed in recent years: The time when Christianity will rid itself of its mistaken beliefs and return to its true essence is fast approaching.

The End Times, in which we are now living, is a very special period filled with good news for believers. That is because *our Lord has imparted the glad tidings that after 2,000 years, He will send Prophet Jesus (pbuh) back to Earth during this period*. This is particularly important for Christians, because only Prophet Jesus (pbuh) can return Christianity to its true essence. Through his efforts, Christianity will become *true Christianity*, and his followers *true Christians*.

The second coming of Prophet Jesus (pbuh) is revealed with various signs or portents in the verses of the Qur'an. The deeds that he will perform after his return, as well as various features of that time, are also related in many hadiths of our Prophet (may God bless him and grant him peace). One of them is: *I swear that Jesus (pbuh) the son of Mary will come down, and will descend as a just judge and a just ruler (Sahih Muslim)*. According to the hadiths, Prophet Jesus (pbuh) will return, restore Christianity, eliminate all atheistic ideologies as a just ruler, and then turn people in the direction of living by religious moral values. This, in turn, will bring people great material and spiritual peace and comfort. All conflict and fighting will come to an end, and all disagreements will be resolved peacefully. Security will replace restlessness and fear, the source of moral corruption. Justice will prevail throughout the world, and all people, wherever they may go, will find beauty, wealth, and abundance.

Like all believers, we hope that our Lord will grant us the honor of welcoming Prophet Jesus (pbuh) and allow us, before he comes, to make the finest preparations to greet him. We hope that our Christian brothers and sisters will rejoice at the glad tidings imparted by the New Testament: *...This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven (Acts, 1:11)*, see the error of trinitarianism, and turn to God alone.

THE DECEPTION OF EVOLUTION

Darwinism, in other words the theory of evolution, was put forward with the aim of denying the fact of creation, but is in truth nothing but failed, unscientific nonsense. This theory, which claims that life emerged by chance from inanimate matter, was invalidated by the scientific evidence of miraculous order in the universe and in living things. In this way, science confirmed the fact that God created the universe and the living things in it. The propaganda carried out today in order to keep the theory of evolution alive is based solely on the distortion of the scientific facts, biased interpretation, and lies and falsehoods disguised as science.

Yet this propaganda cannot conceal the truth. The fact that the theory of evolution is the greatest deception in the history of science has been expressed more and more in the scientific world over the last 20-30 years. Research carried out after the 1980s in particular has revealed that the claims of Darwinism are totally unfounded, something that has been stated by a large number of scientists. In the United States in particular, many scientists from such different fields as biology, biochemistry and paleontology recognize the invalidity of Darwinism and employ the fact of creation to account for the origin of life.

We have examined the collapse of the theory of evolution and the proofs of creation in great scientific detail in many of our works, and are still continuing to do so. Given the enormous importance of this subject, it will be of great benefit to summarize it here.

The Scientific Collapse of Darwinism

Although this doctrine goes back as far as ancient Greece, the theory of evolution was advanced extensively in the nineteenth century. The most important development that made it the top topic of the world of science was Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859. In this book, he denied that God created different living species on Earth separately, for he claimed that all living beings had a common ancestor and had diversified over time through small changes. Darwin's theory was not based on any concrete scientific finding; as he also accepted, it was just an "assumption." Moreover, as Darwin confessed in the long chapter of his book titled "Difficulties on Theory," the theory failed in the face of many critical questions.

Darwin invested all of his hopes in new scientific discoveries, which he expected to solve these difficulties. However, contrary to his expectations, scientific findings expanded the dimensions of these difficulties. The defeat of Darwinism in the face of science can be reviewed under three basic topics:

- 1) The theory cannot explain how life originated on Earth.
- 2) No scientific finding shows that the "evolutionary mechanisms" proposed by the theory have any evolutionary power at all.
- 3) The fossil record proves the exact opposite of what the theory suggests.

In this section, we will examine these three basic points in general outlines:

The First Insurmountable Step: The Origin of Life

The theory of evolution posits that all living species evolved from a single living cell that emerged on the primitive Earth 3.8 billion years ago. How a single cell could generate millions of complex living species and, if such an evolution really occurred, why traces of it cannot be observed in the fossil record are some of the questions that the theory cannot answer. However, first and foremost, we need to ask: How did this "first cell" originate?

Since the theory of evolution denies creation and any kind of supernatural intervention, it maintains that the "first cell" originated coincidentally within the laws of nature, without any design, plan or arrangement. According to the theory, inanimate matter must have produced a living cell as a result of coincidences. Such a claim, however, is inconsistent with the most unassailable rules of biology.

"Life Comes From Life"

In his book, Darwin never referred to the origin of life. The primitive understanding of science in his time rested on the assumption that living beings had a very simple structure. Since medieval times, spontaneous generation, which asserts that non-living materials came together to form living organisms, had been widely accepted. It was commonly believed that insects came into being from food leftovers, and mice from wheat. Interesting experiments were conducted to prove this theory. Some wheat was placed on a dirty piece of cloth, and it was believed that mice would originate from it after a while.

Similarly, maggots developing in rotting meat was assumed to be evidence of spontaneous generation. However, it was later understood that worms did not appear on meat spontaneously, but were carried there by flies in the form of larvae, invisible to the naked eye.

Even when Darwin wrote *The Origin of Species*, the belief that bacteria could come into existence from non-living matter was widely accepted in the world of science.

However, five years after the publication of Darwin's book, Louis Pasteur announced his results after long studies and experiments, that disproved spontaneous generation, a cornerstone of Darwin's theory. In his triumphal lecture at the Sorbonne in 1864, Pasteur said: "Never will the doctrine of spontaneous generation recover from the mortal blow struck by this simple experiment."¹⁹³

For a long time, advocates of the theory of evolution resisted these findings. However, as the development of science unraveled the complex structure of the cell of a living being, the idea that life could come into being coincidentally faced an even greater impasse.

Inconclusive Efforts of the Twentieth Century

The first evolutionist who took up the subject of the origin of life in the twentieth century was the renowned Russian biologist Alexander Oparin. With various theses he advanced in the 1930s, he tried to prove that a living cell could originate by coincidence. These studies, however, were doomed to failure, and Oparin had to make the following confession:

Unfortunately, however, the problem of the origin of the cell is perhaps the most obscure point in the whole study of the evolution of organisms.¹⁹⁴

Evolutionist followers of Oparin tried to carry out experiments to solve this problem. The best known experiment was carried out by the American chemist Stanley Miller in 1953. Combining the gases he alleged to have existed in the primordial Earth's atmosphere in an experiment set-up, and

adding energy to the mixture, Miller synthesized several organic molecules (amino acids) present in the structure of proteins.

Barely a few years had passed before it was revealed that this experiment, which was then presented as an important step in the name of evolution, was invalid, for the atmosphere used in the experiment was very different from the real Earth conditions.¹⁹⁵

After a long silence, Miller confessed that the atmosphere medium he used was unrealistic.¹⁰⁰

All the evolutionists' efforts throughout the twentieth century to explain the origin of life ended in failure. The geochemist Jeffrey Bada, from the San Diego Scripps Institute accepts this fact in an article published in *Earth* magazine in 1998:

Today as we leave the twentieth century, we still face the biggest unsolved problem that we had when we entered the twentieth century: How did life originate on Earth?¹⁰¹

The Complex Structure of Life

The primary reason why the theory of evolution ended up in such a great impasse regarding the origin of life is that even those living organisms deemed to be the simplest have incredibly complex structures. The cell of a living thing is more complex than all of our man-made technological products. Today, even in the most developed laboratories of the world, a living cell cannot be produced by bringing organic chemicals together.

The conditions required for the formation of a cell are too great in quantity to be explained away by coincidences. The probability of proteins, the building blocks of a cell, being synthesized coincidentally, is 1 in 10^{950} for an average protein made up of 500 amino acids. In mathematics, a probability smaller than 1 over 10^{50} is considered to be impossible in practical terms.

The DNA molecule, which is located in the nucleus of a cell and which stores genetic information, is an incredible databank. If the information coded in DNA were written down, it would make a giant library consisting of an estimated 900 volumes of encyclopedias consisting of 500 pages each.

A very interesting dilemma emerges at this point: DNA can replicate itself only with the help of some specialized proteins (enzymes). However, the synthesis of these enzymes can be realized only by the information coded in DNA. As they both depend on each other, they have to exist at the same time for replication. This brings the scenario that life originated by itself to a deadlock. Prof. Leslie Orgel, an evolutionist of repute from the University of San Diego, California, confesses this fact in the September 1994 issue of the *Scientific American* magazine:

It is extremely improbable that proteins and nucleic acids, both of which are structurally complex, arose spontaneously in the same place at the same time. Yet it also seems impossible to have one without the other. And so, at first glance, one might have to conclude that life could never, in fact, have originated by chemical means.¹⁰²

No doubt, if it is impossible for life to have originated from natural causes, then it has to be accepted that life was "created" in a supernatural way. This fact explicitly invalidates the theory of evolution, whose main purpose is to deny creation.

Imaginary Mechanism of Evolution

The second important point that negates Darwin's theory is that both concepts put forward by the theory as "evolutionary mechanisms" were understood to have, in reality, no evolutionary power.

Darwin based his evolution allegation entirely on the mechanism of "natural selection." The importance he placed on this mechanism was evident in the name of his book: *The Origin of Species, By Means of Natural Selection...*

Natural selection holds that those living things that are stronger and more suited to the natural conditions of their habitats will survive in the struggle for life. For example, in a deer herd under the threat of attack by wild animals, those that can run faster will survive. Therefore, the deer herd will be comprised of faster and stronger individuals. However, unquestionably, this mechanism will not cause deer to evolve and transform themselves into another living species, for instance, horses.

Therefore, the mechanism of natural selection has no evolutionary power. Darwin was also aware of this fact and had to state this in his book *The Origin of Species*:

Natural selection can do nothing until favourable individual differences or variations occur.¹⁰³

Lamarck's Impact

So, how could these "favorable variations" occur? Darwin tried to answer this question from the standpoint of the primitive understanding of science at that time. According to the French biologist Chevalier de Lamarck (1744-1829), who lived before Darwin, living creatures passed on the traits they acquired during their lifetime to the next generation. He asserted that these traits, which accumulated from one generation to another, caused new species to be formed. For instance, he claimed that giraffes evolved from antelopes; as they struggled to eat the leaves of high trees, their necks were extended from generation to generation.

Darwin also gave similar examples. In his book *The Origin of Species*, for instance, he said that some bears going into water to find food transformed themselves into whales over time.¹⁰⁴

However, the laws of inheritance discovered by Gregor Mendel (1822-84) and verified by the science of genetics, which flourished in the twentieth century, utterly demolished the legend that acquired traits were passed on to subsequent generations. Thus, natural selection fell out of favor as an evolutionary mechanism.

Neo-Darwinism and Mutations

In order to find a solution, Darwinists advanced the "Modern Synthetic Theory," or as it is more commonly known, Neo-Darwinism, at the end of the 1930s. Neo-Darwinism added mutations, which are distortions formed in the genes of living beings due to such external factors as radiation or replication errors, as the "cause of favorable variations" in addition to natural mutation.

Today, the model that stands for evolution in the world is Neo-Darwinism. The theory maintains that millions of living beings formed as a result of a process whereby numerous complex organs of these organisms (e.g., ears, eyes, lungs, and wings) underwent "mutations," that is, genetic disorders. Yet, there is an outright scientific fact that totally undermines this theory: Mutations do not cause living beings to develop; on the contrary, they are always harmful.

The reason for this is very simple: DNA has a very complex structure, and random effects can only harm it. The American geneticist B. G. Ranganathan explains this as follows:

First, genuine mutations are very rare in nature. Secondly, most mutations are harmful since they are random, rather than orderly changes in the structure of genes; any random change in a highly ordered system will be for the worse, not for the better. For example, if an earthquake were to shake a highly ordered structure such as a building, there would be a random change in the framework of the building which, in all probability, would not be an improvement.¹⁰⁵

Not surprisingly, no mutation example, which is useful, that is, which is observed to develop the genetic code, has been observed so far. All mutations have proved to be harmful. It was understood that mutation, which is presented as an "evolutionary mechanism," is actually a genetic occurrence that harms living things, and leaves them disabled. (The most common effect of mutation on human beings is cancer.) Of course, a destructive mechanism cannot be an "evolutionary mechanism." Natural selection, on the other hand, "can do nothing by itself," as Darwin also accepted. This fact shows us that there is no "evolutionary mechanism" in nature. Since no evolutionary mechanism exists, no such any imaginary process called "evolution" could have taken place.

The Fossil Record: No Sign of Intermediate Forms

The clearest evidence that the scenario suggested by the theory of evolution did not take place is the fossil record.

According to this theory, every living species has sprung from a predecessor. A previously existing species turned into something else over time and all species have come into being in this way. In other words, this transformation proceeds gradually over millions of years.

Had this been the case, numerous intermediary species should have existed and lived within this long transformation period.

For instance, some half-fish/half-reptiles should have lived in the past which had acquired some reptilian traits in addition to the fish traits they already had. Or there should have existed some reptile-birds, which acquired some bird traits in addition to the reptilian traits they already had. Since these would be in a transitional phase, they should be disabled, defective, crippled living beings. Evolutionists refer to these imaginary creatures, which they believe to have lived in the past, as "transitional forms."

If such animals ever really existed, there should be millions and even billions of them in number and variety. More importantly, the remains of these strange creatures should be present in the fossil record. In *The Origin of Species*, Darwin explained:

If my theory be true, numberless intermediate varieties, linking most closely all of the species of the same group together must assuredly have existed... Consequently, evidence of their former existence could be found only amongst fossil remains.¹⁰⁶

Darwin's Hopes Shattered

However, although evolutionists have been making strenuous efforts to find fossils since the middle of the nineteenth century all over the world, no transitional forms have yet been uncovered. All of the fossils, contrary to the evolutionists' expectations, show that life appeared on Earth all of a sudden and fully-formed.

One famous British paleontologist, Derek V. Ager, admits this fact, even though he is an evolutionist:

The point emerges that if we examine the fossil record in detail, whether at the level of orders or of species, we find – over and over again – not gradual evolution, but the sudden explosion of one group at the expense of another.¹⁰⁷

This means that in the fossil record, all living species suddenly emerge as fully formed, without any intermediate forms in between. This is just the opposite of Darwin's assumptions. Also, this is very strong evidence that all living things are created. The only explanation of a living species emerging suddenly and complete in every detail without any evolutionary ancestor is that it was created. This fact is admitted also by the widely known evolutionist biologist Douglas Futuyma:

Creation and evolution, between them, exhaust the possible explanations for the origin of living things. Organisms either appeared on the earth fully developed or they did not. If they did not, they must have developed from pre-existing species by some process of modification. If they did appear in a fully developed state, they must indeed have been created by some omnipotent intelligence.¹⁰⁸

Fossils show that living beings emerged fully developed and in a perfect state on the Earth. That means that "the origin of species," contrary to Darwin's supposition, is not evolution, but creation.

The Tale of Human Evolution

The subject most often brought up by advocates of the theory of evolution is the subject of the origin of man. The Darwinist claim holds that modern man evolved from ape-like creatures. During this alleged evolutionary process, which is supposed to have started 4-5 million years ago, some "transitional forms" between modern man and his ancestors are supposed to have existed. According to this completely imaginary scenario, four basic "categories" are listed:

1. *Australopithecus*
2. *Homo habilis*
3. *Homo erectus*
4. *Homo sapiens*

Evolutionists call man's so-called first ape-like ancestors *Australopithecus*, which means "South African ape." These living beings are actually nothing but an old ape species that has become extinct. Extensive research done on various *Australopithecus* specimens by two world famous anatomists from England and the USA, namely, Lord Solly Zuckerman and Prof. Charles Oxnard, shows that these apes belonged to an ordinary ape species that became extinct and bore no resemblance to humans.¹⁰⁹

Evolutionists classify the next stage of human evolution as "homo," that is "man." According to their claim, the living beings in the Homo series are more developed than *Australopithecus*. Evolutionists devise a fanciful evolution scheme by arranging different fossils of these creatures in a particular order. This scheme is imaginary because it has never been proved that there is an evolutionary relation between these different classes. Ernst Mayr, one of the twentieth century's most important evolutionists, contends in his book *One Long Argument* that "particularly historical [puzzles] such as the origin of life or of Homo sapiens, are extremely difficult and may even resist a final, satisfying explanation."¹¹⁰

By outlining the link chain as *Australopithecus* > *Homo habilis* > *Homo erectus* > *Homo sapiens*, evolutionists imply that each of these species is one another's ancestor. However, recent

findings of paleoanthropologists have revealed that *Australopithecus*, *Homo habilis*, and *Homo erectus* lived at different parts of the world at the same time.¹¹¹

Moreover, a certain segment of humans classified as *Homo erectus* have lived up until very modern times. *Homo sapiens neandarthalensis* and *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern man) co-existed in the same region.¹¹²

This situation apparently indicates the invalidity of the claim that they are ancestors of one another. Stephen Jay Gould explained this deadlock of the theory of evolution, although he was himself one of the leading advocates of evolution in the twentieth century:

What has become of our ladder if there are three coexisting lineages of hominids (*A. africanus*, the robust australopithecines, and *H. habilis*), none clearly derived from another? Moreover, none of the three display any evolutionary trends during their tenure on earth.¹¹³

Put briefly, the scenario of human evolution, which is "upheld" with the help of various drawings of some "half ape, half human" creatures appearing in the media and course books, that is, frankly, by means of propaganda, is nothing but a tale with no scientific foundation.

Lord Solly Zuckerman, one of the most famous and respected scientists in the U.K., who carried out research on this subject for years and studied *Australopithecus* fossils for 15 years, finally concluded, despite being an evolutionist himself, that there is, in fact, no such family tree branching out from ape-like creatures to man.

Zuckerman also made an interesting "spectrum of science" ranging from those he considered scientific to those he considered unscientific. According to Zuckerman's spectrum, the most "scientific"—that is, depending on concrete data—fields of science are chemistry and physics. After them come the biological sciences and then the social sciences. At the far end of the spectrum, which is the part considered to be most "unscientific," are "extra-sensory perception"—concepts such as telepathy and sixth sense—and finally "human evolution." Zuckerman explains his reasoning:

We then move right off the register of objective truth into those fields of presumed biological science, like extrasensory perception or the interpretation of man's fossil history, where to the faithful [evolutionist] anything is possible – and where the ardent believer [in evolution] is sometimes able to believe several contradictory things at the same time.¹¹⁴

The tale of human evolution boils down to nothing but the prejudiced interpretations of some fossils unearthed by certain people, who blindly adhere to their theory.

Darwinian Formula!

Besides all the technical evidence we have dealt with so far, let us now for once, examine what kind of a superstition the evolutionists have with an example so simple as to be understood even by children:

The theory of evolution asserts that life is formed by chance. According to this claim, lifeless and unconscious atoms came together to form the cell and then they somehow formed other living things, including man. Let us think about that. When we bring together the elements that are the building-blocks of life such as carbon, phosphorus, nitrogen and potassium, only a heap is formed. No matter what treatments it undergoes, this atomic heap cannot form even a single living being. If you like, let us

formulate an "experiment" on this subject and let us examine on the behalf of evolutionists what they really claim without pronouncing loudly under the name "Darwinian formula":

Let evolutionists put plenty of materials present in the composition of living things such as phosphorus, nitrogen, carbon, oxygen, iron, and magnesium into big barrels. Moreover, let them add in these barrels any material that does not exist under normal conditions, but they think as necessary. Let them add in this mixture as many amino acids and as many proteins—a single one of which has a formation probability of 1 over 10950—as they like. Let them expose these mixtures to as much heat and moisture as they like. Let them stir these with whatever technologically developed device they like. Let them put the foremost scientists beside these barrels. Let these experts wait in turn beside these barrels for billions, and even trillions of years. Let them be free to use all kinds of conditions they believe to be necessary for a human's formation. No matter what they do, they cannot produce from these barrels a human, say a professor that examines his cell structure under the electron microscope. They cannot produce giraffes, lions, bees, canaries, horses, dolphins, roses, orchids, lilies, carnations, bananas, oranges, apples, dates, tomatoes, melons, watermelons, figs, olives, grapes, peaches, peafowls, pheasants, multicoloured butterflies, or millions of other living beings such as these. Indeed, they could not obtain even a single cell of any one of them.

Briefly, unconscious atoms cannot form the cell by coming together. They cannot take a new decision and divide this cell into two, then take other decisions and create the professors who first invent the electron microscope and then examine their own cell structure under that microscope. Matter is an unconscious, lifeless heap, and it comes to life with God's superior creation.

The theory of evolution, which claims the opposite, is a total fallacy completely contrary to reason. Thinking even a little bit on the claims of evolutionists discloses this reality, just as in the above example.

Technology in the Eye and the Ear

Another subject that remains unanswered by evolutionary theory is the excellent quality of perception in the eye and the ear.

Before passing on to the subject of the eye, let us briefly answer the question of how we see. Light rays coming from an object fall oppositely on the eye's retina. Here, these light rays are transmitted into electric signals by cells and reach a tiny spot at the back of the brain, the "center of vision." These electric signals are perceived in this center as an image after a series of processes. With this technical background, let us do some thinking.

The brain is insulated from light. That means that its inside is completely dark, and that no light reaches the place where it is located. Thus, the "center of vision" is never touched by light and may even be the darkest place you have ever known. However, you observe a luminous, bright world in this pitch darkness.

The image formed in the eye is so sharp and distinct that even the technology of the twentieth century has not been able to attain it. For instance, look at the book you are reading, your hands with which you are holding it, and then lift your head and look around you. Have you ever seen such a sharp and distinct image as this one at any other place? Even the most developed television screen produced by the greatest television producer in the world cannot provide such a sharp image for you. This is a three-dimensional, colored, and extremely sharp image. For more than 100 years, thousands of engineers

have been trying to achieve this sharpness. Factories, huge premises were established, much research has been done, plans and designs have been made for this purpose. Again, look at a TV screen and the book you hold in your hands. You will see that there is a big difference in sharpness and distinction. Moreover, the TV screen shows you a two-dimensional image, whereas with your eyes, you watch a three-dimensional perspective with depth.

For many years, tens of thousands of engineers have tried to make a three-dimensional TV and achieve the vision quality of the eye. Yes, they have made a three-dimensional television system, but it is not possible to watch it without putting on special 3-D glasses; moreover, it is only an artificial three-dimension. The background is more blurred, the foreground appears like a paper setting. Never has it been possible to produce a sharp and distinct vision like that of the eye. In both the camera and the television, there is a loss of image quality.

Evolutionists claim that the mechanism producing this sharp and distinct image has been formed by chance. Now, if somebody told you that the television in your room was formed as a result of chance, that all of its atoms just happened to come together and make up this device that produces an image, what would you think? How can atoms do what thousands of people cannot?

If a device producing a more primitive image than the eye could not have been formed by chance, then it is very evident that the eye and the image seen by the eye could not have been formed by chance. The same situation applies to the ear. The outer ear picks up the available sounds by the auricle and directs them to the middle ear, the middle ear transmits the sound vibrations by intensifying them, and the inner ear sends these vibrations to the brain by translating them into electric signals. Just as with the eye, the act of hearing finalizes in the center of hearing in the brain.

The situation in the eye is also true for the ear. That is, the brain is insulated from sound just as it is from light. It does not let any sound in. Therefore, no matter how noisy is the outside, the inside of the brain is completely silent. Nevertheless, the sharpest sounds are perceived in the brain. In your completely silent brain, you listen to symphonies, and hear all of the noises in a crowded place. However, were the sound level in your brain measured by a precise device at that moment, complete silence would be found to be prevailing there.

As is the case with imagery, decades of effort have been spent in trying to generate and reproduce sound that is faithful to the original. The results of these efforts are sound recorders, high-fidelity systems, and systems for sensing sound. Despite all of this technology and the thousands of engineers and experts who have been working on this endeavor, no sound has yet been obtained that has the same sharpness and clarity as the sound perceived by the ear. Think of the highest-quality hi-fi systems produced by the largest company in the music industry. Even in these devices, when sound is recorded some of it is lost; or when you turn on a hi-fi you always hear a hissing sound before the music starts. However, the sounds that are the products of the human body's technology are extremely sharp and clear. A human ear never perceives a sound accompanied by a hissing sound or with atmospheric sounds as does a hi-fi; rather, it perceives sound exactly as it is, sharp and clear. This is the way it has been since the creation of man.

So far, no man-made visual or recording apparatus has been as sensitive and successful in perceiving sensory data as are the eye and the ear. However, as far as seeing and hearing are concerned, a far greater truth lies beyond all this.

To Whom Does the Consciousness that Sees and Hears within the Brain Belong?

Who watches an alluring world in the brain, listens to symphonies and the twittering of birds, and smells the rose?

The stimulations coming from a person's eyes, ears, and nose travel to the brain as electro-chemical nerve impulses. In biology, physiology, and biochemistry books, you can find many details about how this image forms in the brain. However, you will never come across the most important fact: Who perceives these electro-chemical nerve impulses as images, sounds, odors, and sensory events in the brain? There is a consciousness in the brain that perceives all this without feeling any need for an eye, an ear, and a nose. To whom does this consciousness belong? Of course it does not belong to the nerves, the fat layer, and neurons comprising the brain. This is why Darwinist-materialists, who believe that everything is comprised of matter, cannot answer these questions.

For this consciousness is the spirit created by God, which needs neither the eye to watch the images nor the ear to hear the sounds. Furthermore, it does not need the brain to think.

Everyone who reads this explicit and scientific fact should ponder on Almighty God, and fear and seek refuge in Him, for He squeezes the entire universe in a pitch-dark place of a few cubic centimeters in a three-dimensional, colored, shadowy, and luminous form.

A Materialist Faith

The information we have presented so far shows us that the theory of evolution is incompatible with scientific findings. The theory's claim regarding the origin of life is inconsistent with science, the evolutionary mechanisms it proposes have no evolutionary power, and fossils demonstrate that the required intermediate forms have never existed. So, it certainly follows that the theory of evolution should be pushed aside as an unscientific idea. This is how many ideas, such as the Earth-centered universe model, have been taken out of the agenda of science throughout history.

However, the theory of evolution is kept on the agenda of science. Some people even try to represent criticisms directed against it as an "attack on science." Why?

The reason is that this theory is an indispensable dogmatic belief for some circles. These circles are blindly devoted to materialist philosophy and adopt Darwinism because it is the only materialist explanation that can be put forward to explain the workings of nature.

Interestingly enough, they also confess this fact from time to time. A well-known geneticist and an outspoken evolutionist, Richard C. Lewontin from Harvard University, confesses that he is "first and foremost a materialist and then a scientist":

It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, so we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.¹¹⁵

These are explicit statements that Darwinism is a dogma kept alive just for the sake of adherence to materialism. This dogma maintains that there is no being save matter. Therefore, it argues that

inanimate, unconscious matter created life. It insists that millions of different living species (e.g., birds, fish, giraffes, tigers, insects, trees, flowers, whales, and human beings) originated as a result of the interactions between matter such as pouring rain, lightning flashes, and so on, out of inanimate matter. This is a precept contrary both to reason and science. Yet Darwinists continue to defend it just so as "not to allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Anyone who does not look at the origin of living beings with a materialist prejudice will see this evident truth: All living beings are works of a Creator, Who is All-Powerful, All-Wise, and All-Knowing. This Creator is God, Who created the whole universe from non-existence, designed it in the most perfect form, and fashioned all living beings.

The Theory of Evolution: The Most Potent Spell in the World

Anyone free of prejudice and the influence of any particular ideology, who uses only his or her reason and logic, will clearly understand that belief in the theory of evolution, which brings to mind the superstitions of societies with no knowledge of science or civilization, is quite impossible.

As explained above, those who believe in the theory of evolution think that a few atoms and molecules thrown into a huge vat could produce thinking, reasoning professors and university students; such scientists as Einstein and Galileo; such artists as Humphrey Bogart, Frank Sinatra and Luciano Pavarotti; as well as antelopes, lemon trees, and carnations. Moreover, as the scientists and professors who believe in this nonsense are educated people, it is quite justifiable to speak of this theory as "the most potent spell in history." Never before has any other belief or idea so taken away peoples' powers of reason, refused to allow them to think intelligently and logically and hidden the truth from them as if they had been blindfolded. This is an even worse and unbelievable blindness than the totem worship in some parts of Africa, the people of Saba worshipping the Sun, the tribe of Prophet Abraham (pbuh) worshipping idols they had made with their own hands, or the people of Prophet Moses (pbuh) worshipping the Golden Calf.

In fact, God has pointed to this lack of reason in the Qur'an. In many verses, He reveals that some peoples' minds will be closed and that they will be powerless to see the truth. Some of these verses are as follows:

As for those who do not believe, it makes no difference to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not believe. God has sealed up their hearts and hearing and over their eyes is a blindfold. They will have a terrible punishment. (Surat al-Baqara, 6-7)

They have hearts with which they do not understand. They have eyes with which they do not see. They have ears with which they do not hear. Such people are like cattle. No, they are even further astray! They are the unaware. (Surat al-A'raf, 179)

Even if We opened up to them a door into heaven, and they spent the day ascending through it, they would only say: "Our eyesight is befuddled! Or rather we have been put under a spell!" (Surat al-Hijr, 14-15)

Words cannot express just how astonishing it is that this spell should hold such a wide community in thrall, keep people from the truth, and not be broken for 150 years. It is understandable that one or a few people might believe in impossible scenarios and claims full of stupidity and illogicality. However, "magic" is the only possible explanation for people from all over the world believing that unconscious and lifeless atoms suddenly decided to come together and form a universe that functions with a flawless system of organization, discipline, reason, and consciousness; a planet named Earth with all of its features so perfectly suited to life; and living things full of countless complex systems.

In fact, the Qur'an relates the incident of Prophet Moses (pbuh) and Pharaoh to show that some people who support atheistic philosophies actually influence others by magic. When Pharaoh was told about the true religion, he told Prophet Moses (pbuh) to meet with his own magicians. When Prophet Moses (pbuh) did so, he told them to demonstrate their abilities first. The verses continue:

He said: "You throw." And when they threw, they cast a spell on the people's eyes and caused them to feel great fear of them. They produced an extremely powerful magic. (Surat al-A'raf, 116)

As we have seen, Pharaoh's magicians were able to deceive everyone, apart from Moses (pbuh) and those who believed in him. However, his evidence broke the spell, or "swallowed up what they had forged," as the verse puts it:

We revealed to Moses: "Throw down your staff." And it immediately swallowed up what they had forged. So the Truth took place and what they did was shown to be false. (Surat al-A'raf, 117-118)

As we can see, when people realized that a spell had been cast upon them and that what they saw was just an illusion, Pharaoh's magicians lost all credibility. In the present day too, unless those who, under the influence of a similar spell, believe in these ridiculous claims under their scientific disguise and spend their lives defending them, abandon their superstitious beliefs, they also will be humiliated when the full truth emerges and the spell is broken. In fact, world-renowned British writer and philosopher Malcolm Muggeridge, who was an atheist defending evolution for some 60 years, but who subsequently realized the truth, reveals the position in which the theory of evolution would find itself in the near future in these terms:

I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in the history books in the future. Posterity will marvel that so very flimsy and dubious an hypothesis could be accepted with the incredible credulity that it has.¹¹⁶

That future is not far off: On the contrary, people will soon see that "chance" is not a deity, and will look back on the theory of evolution as the worst deceit and the most terrible spell in the world. That spell is already rapidly beginning to be lifted from the shoulders of people all over the world. Many people who see its true face are wondering with amazement how they could ever have been taken in by it.

**They said, "Glory be to You!
We have no knowledge except
what You have taught us. You are
the All-Knowing, the All-Wise."
(Surat al-Baqara, 32)**

Notes

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The religion brought by Prophet Jesus (pbuh), the true religion of those who believe in God as the One and Only God, was distorted after his elevation to God's presence. As a result, Christianity, as we know it today, is a new belief based on such misguided concepts as the trinity and the atonement for sins. These beliefs were put forward by the Church fathers at various councils, not by Prophet Jesus (pbuh), as absolute laws that must be accepted without thought, questioning or inquiry.

Over the centuries, many Christians have questioned these erroneous beliefs, which were accepted by majority vote in Church councils. Many of those who did so were dragged before the Inquisition's courts and tortured and/or executed. Today, such debates are no longer considered criminal. The concept of the trinity appears nowhere in Christian scriptures. It entered Christianity three centuries after the time of Prophet Jesus (pbuh), and it has now begun to be debated in a number of circles.

In this book, the author uses both Christian, Biblical, and Qur'anic sources to show that true Christianity is a monotheistic religion. The author, in line with the Qur'anic command to command what is good and prohibit what is evil, hopes that open-minded Christians will use the information presented in this book to question this misguided belief and return to the true monotheistic faith taught by Prophet Jesus (pbuh).

About the Author

The author, who writes under the pen-name Harun Yahya, was born in Ankara in 1956. He studied arts at Istanbul's Mimar Sinan University, and philosophy at Istanbul University. Since the 1980s, the author has published many books on political, faith-related and scientific issues. Greatly appreciated all around the world, these works have been instrumental in helping many to return their faith in God, and, in many others, to gain a deeper insight into their faith. Harun Yahya's books appeal to all kinds of readers, regardless of their age, race, or nationality, for they focus on one objective: to broaden the reader's perspective by encouraging him or her to think about a number of critical issues, such as the existence of God and His unity, and to live by the values He prescribed for them.