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## Is Jesus really God?

By BNONN TENNANT on DECEMBER 26, 2013

2 minutes to read

*A simple argument that Jesus can be no one except God.*

**T**his argument has been amended slightly in response to feedback. Some of the comment replies are therefore redundant or irrelevant, but it didn't seem right to delete them.

Because of the idiosyncrasies of Koine Greek, you could claim that the Bible never explicitly says Jesus is God.

Sure, John 1:1 says, “the Word was God”, but because Greek has no indefinite article, *theos* could be translated as either “God” or “a god”. (Needless to say, the latter is a supremely awkward translation given the structure of the sentence, but the JWs and other Arians are a determined bunch.)

Fortunately, proving that Jesus is God is very simply done. Here is one line of argument—enviably easy to memorize:

1. Jesus made every created thing (John 1:1-3, Col 1:16-17)
2. God alone made every created thing (Gen 1:1; Isa 44:24)

3. Therefore, Jesus is God

**Obviously I'm presupposing the Bible doesn't contradict itself.** But even if we don't take inerrancy for granted, it's simply unreasonable to imagine that John, of all people, was attempting to *correct* Genesis 1. Quite obviously he was assuming its *truth* so as to prove the exact conclusion I am proving also!

#### A CORROBORATING ARGUMENT

4. A created thing cannot make itself (as a moment's reflection will reveal)
5. Therefore, since Jesus made *every* created thing, Jesus is not a created thing
6. But if he is not a created thing, then he is an eternal, necessary thing (he exists because he must exist)
7. Therefore, Jesus is either [i] something with the same attributes as God, although not God; or [ii] Jesus simply *is* God
8. [i] breaks God's omniscience and omnipotence, as well as being biblically unsupported; [ii] is theologically unproblematic and biblically attested
9. Therefore, [ii]: Jesus simply is God

#### WHY TWO GODS BREAKS OMNIPOTENCE AND OMNISCIENCE

Under [i], there are two necessary, personal beings (Jesus and God), and they are not the *same* being. But if omnipotence refers to how God has no external constraint on his power, then neither Jesus nor God can be omnipotent, because each would be an external constraint on the other's power. Similarly, omniscience involves knowing every truth—but how could one of them know truths about the other's thoughts? So if Jesus is not God, Christianity falls apart. If Jesus is God, Christianity is upheld.

Take that Arianism!



You meant the Greek lacks a definite article in John 1:1.

JEREMIAH

[🔗 December 27th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-992>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-992)



The argument is sound except that it doesn't explain why the New Testament writers didn't make it and, instead, presented God and Jesus as two different beings.

MIKE  
GANTT

Be sure that I believe Jesus is God. However, your argument does have this deficiency.

[🔗 December 27th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-993>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-993)



Hey Jeremiah, what I meant was that Greek itself lacks an indefinite article, making it ambiguous as to whether "theos" in John 1:1 is definite or indefinite. That, as you correctly point out, is because the grammar of John 1:1 itself lacks a definite article before theos to eliminate that possible reading. I'm not a Greek scholar, but my understanding is that using the definite article there is redundant when it is already implicit—as it would be to any monotheistic audience.

DOMINIC  
BNONN  
TENNANT  
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Mike, I think the NT writers *did* make this argument—indeed, this is exactly what John appears to be doing at the beginning of his gospel. They don't present Jesus and God as two different *beings*, but as two different *persons*.

[🔗 December 27th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-994>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-994)



Oh dear. I'm afraid that your main argument is invalid. 3 doesn't follow from 1 and 2.

DALE  
<[HTTP://TRI](http://TRI)> 1 and 2 could be true because both Jesus and God working together made all things, but then, 3 could be false. (This is more than a thought experiment – this is what the early “logos theologians” thought – that God had some assistance in making the cosmos.)

Putting it differently, the form of your main argument is:

1.  $Fx$
2.  $Fy$
3. Therefore,  $x=y$ .

Do you see why that's an invalid form?

To get your 3, you need 2 to be that \*only\* God made all created things. (For any  $x$ , if  $x$  made all created things, then  $x = g$ .)

But this conclusion (which is also the conclusion of your longer argument) is problematic for you. “God” presumably means either the Father or the triune God. But you can't have Jesus being the same as (numerically identical to, =) either of those – not, at least, if you're a trinitarian.

Your move, friend. Most likely, you'll want to adjust 2...

God bless,

Dale

[@ December 27th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-995>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-995)



Hey Dale, so your counterargument is that we should understand the passages I've given in terms more like this?—

DOMINIC  
BNONN (3\*) God created all things through the creative agency of Jesus, but God and Jesus are separate beings.

TENNANT  
<HTTPS://BN If so, how does this avoid bitheism, given that Jesus can't be a created being himself, as per my supporting argument?

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Hey, Dominic – no, my main point is that your main argument is invalid as written, and even as fixed, has a conclusion you don't want. I'm assuming you're a trinitarian.

DALE  
<HTTP://TRI Yes, I think Jesus and God are two, are non-identical.

<http://youtu.be/9IPJqIkcDuc> <<http://youtu.be/9IPJqIkcDuc>>

About whether the NT teaches that Jesus created, let us suppose, like many since the logos theologians of the late 100s, that it does. What would you think follows about Jesus?

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Hey Dale, the argument is perfectly valid if you presuppose monotheism. If you deny monotheism, then all bets are off—but it's also hard to see why you'd care if Jesus was God either.

DOMINIC  
BNONN To answer your question, if Jesus was the creative agent but he is not  
TENNANT God, then we have a problem. I've already outlined this in the  
<HTTPS://BN article: you're left with two gods. So, do you deny monotheism? If not, allow me to reiterate my question: how do you avoid bitheism given that Jesus created everything, and by merit of this fact is not himself created?

Btw, if you believe that Jesus is the creator, then denying that he is God is scripturally inept, I'm afraid. Who else could he be except the wisdom/word of Yahweh referenced in Proverbs 8:22ff and Psalm 33:6, and who appears to people like Abraham and Samuel and Jeremiah (Gen 15:1-6; 1 Sam 3; Jer 1:1-4), and who is referred to as one and the same as Yahweh (eg Gen 15:2)? It's not like this was a New Testament invention—Jesus is all over the place in the Old Testament,. That's why John didn't need to explain what he meant by "word" to his readers. And why he could make references like Jesus "tabernacling" among us so we saw his glory, alluding to the Shekhinah glory in the ark of the covenant, which resided in the tabernacle. And why he kept having Jesus say "I am". I mean, maybe if there were just one or two such allusions, and we didn't have examples in the Old Testament of Yahweh and his word being two and yet one, then we could be in some doubt about the deity of Jesus. But...yeah, that's not the case.

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MICHAEL

This is great. I argue this at many so called churches. I thought another good argument was the wise men and disciplines worshiped Jesus (as I do). Thank you for the lesson. God bless your msg! I tweeted it so possibly the muslims will bother.

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SAM

SHAMOUN "who ALONE stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea;" Job 9:8  
<[HTTP://WWW.ISLAM.ORG](http://www.islam.org)>

BTW, just to help strengthen your case the Hebrew Bible is clear that Yahweh made all things, and created the heavens and the earth all alone, by himself:

“Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: ‘I am the Lord, WHO MADE ALL THINGS, who ALONE stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth BY MYSELF,’”  
Isaiah 44:24

it further testifies that Yahweh created for himself and for his own glory:

“I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created FOR MY GLORY, whom I formed and made.... The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed FOR MYSELF that they might declare my praise.”  
Isaiah 43:6-7, 20-21

And yet Paul says Christ is the Agent through and FOR whom God the Father created, and that Christ IS (not was) before all created things and the One who sustains the entire creation:

“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and FOR HIM. And he IS before all things, and IN HIM all things hold together.” Colossians 1:16-17 – cf. Hebrews 1:2-3

As if this weren't amazing enough, the author of Hebrews takes the following Psalm which identifies Yahweh as the immutable Creator and Sustainer,

“‘O my God,’ I say, ‘take me not away in the midst of my days—you whose years endure throughout all generations!’ Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out

like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.” Psalm 102:24-27

And applies it to Christ. In fact, he has the Father uttering the very words of this Psalm in praise of his Son!

“But OF THE SON he [the Father] says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.’ And, ‘You, Lord [the Son], laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.’” Hebrews 1:8-12

So, biblically speaking, your case is simply irrefutable.

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Great point Sam. I should have used those passages to make the argument more stringent from the start really!

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[🔗 December 28th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1001>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1001)



Dale, I’ve updated the argument to strengthen premise [2] as a result of Sam’s helpful input. You can see that since God alone created all things, and since Jesus created all things, it follows necessarily that



DOMINIC Jesus and God are ontologically identical.

BNONN

TENNANT I hesitate to say “numerically” identical, because it seems clear our  
<[HTTPS://BN](https://bnnonn.com)conceptual framework for numerical identity is insufficient to  
capture the ontology of God. There is some kind of equivocation in  
our language there, which seems to result from a built-in limitation  
to our own conceptual or experiential abilities.

I doubt this will satisfy you, as I’m sure you must be familiar with  
the work of James Anderson in this regard. But then, if the clear  
teaching of God himself about who he is won’t satisfy you, I  
wouldn’t expect anything I say, or draw on, to satisfy you either :/

[🔗 December 28th, 2013 <https://bnnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1002>](https://bnnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1002)



My thoughts on first reading this was could one say that Jesus is  
created by God and that both uncreated God and created Jesus  
created everything else. That Jesus made all things may imply Jesus  
BETHYADA is uncreated (which is my position) though he could be created and  
<[HTTP://BET](http://bethyada.blogspot.com)all things could mean all things except Jesus (as per Eph 1:22 cf 1Cor  
15:27).

Your change to God alone resolves this problem.

[🔗 December 28th, 2013 <https://bnnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1003>](https://bnnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1003)



As to your comment on John 1, it is not that there is no indefinite  
article (Greek has none), it is that it lacks a definite article which  
may imply “a god” rather than “the God”.

BETHYADA

<[HTTP://BET](http://bethyada.blogspot.com)However, there is also the issue of word order which is an issue in  
Greek that is different to English. The definite article is left off  
intentionally for the sake of meaning. Read my [post](http://bethyada.blogspot.com/2013/03/the-word-was-god.html)  
<<http://bethyada.blogspot.com/2013/03/the-word-was-god.html>> on

this. Though written by a non-Greek speaker (me) I have tried to be quite detailed in what I have understood the relevant literature to mean.

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” perfectly valid if you presuppose monotheism”


No, validity is purely a matter of structure, of the argument’s form.

DALE

<http://trinity.org> I see you’ve fixed it – good.

Now on to the problem with your conclusion. In \*your\* view, if you’re a trinitarian, Jesus can’t be identical to the one God, as the latter is triune, and the former is not. But, identical things (really, thing) can’t differ.

James’ work is indeed the best place to look, if you want to defend believing in apparent contradictions. In my view, though, it does not pan out:

 <http://trinities.org/dale/On%20Positive%20Mysterianism.pdf>  
<<http://trinities.org/dale/On%20Positive%20Mysterianism.pdf>>

Formally, his strategy is ingenious. But when it comes to the actual evidence, I claim that it seems hopeless.

Here’s the problem. You want to argue that Jesus just is God, and that Jesus and God differ. By the Indiscernibility of Identicals, which is self-evident, those are inconsistent. It won’t do, to simply claim that our concept of identity falls short somehow or other. It is a rock-bottom, undefinable part of our conceptual scheme. Note that your second premise uses the concept, as we all do constantly. Here’s a comparison. If your theology said or implied that God exists, and that he doesn’t – that won’t fly. To say that our concept of

existence is inadequate is empty – it is only a gesture at an answer, or rather, a mere assertion that there is some answer or other. The same is true, I'm afraid, in the case of numerical sameness / identity.

I strongly affirm monotheism. I deny that the NT or OT teach that Jesus created the cosmos. I do not agree that “Jesus is all over the place in the Old Testament.” To the contrary, “in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son”. (Heb 1:2)

This is not the place to argue all the relevant texts. Let me just make this historical point – when the Christian-Platonic logos theologians started teaching in the mid- and late 100s that Jesus existed at the point of creation, and that the one God created through him, this raised an outcry among common people, who considered creation to be the prerogative of God, that is, the Father, alone. They accused the elites of a new teaching, and teaching two gods. We know this because the logos theologians tell us this. This tells us a couple of things. First, at least many did not read Paul and John in the way they're usually read today. Second, they did not think that a creation argument would show that Jesus was God himself – rather, they strongly distinguished between the two, and emphasized that only the Father is “God” in the highest sense of the term. Finally, they tell us the reason why they thought God needed a helper to create, and to appear to Moses etc. – for Platonic reasons, they thought God was too transcendent to do those things, and could not, as it were, get his hands dirty in matter. This is bizarre and disturbing, but it's right on the surface in Justin Martyr – and in this they all followed Philo of Alexandria, the Jewish Platonist theologian.

My experience is that evangelicals think that there's a slam-dunk cases that the NT says that Jesus created. But they have literally not looked at other well-motivated interpretations. Here's another take on one such favorite proof text: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-ITWy5nsgI> <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-ITWy5nsgI>>

“I am” and John 1 – other big topics. On the latter, there are good reasons to take the Logos of John 1 to be not a pre-human Jesus, but rather as something like God’s wisdom, by which (as the OT says several times) he created. It is this which manifests in the man Jesus, who really comes fully into view only in 1:14. As to a divine attribute jumping down, as it were, from heaven to earth, and manifesting physically, there are preceding precedents for that kind of talk in the Apocrypha.

blog on & God bless,

Dale

[🔗 December 29th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1005>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1005)



Sam,

You say that “Yahweh made all things, and created the heavens and the earth all alone, by himself”

DALE  
<[HTTP://TRI](http://TRI)

By himself. Evidently, you consider God to be a self. If so, I say great – me too. But then, if you’re a trinitarian, you must be a one-self trinitarian:

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/trinity/#OneSel>  
<<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/trinity/#OneSel>>

The logos theologians I mentioned in my comment above, of course, would not agree that God made all things alone – as they think a lesser (but divine) being, the Son, helped. But if that were so, it would look like God would’ve wrongfully deceived the Jews, in some of those verses you cite.

I think any one-self Trinity theory is really problematic. It is a common view, though, for apologists interacting with Muslims.  
(<http://trinities.org/blog/archives/61>)

<http://trinities.org/blog/archives/61>) I've been viewing some of your stuff along those lines, and would enjoy interacting with you about some of those things some time.

God bless,

Dale

<https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1006>



Dale,

SAM SHAMOUN  
<http://WWW.ISLAM.ORG> There you go ignoring trying to appeal to philosophy in order to brush aside all the passages which I cited to affirm the point of the post. But even your appeal to philosophy doesn't help you in the least as the shellacking you have been getting at the hands of Steve Hayes from triablogue shows.

Let's see if we can try this again by having you take a stab at dealing the passages I cited and their implications as opposed to appealing to uninspired theologians.

The Hebrew Bible is clear that Yahweh made all things, and created the heavens and the earth all alone, by himself:

“who ALONE stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea;” Job 9:8

“Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: ‘I am the Lord, WHO MADE ALL THINGS, who ALONE stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth BY MYSELF,’”  
Isaiah 44:24

It further testifies that Yahweh created for himself and for his own glory:

“I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created FOR MY GLORY, whom I formed and made.... The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed FOR MYSELF that they might declare my praise.”  
Isaiah 43:6-7, 20-21

And yet Paul says Christ is the Agent through and FOR whom God the Father created, and that Christ IS (not was) before all created things and the One who sustains the entire creation:

“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and FOR HIM. And he IS before all things, and IN HIM all things hold together.” Colossians 1:16-17 – cf. Hebrews 1:2-3

As if this weren't amazing enough, the author of Hebrews takes the following Psalm which identifies Yahweh as the immutable Creator and Sustainer,

“O my God, I say, ‘take me not away in the midst of my days—you whose years endure throughout all generations!’ Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end.” Psalm 102:24-27

And applies it to Christ. In fact, he has the Father uttering the very words of this Psalm in praise of his Son!

“But OF THE SON he [the Father] says, ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.’ And, ‘You, Lord [the Son], laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end.’” Hebrews 1:8-12

Now that I have basically reposted what I had previously written perhaps you will actually address my argument. Since Yahweh alone created all things for himself, and since Paul says the Father used the Son to create all things for the Son, and since Hebrews 1:10-12 applies to the Son an OT passage concerning Yahweh as the unchangeable Creator and Sustainer, characteristics and functions which are unique to Yahweh alone, please explain your humanitarian unitarianism without butchering these passages.

I will deal with your gross distortion of Hebrews 1:2 and your highly selective sourcing of the logos theologians to show that either you are dishonest or incompetent for failing to mention the fact that fathers like Justin Martyr actually affirmed that Jesus is the Jehovah who appeared to the OT prophets and saints, SOMETHING WHICH YOU CLEARLY DENY!

📧 December 29th, 2013 <<https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1007>>



BTW, do excuse my typos and incoherent sentences. I meant to say, “there you go again appealing to philosophy without first handling the texts accurately and responsibly.” Once Dale tries to address these passages by not simply denying what they say or overriding

SAM  
SHAMOUN  
<[HTTP://WW](http://www)

ISLAM.ORG> their plain meanings by an appeal to his understanding of Being and Self, I will then move to his gross perversion of Hebrews 1:2 and his selective references of the logos theologians.

[🔗 December 29th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1008>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1008)



Dale, I am going to show why you have no business dealing with biblical issues. per your eiesgetical reading of John 1:1, can you so kind as to explain to us the significance of the preposition pros before the accusative as we find in John 1:1-2. Once you respond I will take it from there.

SAM  
SHAMOUN  
<[HTTP://WWW](http://www.islam.org)  
ISLAM.ORG>

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Dale—

Jesus can't be identical to the one God, as the latter is triune, and the former is not. But, identical things (really, thing) can't differ.

DOMINIC  
BNONN  
TENNANT  
<[HTTPS://BN](https://bnonn.com)

You're just begging the question against what God has revealed. Needless to say, I don't feel like God's revelation needs defending against your understanding of what being and identity must entail. Given that God is epistemically and ontologically superior, I'll take his word for it when he says that he and Jesus are the same being, even if I can't understand how that cashes out due to my own conceptual/experiential limitations.

It won't do, to simply claim that our concept of identity falls short somehow or other. It is a rock-bottom, undefinable part of our conceptual scheme. Note that your second premise uses the concept, as we all do constantly. Here's a comparison. If your theology said or implied that God exists, and that he doesn't – that won't fly.



Be sure to explain to God that his ontology “won’t fly” because he didn’t make you with the ability to grasp it, when you meet him in person.

I deny that the NT or OT teach that Jesus created the cosmos.

This implies one of two things: Either you’re so set in unbelief that you refuse to believe God’s revelation about himself; or you’re so incompetent at reading that you can’t actually parse the words God has used to plainly reveal his nature. It seems to beggar belief that you could become a philosophy professor without some basic reading comprehension skills, so I’m inclined to assume you are simply a stiff-necked unbeliever like the Jews who rejected the Christ. You’ve turned your personal ideas about how God must be, and your personal ability to comprehend something, into an idol that has replaced the revealed Yahweh.

I do not agree that “Jesus is all over the place in the Old Testament.”

Well, either you’re simply ignorant, or you’re again refusing to see the obvious because it goes against your idol. If Jesus is the word of God, as John plainly says, then he certainly *is* all over the place in the Old Testament, since the word of God appears frequently. I’ve already alluded to several passages, like Gen 15, 1 Sam 1 etc, but there are plenty of other instances which become obvious upon a closer reading, like the angel of Yahweh in Gen 22, who speaks as Yahweh himself.

in this they all followed Philo of Alexandria, the Jewish Platonist theologian.

Facile oversimplification of history aside, the word/wisdom as the agent of creation appears in the Old Testament long before Philo was a twinkle in his father’s eye. The word or the angel of Yahweh as El’s vice-regent is a recurring motif in Genesis, and is fleshed out

even more in later revelation. There's nothing platonic about John's use of "logos"; he is referring straight back to the logos that appears in the LXX. John was a Jew. Not a Greek philosopher.

On the latter, there are good reasons to take the Logos of John 1 to be not a pre-human Jesus, but rather as something like God's wisdom, by which (as the OT says several times) he created.

The problem for you is that the Old Testament clearly reveals this to be a personal agent distinct from Yahweh, and yet who speaks as if he *is* Yahweh—which is entirely consistent with trinitarian theology and later revelation, but completely wrecks your heretical viewpoint.

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◀ “shellacking you have been getting at the hands of Steve Hayes”  
LOL.

DALE “Let's see if we can try this again”  
<HTTP://TRI> Translation: I only want to talk about my proof-texts.

Sam, I'm disappointed that you think this is a kind of debating contest where bullying and pasting in loads of proof text are in place. I'm going to reply, briefly, in the hope that your more serious. In brief (there are a number of places you can look for more detail),

Col 1 – I note that you ignored my link, eager to get in the combobox and paste like mad – so, I'm going to leave it at that. What they said.

Heb 1: 2-3 are not a problem for my view. 8-12 is. See Buzzard's treatment of that, which gets into the difference between the LXX and the Masoretic text. Note that the whole context of Hebrews distinguishes God from Jesus quite clearly, and so it is uncharitable to read 8-12 as identifying them. The author's not that confused.

It's a well-documented phenomenon, by the way, that OT prophecies relating to YHWH are \*reapplied\* to Jesus; e.g. calling on the name of the Lord. It is simply a mistake to take this as an implication, or even a hint, that Jesus and YHWH are identical, i.e. that Jesus is YHWH himself. That would be like arguing that Jesus must be the same person as the original baby that the "Immanuel" text had to do with, back in the prophet's time.

About Justin, bluster away, Sam – I've done my homework. Yes, he thinks that Jesus is the "Jehovah" who appeared in OT times. But his view – and this couldn't be clearer – is that "Jehovah" is an ambiguous name, for either God or for the Son. See above, re: God being unable to directly interact. I say this couldn't be clearer because he says that Jesus and God are "two in number," i.e. two beings, non-identical. He's also clear that the one God is the Father, not the Trinity. Trinitarians tend to misread Justin, projecting their own views there. But he's demonstrably a subordinationist unitarian. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHnlw4iMhE8>  
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHnlw4iMhE8>>

About John 1:2, "with God" pros ton theon – John's readers would immediately think of Proverbs 8, in which lady Wisdom is "with" God when he creates. God's logos was indeed always "with" him, and \*was\* him – i.e. wasn't distinct from him. He made all things by it, etc. If that sounds like outrageous eisegesis to you, may I humbly suggest you read around a little more widely.

"I'll take his word for it when he says that he and Jesus are the same being, even if I can't understand how that cashes out due to my own conceptual/experiential limitations"

I know you probably think this is humble, Sam, but I would argue that it takes real chutzpah to assert that "God says" \*your inconsistent claims\*, that Jesus and God are numerically identical, yet differ. Camping out in evangelical tradition, and glorifying your contradiction with the name "mystery" is not the way of true

humility. The way of humility is to go back to the drawing board in how you read the texts, being open to the possibility that your theoretical commitments are generating the contradiction.

“seems to beggar belief that you could become a philosophy professor”

Sam, you should learn how to discuss without insulting, and you should pray for the patience it takes to carefully search out alternate interpretations of texts. Why are you able to spend so much time learning Islamic theology, but you're too filled with contempt to get your head around other Christian theologies? I understand your side perfectly well. I used to take your sort of view of these texts, and I was persuaded, by careful study, that that perspective is confused, and introduces confusion to the texts. That you are heaping abuse and not arguing tells me that you have decided not to look much into the arguments of my side.

The confusion I've pointed out – that Jesus and God are identical, yet they differ, is far from being my little idiosyncratic speculation. In fact, all the \*evangelical\* philosophers who've worked on this issue carefully build their understanding of the Trinity so as to respect the indiscernibility of identicals, and generally to avoid problems relating to identity. See, e.g. the work of Hasker, Craig, Davis, and Rea (<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/trinity/> <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/trinity/>>), who are certainly evangelicals, or the work of Swinburne and Leftow, who are certainly traditional, catholic Christians (I don't know if they'd claim the title “evangelical” or not). None dispute the meager and easy points I've made about identity here. You've fallen into the Hays trap: Tuggy is a philosopher, ergo what he's saying must be Evil Philosophy. Believe that if you want, but I recommend that you lose the swagger and study up on this stuff, as your Islamic opponents will be. There are speculations there, yes, as is unavoidable, but quite a lot of it is simple, sober reasoning.

Yes, I'm aware of the angel of the LORD, and the theophanies. I suggest that you consider that \*any\* OT reader would take lady Wisdom in Prov 8 as a personification of a divine attribute. This notion that OT revelation included multiple persons in God, we'll have to take that up another time.

God bless,

Dale

[🔗 December 29th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1011>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1011)



Oops – I see that above I was looking at Dominic's comment #19, and thinking it was another of Sam's. I apologize for the mistake. In my defense, the tone was quite similar.

DALE

[<HTTP://TRI](http://TRI)

[🔗 December 29th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1012>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1012)



Dale,

SAM  
SHAMOUN  
 [<HTTP://WWW ISLAM.ORG>](http://WWW.ISLAM.ORG)

Try to refrain from appealing to sympathy because that won't get you far. Neither will your appeal to Buzzard and his butchering of Hebrews 1:10-12 on the basis of his manhandling of the LXX of Psalm 102. Lord willing, I will respond to your bluster sometime during the week as time permits. Once I do it will become evident that my assessment of your inability to do serious exegesis of the biblical texts is actually spot on. So enjoy it while you can! ;-)

[🔗 December 29th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1013>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1013)



I appreciate the debate – except for the tone. Cannot each side bring forth its best arguments without including personal attacks?

MIKE  
GANTT

While I think both sides are wrong in their respective ultimate conclusions, fairness requires me to acknowledge that Dale has been more gentlemanly than his opponents.

The main weakness in Sam's and Dominic's arguments is that they want to use biblical texts and logic right up until the point that it doesn't suit them (three persons/one being is neither biblical nor logical). It is less easy for me to see where Dale goes astray because I do not know philosophy. I do know, however, that with his argument a human being ends up with all the glory that should be going to God only.

Jesus Christ is God – the resurrected God. But whether we believe He is divine or human, we should be able to agree that He/he is due all our devotion and obedience. Therefore, I urge you to argue as brothers and not as enemies – for the sake of His/his name.

[🔗 December 29th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1014>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1014)



Mike, considering what the Bible has to say about false teachers and wolves in sheep's clothing, I would say both Sam and I have been quite civil and restrained.

DOMINIC

BNONN

TENNANT

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Dale, you seem to think that the mere existence of other people who are willing to shoehorn Scripture into their preconceived theology grants your position some kind of legitimacy. But one can plainly see from Scripture and from reason that your view is illegitimate. I have no interest in wasting my time becoming intimately familiar with the intricacies of obvious falsehoods.

[🔗 December 29th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1015>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1015)



MIKE  
GANTT

Insofar as one human being is able to discern the spirit of another human being, and as mediated through the Internet where all we have to go on are words on a page, I deem Dale to be as sincere in his intent to honor God as you, Sam, and Steve Hays. All of you strike me as doing your best to serve God.

We must always remember that our Lord (and this expression “our Lord” surely applies to all four of us) was wrongly condemned for being unorthodox lest we make the same mistake with each other.

Surely obedience to Christ matters more than correct ontological understanding, as important as correct ontological understanding may be. Whoever serves Christ as Lord is serving the right cause – and is with us, not against us.

[🔗 December 29th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1016>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1016)



DOMINIC

BNONN

TENNANT

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Mike, obedience to Christ is only possible if you know who Christ is. Dale does not worship the same Christ I worship. I worship the Christ who is God. Dale does not. That’s a categorical difference.

I assume that the person who knows best what God is like is God himself. And I assume that if anything is going to be beyond my ability to understand properly, it will be ultimate reality—God himself. So when God reveals what he is like and I can’t understand it, I assume the problem is with me; not with God.

Dale, by contrast, despite being infinitely inferior to God both ontologically and epistemically, sets up his own understanding as the authority for who God can be. Then, when God reveals something different, he rejects that because it doesn’t meet his little standard. That is the basic definition of faithlessness and idolatry.

As to whether Dale is sincere, I'm not sure how that is relevant. A sincere false teacher is still a false teacher. A deluded wolf who thinks it's a sheep is still a wolf. The Jews who killed early Christians strike me as having done their best to serve God. Jihadist Muslims certainly seem sincere. Or to take tamer examples, open theists certainly claim to serve God, despite denying most of his attributes. Same for Catholics, who worship Mary and the saints along with God, while proclaiming a false works-based gospel—surely many of them are doing their best to serve God? The question isn't whether they are sincerely trying to serve God, but whether they *know* God. Because if they do not know God through faith, then all they are sincerely serving is their own idols.

[🔗 December 30th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1017>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1017)



Dominic,

MIKE  
GANTT

If X and Y both love and obey Jesus as Lord, the only difference between them being that X believes Jesus to be God and Y believes Jesus to be a creation of God, then, other than the way X and Y each address themselves to God in the prayer closet, how will their behavior outside of it differ?

[🔗 December 30th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1018>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1018)



Mike, your question systematically ignores my arguments. Behavior is not what defines us as Christians. Faith is.

DOMINIC

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TENNANT

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[🔗 December 30th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1019>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1019)





Is it not a reasonable question to ask? And do not Hebrews and James teach us that faith is the invisible motivation of observable behavior?

MIKE  
GANTT

Nevertheless, I will leave aside the question of behavior for the moment and ask you how faith in Christ as divine differs from faith in Christ as the most exalted agent of God? And if you deem faith in the latter to be deficient are you claiming that every believer in the New Testament at the moment of belief saw Him as fully divine?

As I've said, I am thoroughly convinced that Jesus is God. However, I believe that we find the quickest path to understanding His nature by faith and obedience. Therefore, when someone tells me that he trusts and obeys Christ, I know we are on the same path.

Christ (i.e. God) is revealed progressively to humanity. That progression takes place the swiftest through obedience – not through intellect and academics.

[🔗 December 30th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1020>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1020)



I will leave aside the question of behavior for the moment and ask you how faith in Christ as divine differs from faith in Christ as the most exalted agent of God?

DOMINIC

BNONN

TENNANT

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Your question answers itself. Imagine a Jew looking at the Old Testament and asking how faith in Yahweh as divine differs from faith in Yahweh as the most exalted angel of El.

And if you deem faith in the latter to be deficient are you claiming that every believer in the New Testament at the moment of belief saw Him as fully divine?

Probably not. But what would separate true believers from false ones would be their response to discovering Jesus's divinity. Do they accept it in faith and worship him as God, or do they reject it and set up an idol in his place?

I believe that we find the quickest path to understanding His nature by faith and obedience.

You seem to be making my point for me. Dale disbelieves God's revelation of himself, and refuses to submit himself to it. The very definition of faithless disobedience.

Therefore, when someone tells me that he trusts and obeys Christ, I know we are on the same path.

So when a Mormon tells you that, you know you're on the same path? That's unfortunate, since the path the Mormon is on leads to a gate labeled "Destruction".

[🔗 December 30th, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1021>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1021)



Dominic,

MIKE  
GANTT

You are attempting to alter the word of God. Paul wrote, "...if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord..." but you, in essence, write, "If you confess with your mouth God as a trinity..."

The word of God stands forever. Let us not make alterations to it.

[🔗 December 31st, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1022>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1022)



Of course, the word Lord was carried over from the Septuagint, where it was generally written in place of YHWH, the personal name of God.

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[December 31st, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1023>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1023)



Btw, I'd like to point out to anyone reading how Mike conspicuously avoids my arguments while weaseling with the text of Scripture.

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TENNANT  
<[HTTPS://BN](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1024)

Does Mike think that a Mormon who says Jesus is Lord is “on the same path” as a Christian? Mormons believe that Jesus is the spirit-child of a flesh-and-blood God the Father, that he is the brother of Lucifer, and one of three gods in the Trinity (the other being the Holy Ghost).

“Jesus” is not a catchall term you can fill with whatever meaning or person you like. He is Yahweh. If your “Jesus” is not Yahweh, the necessary ground of existence who created the universe, then he is not my Jesus, and he is not the Jesus of the Bible. If you worship him as Lord, then you are worshipping the creature rather than the creator—a creature of your own invention.

[December 31st, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1024>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1024)



MIKE  
GANTT

A Mormon who puts his faith in his Mormonism is no better off than a Calvinist who puts his faith in his Calvinism or a Catholic who puts faith in his Catholicism, but a Mormon who puts his faith in Christ is just as well off as a Calvinist or Catholic who puts his faith in Christ.

The Scriptures command us to faith, but Dominic commands us to orthodoxy. Make your choice.

[December 31st, 2013 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1025>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1025)



A Mormon who puts his faith in a created spirit-child called Jesus who was born a man via God inseminating Mary is just as well-off as a Calvinist or Catholic who puts his faith in the word of Yahweh?

DOMINIC

BNONN

Notice how Mike pays lip-service to faith, but he is actually

TENNANT

reducing salvation to a cantrip—an incantation. Say the right words

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and you're okay, no matter what they refer to.

If an atheist had a dog called Jesus who lorded it over his other pets, Mike would probably think that atheist was saved if he quipped at the pub that “Jesus is lord”.

🔗 December 31st, 2013 <<https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1026>>



When any two people confess Jesus as Lord, that Jesus of whom and that lordship of which the prophets and apostles wrote, it unlikely they will both understand all 31,103 verses of the Old and New Testaments in precisely the same way (they may not even have read them all), but there can be no doubt that they are calling on the same Lord...even at the pub.

MIKE  
GANTT

🔗 January 1st, 2014 <<https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1027>>



Dominic,

MIKE  
GANTT

You've complained a couple of times that I haven't provided detailed rebuttals to your individual arguments. I haven't thought them necessary, but since they seem important to you I have provided them in this post: <http://wp.me/p1eZz8-2nz> <<http://wp.me/p1eZz8-2nz>>

All that said, I want to be sure you understand how much I appreciate you. I am thrilled that you turned from atheism. You have a great looking blog and I'm glad you are using it to advance the gospel. I may disagree with you about the trinity, but I applaud your proclamation of Jesus as Lord and as God. He is indeed Yahweh!

My fundamental message to Christians is that we need to return to our first love: Jesus Christ. The world is in a terrible mess today. Corruption is abounding. The only hope for our generation is that Christians return to Christ. If we want the unbelieving world to give up their unbelief, their abortions, their insistence on the normalization and sanctioning of blatant sexual immorality (e.g. "gay marriage"), then we must first give up our sins. Let us therefore return to the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls. Let us cleanse our hands and purify our hearts.

God forbid that any of my challenge to you should discourage you. Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might! You have taken on a good work to proclaim His name and His glory.

📧 January 1st, 2014 <<https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1028>>



MICHAEL

I agree normalization of gay marriage is wrong but let's not forget the environment we created with "ask not tell not" could in itself create paranoia as well as anything considered "feminine" would cause division. Before this we had hardly any women which I understand now created bull-queers and ashamed victims of both sexes. Finally we get situations then and now of whitewashing a complaint or threat of or paranoia that puts a warrior in extra dangerous situation.

And then finally, why I had to respond: sin is sin and our modern society is teeming with it. I don't believe in dating. What ever happened to high school sweethearts getting married or a couple of

the same faith in a local church meeting getting married??  
[🔗 January 1st, 2014 <https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1029>](https://bnonn.com/is-jesus-really-god/#comment-1029)

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