

Is Jesus God or a god? (White vs Stafford)

Jehovah's Witnesses

By Dr. James White

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Announcer. Well, good evening. How are you? It's great to have you here and thank you, Dr. White. Oh, thank you.

Dr. James White. Former sound man.

Moderator. Yes. Current. If you're here, that means that you probably care something about the truth and regardless of your background or what beliefs that you hold to, you believe that there is a demarcation dividing line between what is true and what is false. Now today we hear a lot about tolerance, we hear a lot about how we need to be tolerant of each other, and I believe in that but I believe we need to practice negative tolerance, and that means that we can say, "Yes, I disagree with you, but I am still willing to listen to your opinion and to what you have as far as facts to back up your opinion, and we can disagree on those facts." And the best way that we can really achieve finding the truth is to have scholarly, intense debate. Do you agree?

And that's why we're here tonight and this is our third debate here, actually, excuse me, our fourth debate here in Tampa Bay. If you'd been to our debate with Dr. White and Robert Sungenis or with either one of his debates with Dr. John Sanders, you know that what you're about ready to hear and especially with the presence of Greg Stafford, is going to be a challenge of understanding and discerning what is true and what is false based upon the foundation of Scripture.

Well, let me introduce our speakers. First, to my right, Greg Stafford is a third generation Jehovah's Witness, author of "Jehovah's Witnesses Defended: An Answer to the Scholars and Critics," and three dissertations on the teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses. He is a well-known debater and speaker on topics relating to Jehovah's Witnesses and the Watchtower Society. Would you please welcome Greg Stafford.

And on my left, your right, he is the author of several acclaimed books including "The God Who Justifies, The Potter's Freedom, The King James Only Controversy." He is an elder at the Phoenix Reformed Baptist Church and Director of Alpha and Omega Ministries and a seminary professor. He and his family live in Phoenix. Would you please welcome Dr. James White.

And our moderator this evening is the Founder and CEO of the nationwide financial services organization Equity Leadership Group, whose headquarters are in Tampa, Florida. Would you please welcome Mark Graham, Sr.

Just a couple of things to the folks that are coming in, if we could please use for the rest of the evening the entrances and exits in the back of the hallway. Let's not try to utilize any here that are on the sides as it will cut off the camera angles and so forth. You'll be famous forever if you do that but let's try to use the ones that are in the back. Also, we will also have a break in the middle of our debate tonight where I always will share some things with those who are joining us tomorrow. And with that, would you please welcome Mark Graham.

Mark Graham. Well, it's certainly a pleasure to be with you all tonight and I want to thank you on behalf of the city of Tampa, for coming to our fine town and we really enjoy these kinds of events and tonight, I think, will be enlightening on both sides for sure, and I am blessed to be part of the event.

We have gone over the ground rules and the format at length prior to the meeting. Both Dr. White and Mr. Stafford are in agreement with the terms and the ground rules, and if you know these two gentlemen, you know their past, they are professionals so I expect this to be a very orderly debate and an exciting one. So the only caveat we will have here tonight is toward the end of each section I will at least give them a one minute warning and that's not to be construed from the audience as some kind of a negative, that's just to let them know for lack of clocks that we have on hand, how much time is left.

So the format's going to go like this and we'd appreciate you to have patience with us and not disrupt the meeting as it goes along. Each participant will have a 25 minute opening statement starting with Dr. White. After those 25 minute statements, there will be a 20 minute rebuttal from both sides. At the end of that, we will have a 20 minute break. Promptly after the 20 minutes, we will restart and we will have two 20 minute cross-examinations in the same order. After that, we will have two 10 minute closing sessions from each of the gentlemen, and if time permitting, we will have questions from the floor.

So with that, I'm looking forward to starting the evening as I'm sure you are and we will start with Dr. White.

Dr. James White. Well, good evening. I thank you all for being here this evening. I hope those of you in the front row received your complimentary sunglasses, OSHA has determined that sitting in the front row while I'm speaking under television lights is hazardous to your vision, and so I hope you will use those safety glasses during the debate this evening.

Our thesis this evening: Jesus Christ, God or a god? The issue is more basic than most think. We will not be arguing whether Jesus Christ is called theos tonight. Both sides admit that fact. Mr. Stafford said in a debate only seven months ago, "And so I would agree and affirm that Jesus is God both in terms of his authority and representation,

there's no question in my mind that Thomas looked at Jesus and affirmed, he said, 'My Lord and my God.' I have no problem making the same declaration of Jesus if he stood before me now." Hence, this discussion will differ in many ways from the discussions you have at the door with your average Jehovah's Witness on a Saturday morning. We will not be arguing about whether Jesus is given the name Jehovah or Yahweh as well. Both sides agree to that, though with differing emphases, again, making our discussion different than that which you might have had on your front doorstep. The issue tonight, I believe, is this: are we monotheists who believe only one true God should be worshiped, should be acknowledged as our Creator, and should be identified with the divine name, or are we henotheists who believe there is one major God, Yahweh, but lesser divinities, angels and the like, who can, in a sense, receive forms of worship and obeisance, who can, in a sense, in some sense, be called creators and who can even be called Yahweh, again, in a representational authoritarian sense. If we are monotheists, then Jesus can only be God with a capital "G," truly worthy of being called Theos, worshiped as God, acknowledged as our true Creator, and identified as Yahweh, the one true God. To believe Jesus is a god, a separate ontological god from the Father, is to deny fundamentally the truth of biblical monotheism, in fact, I wish to assert and prove this evening that to hold that Jesus is a god, small "g," is to abandon not only the historic Christian faith but it leads inevitably either to a denial of the inerrancy and coherence of the Scriptures themselves, or it leaves us without any meaningful mechanism whereby we can avoid idolatry, that is, if a creature, even a highly exalted creature but still a creature, can be described as Jesus Christ is described in Scripture, then there is no meaningful way to identify the one true God in opposition to highly exalted creatures. No means exist to avoid the great sin of idolatry. I do not believe the Bible is self-contradictory, nor do I believe the Bible is so unclear as to leave us wondering about the nature of true worship and who our Creator is, hence, are we biblical monotheists or are we henotheists who acknowledge the existence of ontologically distinct gods from the Father and that Jesus is one of these lesser divinities.

So in the brief time I have, I shall, first, defend the concept of true biblical monotheism, then I shall establish three points that in light of monotheism establish the truth of the full deity of Jesus Christ. These truths are, first, Jesus is worshiped as only God can be worshiped; secondly, Jesus is described as only the Creator can be described; and third, Jesus is Yahweh not only representationally but ontologically. But I must needs make one more comment before entering into a defense of biblical monotheism, the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. I stand before you this evening somewhat of a fossil in a modern age, a throwback in the realms of theology. I unashamedly, knowingly, and firmly confess my belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. I believe with the apostles that the Scriptures are God-breathed, that holy men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. I believe with my Lord that the Scriptures cannot be broken and to read the Scriptures is to hear God speaking to me. I say this for one simple reason: a consistent, pan-canonical approach to the Bible yields historic orthodox teaching concerning the nature of God. The vast majority of those who today teach the Bible presents differing views regarding God, the world, salvation, etc. do so from a position of denying the consistency and inerrancy of the inspired word.

Let us, then, consider the truth of biblical monotheism. There are few revelations more clearly enunciated in Scripture than this one. Only in modern times with the advent of destructive, unbelieving biblical criticism has this question regarding this foundational truth been able to be entertained. The number of passages teaching that there is only one true God, the Creator of all things, unchanging and unchangeable is far beyond our brief time this evening to consider fully, but allow me to make two important points in regards to this truth. First, since Scripture defines idolatry as such a horrible sin, then we must be able to distinguish between true and false gods on the basis of the divine truths that it gives us. We find in the great trial of the false gods in Isaiah 40-48 just such information. By revealing unique characteristics of the one true God, the false gods are exposed. And what do we read in this section? In Isaiah 45:5-7 reads, "I am Yahweh, and there is no other, besides Me there is no God. There is no one besides Me. I am Yahweh and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity. I, Yahweh, am the One who does all these." Should someone attempt to limit the force of these words by saying that all God is doing is denying the true divinity of idols, not the true divinity or existence of other gods such as angelic creatures, we simply point out the phrase "beside me is there no god," makes no sense when read "beside me there is no idol." Of course, there are idols, the point is that no idol can be considered a true God because there is only one true God, maker of heaven and earth, Creator of all things, sovereign over all things.

As we read in Isaiah 44:24, "Thus says Yahweh, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, 'I, Yahweh, am the maker of all things, Spreading out the heavens by Myself And spreading out the earth all alone.'" God alone is the Creator of all things, not just in the sense that he created all things by decreeing it to be so but while using lesser deities in the process, but in a sense that excludes any others from a role in creation. His glory cannot be divided amongst others for creation is his glorious accomplishment alone. Indeed, Isaiah 43:10 quotes God as saying, "Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me."

These words summarize true biblical monotheism. God is not merely denying that idols are worthy of worship, he is excluding from the category of God in its fullest sense anyone other than himself. To find these words, then, on the lips of the Lord Jesus spoken in reference to himself in John 13:19, and the same context of the revelation of the future in a prophetic manner, is significant indeed. So important was this truth that God even gave to the captive people of Israel an apologetic response in the language of their captors to those who would invite them to engage in idolatry. We read in Jeremiah 10:10-11, "But Yahweh is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation. Thus you shall say to them, 'The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.'" Listen most especially to the standard the true God gives his people, the gods who did not make the heavens and the earth are false gods. They will perish, pass away. The fact that God is the Creator separates him from all pretenders. Here where we read that Yahweh is the true God, the chief distinguishing characteristic listed is that he is the maker of all things. If we are going to call anyone a

true god with a small "g," we are going to have to explain why in light of passages like this.

So in light of this truth, we might rephrase the question of the debate like this: is the Lord of glory, the King of kings, the mighty God, the one worshiped by all angels and all creation, Hebrews 1 and Revelation 5, the uncreated Creator, the true God or a changeable, non-eternal creature, a small "g" god? This is our debate this evening. But as time is fleeting, let us consider why in light of the truth of biblical monotheism we believe the Lord of glory, Jesus Christ, is rightly called God in the fullest sense, one that makes him worthy of our worship and our praise.

First, Jesus is worshiped as only God can be worshiped. Those who deny the full and proper deity of Christ are very quick to point out that the term "worship, proskuneo," does not necessitate in its bare usage true and full religious worship and, hence, does not prove the full deity of Jesus Christ when he is the object of it. Surely, if that were the extent of the argument, this response would be correct. The term "proskuneo" most definitely can be used in non-religious context to refer to mere obeisance or honor. The question is: can it refer to full religious worship and is it used this way of the Lord Jesus? The answer is very plainly, yes. We know that Peter refused to accept proskuneo in Acts 10, and we know the angel who showed John many wondrous things likewise refused it in Revelation 19 and Revelation 22. The angel, instead, commanded John to proskuneo God, worship God. When Satan tempted the Lord Christ at the beginning of his ministry, he desired that the Lord bow down and proskuneo him but Jesus refused and said we are to proskuneo God alone. In each of these instances, we see the term referring to true worship. To give this kind of worship to any creature, even a highly exalted angel, is wrong.

It is the religious context, the intention of the heart, that makes this form of proskuneo different from the secular non-religious usage. Indeed, Mr. Stafford, likewise, has recognized this distinction for in his debate against Robert Bowman, he made reference to the uses of proskuneo found in the Old Testament given to the kings of Israel, but then said, "Not, of course, the same worship that God himself is given in the religious sense." Now the simple fact of the matter is, Jesus Christ is not only worthy of such worship but he is clearly seen to receive it in the Bible.

As time is short, I will give only one example but it is, I truly believe, beyond refutation. In Revelation 4:9-11, we see a vision of the highest form of worship as it exists in heaven. God is seated upon the throne and the pure, holy inhabitants of heaven are involved in constant worship before that throne, mirroring, in many ways, the vision of Isaiah. We read, "And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.'" Not only does John here use proskuneo in its highest and fullest form, but we read of the ascription of worthiness, glory, honor and

power, all terms commonly associated with true religious worship, which is to be given to God alone.

If this is not the kind of worship that is never ever to be given to any created thing, then we have no possible way of defining true worship from the biblical texts. And yet keeping this in mind, let us look quickly at Revelation 5, beginning in verse 6, "And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain... When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb... And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.' Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.' And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.' And the four living creatures kept saying, 'Amen.' And the elders fell down and worshiped." This is the continuation of the scene we saw in chapter 4. The context is still heavenly worship but now we see another object of this worship, the Lamb who was slain. The same complex of words including worthiness, power, honor, glory and blessing appear with their direct object being the worship and adoration of the Lamb. He who sits on the throne and the Lamb are the objects of the worship of every created thing, including the highly exalted heavenly beings. I submit that not only here do we have worship that is utterly and completely inappropriate for any creature no matter how exalted, but that if, in fact, Jesus Christ, the slain Lamb, is indeed only an exalted creature, then it would have been his absolute duty to reject the worship of the created universe here given to him, and instead to take his place as a creature in the adoration of God upon the throne, but such is not what we see for the Lamb is, indeed, worthy of the worship of every creature, hence, he is God, not a god.

Secondly, Jesus is described as only the Creator can be described. We have seen that God, himself, has informed us that his role as the Creator of all things is central to how we, his people, are to distinguish him from all false gods. He alone is the Creator of all things and we exist only because he has given us being. Now there is no question that the Lord Jesus Christ was involved in creation, both sides would agree. How else can we read such words as these from Colossians 1, "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

But some argue that Jesus is not the Creator in the very sense that makes God God, that is, it is argued that Jesus is a secondary creator, an instrument in God's hands, a master worker, yet himself a part of the creation. How can such a position be maintained in light

of Paul's words to the Colossians? It is argued that God is the active agent in creation with the Son as the passive instrument, hence, creation takes place through Christ. But does such an argument stand up to scrutiny? Let's consider the doxology found in Romans 11:36 which says, "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." And likewise Hebrews 2:10 says, "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings." There is no question the term "God" is here being used in both passages in the highest absolute sense, and yet in both passages "all things," the same phrase used in Colossians 1, are said to be through him. Does this mean there is yet another higher God above God himself who is using him as a mere instrument? Or is the whole argument based upon improperly assuming that instrumentality implies inferiority?

The Apostle Paul was a monotheist. Yes, he consistently recognized, as all Trinitarians do, the means by which the Father and the Son are differentiated from each other. He never taught, for example, the Father took on flesh to suffer for our sins; in God's eternal decree, the Son voluntarily took that role. And so just as Paul viewed the Father as the one from whom the work of salvation issued as from its source, and the Son is the one in whom it is accomplished, the Savior, and the Spirit is the one who applies the work to God's people. So, too, he differentiated between the Father and the Son in the work of creation in 1 Corinthians 8:6, but it is completely arbitrary to assume that if we exist from and for the Father, that the Son is made a mere creature by our existing and living through him. These terms refer solely to the differing roles taken by the Father and the Son, not to an essential inferiority of the Son.

So I return to the statement of Paul in Colossians 1, that all these things exist for the Son. Please, my friends, how could such ever be said of even the most exalted creature? These words describe the Creator, not a creature. We will enforce this point as we briefly present our third demonstration, the full and true deity of the Lord Jesus. Thirdly, Jesus is Yahweh not only representationally but ontologically. A number of times, the New Testament writers apply passages from the Old Testament to the Lord Jesus in such a fashion as to identify him as Yahweh, always, of course, carefully distinguishing him from the Father as the doctrine of the Trinity teaches.

John teaches us plainly in John 12:41 that when Isaiah saw Yahweh seated upon his throne in Isaiah 6:1-2, that he was, in fact, seeing the glory of Christ, but most importantly for us, in Hebrews 1:10-12, a passage that can only be applied to Yahweh, a passage that refers to his eternity, his immutability in contrast to the creation itself, is applied to Jesus. Mr. Stafford has argued in his writings that this does not mean Jesus is Yahweh in the fullest sense, since earlier in Hebrews 1, a passage about a Jewish king has been applied to Jesus without making Jesus that Jewish king. While this is true, it does not address the actual point. Kingship was not unique to any one Jewish king. There have been many kings, so applying a passage about kingship to Christ would refer only to the fact that he is the King of kings. But the passage applied to Jesus from Psalm 102:25-27 is about Yahweh alone, that is, only Yahweh is eternal, only Yahweh is immutable, only Yahweh remains the same while all created things pass away. Such words cannot be

applied to any created being in inspired Scripture. It is plainly the intent of the writer to the Hebrews to establish the utter and complete supremacy of Christ over all the created order and he does so by not only saying all of God's angels are to worship Christ in chapter 1, verse 6, and calling the Son God in chapter 1, verse 8, but by applying a passage to the Lord Jesus that identifies him as the eternal and unchangeable Creator, God not a god.

This is further established when we consider another passage where Christ is identified as Yahweh, that being the tremendous Carmen Cristi, Philippians 2:5-11, and by reference to this passage in closing, we can likewise provide a response to one of the most common, though erroneous, forms of argumentation against the deity of Christ. This passage teaches us that while the pre-incarnate Son possessed equality with God in eternity itself, existing not merely in a spiritual form but in the form of God himself, he did not consider that equality he had something to be grasped or held onto at all costs, but instead he made himself of no reputation. The Greek term "kenoo" that is used here, is never used by Paul literally but instead is always used metaphorically as the text itself indicates, for this emptying is done voluntarily, that is, it is something Christ does and it is done by taking the form of a man and by being made in the likeness of men. Some have argued that what the passage really means is that Jesus ceased to being God or a god, but such involves a terrible misreading of the text. These are actions Jesus undertakes voluntarily and they describe for us how the glorious one seen in Isaiah 6 could walk amongst the sons of men as Jesus of Nazareth. He took the form of a man and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

The grand truth of the incarnation, the mystery of how the Lord of glory could be crucified will come up in our debate tonight many times, for the vast majority of arguments against the deity of Christ are derived from noting his own divinely free act of taking on human flesh, and note that it is because of his accomplishing his task as Redeemer, in dying that substitutionary death on behalf of God's people that he is given the name which is above every name, so at the name of Jesus every knee bows in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Paul knowingly and purposely pulls from Isaiah 45:23 where Yahweh speaks of his own self-glorification and applies this to the exaltation of the risen Savior. Every knee bows to Christ and yet all is to the glory of God the Father. Is this Yahweh's glory being divided? No more than it was divided in John 17:5 where the Son in his pre-incarnate state shared it with the Father. You see, when someone says why is Jesus given the divine name, they are forgetting the incarnation and humility of Christ and the glory that was his before that voluntary self-humiliation. We will see how important this point is many times this evening. Though some might dismiss as bogus the great truth of the incarnate Son, the Lord of glory, the Word made flesh, it is a plain and biblical teaching. Jesus truly became flesh but that great act of condescension does not change the fact that before time itself, he shared the very glory of God alongside the Father. He was the eternal Son fully divine.

So what are we to conclude this evening? The debate tonight addresses the most fundamentally elements of the Christian faith. Are we monotheists who proclaim to the

world one true and almighty God? Do we believe God when he asks us, "Who is like Me?" Do we dare answer that obviously rhetorical question by saying, "Well, there are many like You, and, in fact, when it comes to worship, creatures can receive basically every kind of praise and adoration that You do"? Or when it comes to who the Creator is, there are creatures who can be said to be the ones through whom we were made and for whom we were made, in fact, the divine name itself can be given to creatures as well? Surely, this was not the intention of the rhetorical question, "Who is like Me?" The answer to that question is simple: there is none like him. So can we truly bear to have Jesus Christ, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, beginning and end, first and last, the Lord of glory, the Creator of all things, the one to whom every knee bows and every tongue confesses, the one who says, "Ego eimi," and the soldiers fall back upon the ground, the Word who was in the beginning and who was seen by Isaiah seated upon the throne receiving the adoration of the cherubim and seraphim, can we truly bear to see him placed in the category of the finite, the limited, the created, so that we cannot join the created order in bowing and worshiping him in the fullness of heart as seen in Revelation 5? I say that we cannot and the Bible prohibits our doing so. Thank you very much.

Greg Stafford. It is my pleasure to be here tonight and speak with you on this subject. I am very grateful to Dr. White and Alpha and Omega Ministries, Michael F. in particular, for helping to arrange this evening.

This subject is obviously of critical importance to Christians and those interested in the study of Christianity and Judaism, but why is it a question at all? Why after 2,000 years do we still ask the question is Jesus God or a god? Why does anyone still even take the side of those who would suggest that he's anything other than God after a presentation such like Dr. White gave, or after the many councils that have taken place over the years that have established traditions in Christendom that uphold that teaching that Jesus is, in fact, God, Jehovah, part of a Triune being? The subject this evening, of course, is something that will help explore the reasons why that is still a subject of debate, and why I deny that Jesus is, in fact, ontologically equal with the Father and is not, in fact, Jehovah God. That may sound strange and it may sit uncomfortably with some of you, and the reason for that is because the whole concept of monotheism, polytheism, carries with it a lot of baggage, a lot of negative thought and connotation that unless you're able to get past, you're really not going to be able to give a fair hearing to some of the subjects or texts that we discuss.

What might some of these texts be? Well, we've heard some discussion, and part of my opening statement does overlap with some of the things I'm going to bring up in my rebuttal and that's not by design, it's simply my intention to bring out to you in the beginning of my opening statement some reasons why I need you to try to give some thought as to why it might be possible that Jesus is a second god. It's a foreign concept to many who don't accept that because I've talked to thousands of them over the past 15 years, but it's not that difficult to grasp when you look at the Scriptures in light of what I'm going to say this evening.

Let's talk, for example, about a specific scriptural text and I'm going to quote a few Scriptures directly because sometimes when I quote them from memory or when others do so, we leave out certain points that are just essential in conveying the actual idea. For example, in Isaiah 43, starting in verse 10, Jehovah says, "'You are my witnesses,' is the utterance, 'even my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and have faith in me and that you may understand that I am the same One.'" This is the key point and I'm going to get right to it because there's so much important information we need to cover that I'm going to try to just stick with that which I want you to focus on directly. But notice this point, "Before me there was no God formed, after me there continued to be none. I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no savior."

A couple points of interest here. When we read this text, we might come away with the idea that there's only one God because before God there was no other God formed, and after him there continued to be none. But what's this idea of formation have to do with the point? If you read the context of Scriptures like this, you will, in fact, find that they are very specific in addressing idols or particular gods of religious groups and nations surrounding Israel. To think any other way is to deprive this text and others like it of its context, and if you don't read it in its context, you're going to be able to look at it in light of a variety of different views, not many of which might have anything to do with its historical intent.

What else might you notice here? "Besides me there is no savior." Now that might just be something that you would think is simple to understand, only one savior, God, and yet in the Hebrew Scriptures we find various references to Israelites like Ehud and Benjamin, who are called saviors, exact same Hebrew word, moshiah, used here of Jehovah, used of them. And yet there is no other savior but Jehovah, so you start to see how the Bible speaks at times using negative phrases when, in fact, it's not trying to exclude all others from being considered or described the same way as the subject here, but what we're talking about is a different type of application, a different degree of usage. It's something very common, actually, in ancient and modern literature. But the point here is that there are a lot of Scriptures that do deny the existence of other gods and for me to get up and try to explain or defend my position as to why Jesus is a second god and ignore texts like these would be futile so I'm going to get right to it and discuss these texts and explain to you why I consider all of these texts, and not only will do so this evening but in my writings, but the reason we have to make this point is because unless you see that these texts do not, in and of themselves, deny the possibility that a second god can exist alongside Jehovah, then there's no point in going any further, and I will contend that every single text that you will find in the Hebrew Scriptures that denies the existence of other gods will every single time have a context that is limited to a particular group's religious deities.

And that's also why you'll find texts in the Bible that refer specifically to angels as gods, Psalm 8:5, Psalm 82, other texts that refer to divinities, and these aren't just general references, just casual references that can be disputed, in fact, in John 10, I think you'll find something very interesting and this lends itself with my point as to why Jesus is, in fact, not God ontologically but a god ontologically, and often God functionally, a point

I'll develop later on. In John, there's an account where Jesus is disputing with the religious leaders of his day, the scribes and Pharisees, and they accuse him of something very interesting and relevant to our discussion this evening. I'm sure most of you are familiar with this account, it's a text I brought up twice in my debate with Robert Bowman and it's a text that he twice ignored; I'm assuming this evening we will get a more detailed discussion of this text in light of how I'll present it.

John 10, beginning in verse 31, it says, "Once more the Jews lifted up stones to stone him," that is, Jesus. "Jesus replied to them: 'I displayed to you many fine works from the Father. For which of those works are you stoning me?' The Jews answered him: 'We are stoning you, not for a fine work, but for blasphemy, even because you, although being a man, make yourself,'" *theos*, which may be translated either "God or a god." The New World translation and several other Bibles including the New English Bible translate it "a god," some god. Let's go with the translation God, capital G-o-d. You, although being a man, make yourself God," capital G-o-d. "Jesus answered them: 'Is it not written in your Law, "I said: 'you are gods'"? If he called 'gods' those against whom the word of God came, and yet the Scripture cannot be nullified, do you say to me whom the Father sanctified and dispatched into the world, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, I am God's Son?" Now think about this just for a moment. If the Jews accused Jesus of claiming to be God, capital G-o-d, which most modern translations would have you believe, what's the point of him referring to Psalm 82 in reference to others as gods? How does that help his argument one bit? It doesn't at all. If I were a religious leader in that day, I'd look back and I'd say, "Well, look, our claim is not that you're claiming to be one of these gods, these judges, angels, or even false gods. It doesn't matter what kind of gods those are in Psalm 82. We claim that you are calling yourself God, capital G-o-d." So essentially Jesus would have just had no point at all.

Now let's change it again and go back to a translation that says "you claim to be a god." "We do not stone you for a fine work, but for blasphemy, because you, although being a man, make yourself a god." In answer Jesus said to them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I said: "You are gods'"? If he called 'gods,' if he called those against whom the word of God came 'gods,' and yet the Scripture cannot be nullified, do you say to me whom the Father sanctified and dispatched into the world, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, I am God's Son?" Now that makes sense. The point there is that, look, what's the problem here? We all know that in the Scriptures others are called gods. You, either he's referring to the Israelite judges of old, angelic gods who are spoken of in the book of Psalms as, in some sense, forming a counsel of divinities around Jehovah, or even if it was just false gods, the point is he used that category of divinities to support his claim. He put himself in that category of divinity. He didn't quote a text that referred to God Almighty as being God and it was fulfilled in himself, which he could have done, he quoted a text that referred to other inferior secondary gods, separate ontologically from Jehovah, to support his claim. That's the claim I'm supporting this evening, that Jesus is, in fact, a god separate from Jehovah. His claim was to be a god separate from Jehovah, and he had every right to do so scripturally as he himself showed.

There's other Scriptures in the book of John that help us appreciate this idea of why it's not a problem to accept Jesus' individual unique divinity, which is what I'm defending, by the way. I do not deny his deity. I am defending his individual, unique deity separate from Jehovah God. Dr. White is claiming that Jesus is the same God as the Father, that he is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, we're not talking about the Trinity but we're discussing what it means when you call Jesus God in this context, that there is no division of nature between the persons of the Trinity in this Godhood. I am saying they are divided and that is clear from the Scriptures I'm going to share this evening.

In John 8, one other Scripture that is very important in terms of discussing this idea of monotheism and whether or not I am broaching that topic by suggesting that Jesus is a god separate from the Father. In John 8:38-41, another discussion with the Jews, Jesus says, "What things I have seen with my Father I speak; and you, therefore, do the things you have heard from your father." In answer they said to him: 'Our father is Abraham.' Jesus said to them: 'If you are Abraham's children, do the works of Abraham. But now you are seeking to kill me, a man that has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the works of your father.' They said to him: 'We were not born from fornication; we have one Father, God.'" Now wait just a second, in verse 39 the Jews said "our Father is Abraham." In verse 41, they say "we have one Father, God." Well, what's the problem? Did the Jews think Abraham was their God and Father? No, they used the term "father" within a few verses with two completely different senses even though they claimed they only had one father. So there's not a problem at all for a biblical monotheist to hold that there's only one God in one very exclusive and unique sense, and at the same time maintain that there are other gods in different senses, completely separate from the way in which we view that one unique being as God in the same way they could view God as their one Father and still acknowledge Abraham as their father, without confusing the identity or the sense in which each of them were a father to them.

Once you understand that and you get the idea of how the Scriptures use negative terms like "no other" or "only one," then it is a little more easy to discuss texts that call Jesus or others gods because then we're not dealing so much with the problem of monotheism or there being no one else who can be called this or that except this one being. Now we have an opportunity to discuss texts that we can assess the sense in which or the degree to which the meanings attached to it, and determine if it's the same. As Dr. White alluded to earlier, we all agree that Jesus is called Theos or El or called God using the biblical terms in Scripture, but what does that mean? What sense should we give them? What sense did Jesus give the use of the term when he referred to the text in Psalm 82? Clearly it was different from how he would use it of his own Father, and yet he used it in his own defense as well.

Let's take a look, then, at a Scripture that does, in my opinion, apply the term theos to Jesus, and this might be a surprise to some of you because the text is debatable, Hebrews 1:8. It's a quotation from Psalm 45:6-7, and the text is debatable but, in my opinion, I believe it is probably easier to read as a vocational reference in calling the subject God, and in this case it says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever," Hebrews 1:8, "and the

scepter of your Kingdom is the scepter of uprightness. You loved righteousness, and you hated lawlessness. That is why God, your God, anointed you with the oil of exultation more than your partners." Now notice this, the author of Hebrews is making a series of applications of Old Testament texts to the Christ and what text does he choose in applying the term "theos" to Christ? Did he use a text that applies the term "theos" to Jehovah in the Old Testament to Christ in the New? No. He used the text that applies the term "theos" to an Israelite king and that's the text he uses and applies to Christ.

It's the same text that also carries with it the qualification "your God," that is, the God of you. In other words, he has a God above him. So you not only have the qualifying application of a text using the term "theos" of an Israelite king, but you have that same text coming with it, or the same text has with it a text that qualifies the God-ship itself. So it's curious, don't you think, because here we have a few isolated opportunities of where the New Testament writers actually do attempt to point out something about Christ's divinity and the selections they make in doing so are very curious. They're certainly not the kind you would expect of someone who is almighty God.

Let's take a look at another text, Hebrews 1:1-3, just a couple of verses previous. Notice this, "God who long ago spoke on many occasions and in many ways to our forefathers by means of the prophets, has at the end of these days spoken to us by means of a Son." Now let's stop there for a moment. This tells us several things. God who long ago spoke on many occasions and in many ways has at the end of these days spoken to us by means of a Son. The "God" here is clearly the Father because it's talking about his Son. And the God who is spoken of here is the one who spoke long ago and on many occasions and in many ways through the prophets and at these last days. We're talking about the Father. So every time you see God speaking, it's the Father according to this text here.

And it goes on and says, "whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the systems of things," which we'll get to in a moment in relation to ideas of creator-ship. "He," that is, the Son, "is the reflection of his," that is, God's, "glory and the exact representation of his very being." Now this is critical because at heart of our debate here tonight is the idea of ontological division, that is to say that we are dealing with two separate beings, the same as you are sitting next to a person, a human being in one chair and a human being in another chair. Two human beings. A division in nature. You're both as fully human as the other but there's two of you. According to this text, Jesus Christ is a copy of God's being. He's not of the same being, he is a copy of it. This is an irrefutable text. There are no grammatical problems. There are no semantic difficulties. There is no other way to interpret this text. If there is, I'm sure we'll hear it in about 15 minutes. But if we don't, then we have a real problem. This text cannot be set aside. To me, it is irrefutable.

So when we're dealing with texts like this, you're not going to find the God who is so described and eloquently described by Dr. White, I should say, in lofty terms called a copy of someone else's being. That just doesn't happen, my friends. Jehovah God is not a copy of anyone's being. But there is someone who's a copy of his being and that's his Son Jesus Christ.

Another important point to make is that in the Bible the phrase "one God" is used several times, actually three times, I believe. Twice the reference is very specific, once it's implied and it's 1 Timothy 2:5 which says, "There's one mediator between God and man, one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ." But in Ephesians 4 and 1 Corinthians 8, it's very specific. Let's turn to 1 Corinthians 8:6 since it was also alluded to earlier and it ties in with the point that I'll be making next. Starting in verse 4 it says, "Now concerning the eating of foods offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world and that there is no God but one. For even though there are those who are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many 'gods' and many 'lords,' there is actually to us one God, the Father, out of whom all things are and we for him; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are and we through him." The standard reply is, "Well, if the Father, if only the Father is God, then Jesus is the only Lord." But that's not the argument being made here. That's a misrepresentation there, not that Dr. White makes that but others have. The point is that we have an identification here of the one God, the Father. There is one God, this is biblical monotheism. The view I espouse suggests that there is only one God in the ultimate supreme sense of the word in the Scriptures and that is the Father, but that there are others in the Bible who are properly called gods, in the case of his Son most especially in light of Hebrews 1:3, but none of them occupy the position and certainly none of them share the essence or nature that the Father has as the one God. That's why he's the one God and no one else is so described.

I'm not going to get into, obviously, the rebuttal phase of my point because this is my opening statement so we'll have to wait until my next turn to discuss certain specifics of some of the comments made by Dr. White, but let's take another look at a familiar Scripture, John 1:1. That's actually when I'll go ahead and quote, I think we all can be safe with that. We all are aware of the controversy surrounding that text. Is the word a god or God? It's simple. What does the text say? "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was," either he was "God" or he was "a god," correct? If he's God, then he's the God he was with and none of you believe that. That's why even though, as we'll discuss later, you will say the Word was God, you don't really believe it. What you mean by that, or what Trinitarians mean, I don't mean to put you on the spot directly but I've spoken with so many of you for so long I feel comfortable doing that, is that he's a person of God, divine, fully equal in terms of nature and being with the Father. That's not what the text says, does it? It either says he was "God" or "a god." Now he's with God so, to me and many others, it's very clear that he has to be a separate god. If he's not a separate god, then he's the same God and we're still trying to figure out who he's with. Now you might just say he's with the Father. That's not what the text says, though, does it? It says he's with God.

So the distinction is made by John in terms of theos, not Father, Son and these personal terms. If that was allowable, then we might have an issue. The text is very clear, the Word was with the God, the Word was God or a god. There's a distinction made by John through the use of the article and that is a big distinction. It's not meaningless. It's not that every time you have the word "theos" used without the article or with the article it has to

be a god or God, but there's a difference when you're trying to make a difference. When there's two persons there, two beings, and one of them is ha theos and the other one is theos, that's significant, and do you know what? That's the only time in the entire Bible that's ever done. The only time. So do you think it's significant? Probably. Probably.

Let's take a look at Colossians 2:9, again, another text that's very clear in terms of describing the divinity of Jesus Christ. Different translations word this differently. I don't particularly care for the New World translation rendition but it says, "because it is in him that all the fullness of the divine quality dwells bodily." I would prefer "deity" or "that which makes one a god," because that's actually what the word means. There's really no difference at all between that word and theiotes which is used in Romans 1:20, although Dr. White has asserted so in his book. I contradicted that in my second edition. I'll leave that to him to carry that discussion further.

The point is that Christ has within himself all the qualities that make one a god. Now you might say, "Why 'a god' and why not 'God'?" Well, that's what I say. Why does it have to be all the qualities to make one God because the term actually means all the qualities that make one a god. That could be God or a god, the point is, Christ has them all. Christ is separate from God. He was with God in the beginning. He is an individual, unique, full deity. Now again, now you might be thinking back to the idea of monotheism and polytheism but since we've covered that, that's not a problem. The point is that the Scriptures do teach several things very clearly, that there are no gods on the same level as Jehovah God. The Father is the one God. There is a sense in which Jehovah the Father is different from everybody else. There's monotheism. He is unique. The one being in that class is the Father. Outside of that, it's safe to accept the existence of other divinities because that's what the Bible teaches. Jesus Christ is a divinity. It cannot be denied. But he's not the same God as the Father. He's not the one God.

So what we have to do when we're evaluating these texts and another text, of course, Dr. White mentioned, Philippians 2:6-9, it doesn't have to mean the form of God or the Word was God, it could be the form of a god, the Word was a god, and that's the point I'm trying to make, that unless there's clear and convincing evidence to show that Christ is, in fact, the exact same God as the Father, we should not hesitate to set aside our preconceived views about monotheism and polytheism and acknowledge the possibility that Jesus may, in fact, be an individual distinct deity from the Father.

Moderator. At this point, we'll start the 20 minute rebuttal with Dr. White.

Dr. James White. We just heard asserted that each of the passages that we see in the Old Testament regarding the fact that there is only one true God had a unique context which, of course, is true, and had a unique historical context which is also true, however, if it was being asserted that that means that since it had a historical context in regards to a particular false god or false idol, that we cannot as a result of that, derive a principle of absolute monotheism, then I would point out that in regards to that, the Bible itself would have to continually be being written to deny the reality of every new god that comes along. If we cannot hear what God says when he says the people of Israel, the reason you

don't go after the Babylonian gods, the reason you don't go after the Egyptian gods is because they aren't true gods in the first place because they did not create the universe. "I alone am God because I alone created all things." If we can't take that and then 2,000 years later say, "Well, if we have a god, someone is promoting a god who did not create all things, then he is a false god," then we cannot learn anything from Scripture at all. This whole position would, in essence, mean that the Bible would have to be rewritten over and over and over again. We can derive general principles of absolute monotheism from what the Scriptures teach us given the revelation that we have looked at.

Now we heard it said that, "Well, the Bible calls angels gods." Actually, each one of those passages is very very easily disputed. For example, one that's very important and I want to spend some time on John 10 and Psalm 82. I'm certainly not going to have a problem doing that because this is a passage that I have had to deal with for quite literally now, sadly, decades in dealing with our LDS friends in Salt Lake City. This is one of their favorite passages because they will utilize this to say, "See, there are many gods. We can become gods. Jesus himself taught so, look at John 10." And it's been asserted, "Well, look at what we have here in Hebrews 1:8 And these two passages, the inspired writers pull these passages that don't apply to the almighty God but to these lesser gods." Well, is that really the case? Well, Mr. Stafford has admitted that it's very easy to read Psalm 82 and recognize that the people that are in view here are unrighteous judges. They are the judges of Israel. Just read the Psalm, it goes on to say, "How long will you judge unrighteously?" It talks about widows and orphans and it talks in the next verse about them falling like any one of the princes and dying like a man. These are talking about human judges, they're unrighteous judges. So why does Jesus cite this? Well, it's not because he's saying, "No, I'm just a god like you all are gods." What is he doing? He is applying this passage to them. They are the unrighteous judges. He says, "How do you convict Me of blasphemy when the Father has anointed Me?" He's identifying them as the false gods, as those who are the unrighteous judges in Psalm 82. This isn't some passage where somehow Jesus is saying, "Well, see, I'm just a god like judges are gods." That's not the intention of Jesus' rebuttal at all. He is, in fact, bringing charges against his accusers in that passage.

So you don't have angels being called gods here, the gods here are those who were judges. And why are they called gods? The very next verse says "you'll die like a man." Is anyone confused that what the Scripture is saying is that these are true divinities? Is this really a parallel to the way that Jesus is called God, as being the Creator, as being the one worshiped by all created things? Surely not. Instead, they're called gods because they are given God's authority to judge amongst the people and they will be held accountable for how they utilized that authority. So John 10 does not establish that Jesus somehow views himself as merely a modern example of the use of "god" in Psalm 82. In fact, he's not applying that to himself at all in that way, he is bringing a charge against his Jewish opponents at that particular point in time.

Now then we're told, "Well, Hebrews 1:8," and I was very glad to see that it was said, you know, this probably is referring to him as God but it's using it in the vocative form but, you see, it's about the king and it obviously was talking about "amongst your fellows,

God, your God," so on and so forth, that means that Jesus is somehow in some shape, way or form a lesser deity. But remember, we need to recognize the nature of truth. We cannot atomize a passage of Scripture and say, "Well, let's analyze just this verse over here," and then remove it from what this verse over here says and this verse down here says. We looked at two sections of Hebrews 1. Remember, you've got Hebrews 1:1-3, you've got Hebrews 1:6 where all the angels of God worship Christ, you have Hebrews 1:8 where he's called God by the Father, and then you have Hebrews 1:10-12 where he's identified as Jehovah using a passage about a unique characteristic of Jehovah.

So we have to look at all of that, this is a part of a singular argument, and so what would be if that was an argument, remember, Hebrews is an apologetic work, Hebrews is a work where a person is trying to make a point. Would it be in the best interest for the writer of Hebrews to make a point wherein he's basically saying that Jesus is actually just like angels and others like that in Hebrews 1:8? Of course not. He is establishing the supremacy and superiority of Christ. And to follow 1:8 with 10-12 which applies that passage about Jehovah to Jesus, obviously indicates the sense in which 1:8 is to be taken.

This also is true in regards to 1:3. We were told that Hebrews 1:3 is an irrefutable text. Well, I would definitely agree it is irrefutable but the question is what does it mean? What does it mean? Does it mean merely copy? The Greek term is charakter of his hypostasis. The charakter, does that mean just a mere copy like you would get at a copy store? Are we saying, "See, all this is saying is that Jesus is obviously lesser than the Father if He is merely a copy, He's a separate ontological god." We heard it said that we are defending the unique deity of Jesus this evening, that Mr. Stafford is. Well, I would point out that what that means is defending the idea that Jesus is a separate God created by the Father, less than the Father and not worthy of the fullest form of worship than the Father. That's a very different sense than historic Christianity has understood the term "deity of Christ."

But does Hebrews 1:3 establish the inferiority of Christ? Well, let me ask you something: how can even the most exalted creature be the charakter? That was a term that was used of the stamp that would be left by a person's signet ring. We don't have these things anymore, they were neat when we had them. My mom, this shows how old I was, used to have this little "W" and she would melt wax on the back of Christmas cards, some of you are old enough to remember this, you can't do it anymore because the postal machines will eat them, but you melt wax on the back of the Christmas cards and she'd put this "W" in the drying wax and it would leave an imprint that would be identical to that "W," to that thing, of course, a mirror image. They had signet rings, you'd do the same thing into the wax to demonstrate ownership of something. Well, let me ask you something: how can any creature be the charakter of the infinite God? Is not Jehovah's hypostasis, his substance, his being, is not infinite? How can Michael the archangel be anything but a very poor copy? We have to read this word to mean "poor; partial; limited; small copy," because remember, folks, no matter how exalted you make Jesus, the divide between God and creation is between he who is eternal, unchanging, and self-sufficient in and of himself and everything that he has brought into existence, and that divide is massive. So how can anything that exists on this side be the charakter of him who alone exists on this

side? I think the passage is irrefutable but it is not irrefutable in establishing that Jesus is somehow a god.

I think the same is true in 1 Corinthians 8:6 and since we're looking at these passages, it might be good to look at it because I think this really does speak to our issue this evening. 1 Corinthians 8 many have identified here another fragment of the hymns of the church, an early confession of the church in verse 6, and specifically we read, "yet for us," and let's back up to verse 5, "For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords," who is he talking about? So-called, those that are called gods. He's talking about the idols of the world. "Yet for us," who are we? Christians who have God's truth. "Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him. However not all men have this knowledge." Not all men have this. What knowledge is this? That this is how God has revealed himself. Look at the parallelism between 5 and 6, "as there are many gods and many lords, but for us there is only one God, there is only one Lord." There is where the parallel is. This isn't somehow saying, "Well, I'm just going to use God or the Father and I'm going to make him superior in that way." It does make him different. Yes, the Father most definitely, Paul most definitely uses the term God of the Father most of the time, sometimes he uses it of the Son, and most of the time he uses the term kurios, Lord, of the Son. These are the ways he distinguishes.

If we do not just assume unitarianism, let's say just for sake of argument that there are two divine persons and God wants to reveal himself to us, is he not going to do it in such a way that we can distinguish between those divine persons? Just simply to say, "Well, Jesus is different from the Father." The doctrine of the Trinity has taught that from the beginning. We recognize that Jesus is different from the Father, the question is does that make the Son inferior to the Father? The Father never took on flesh. Jesus did. Does that make Jesus superior to the Father? Jesus voluntarily made himself of no reputation. The Father never voluntarily made himself of no reputation, does that make Jesus superior to the Father? Of course not. The difference is we admit and recognize, but then we recognize in light of biblical monotheism that because Jesus Christ is described as our Creator, because Jesus Christ is worshiped as our Creator, because the name Yahweh is given to him, that obviously we are not talking about merely a secondary deity in the Lord Jesus Christ. But not all men have this knowledge, not all men know that there is only one true God who has revealed himself to us in the Christian Scriptures, and so they worship false gods and idols.

We did here that, well, John 1:1 differentiates between the Son as theos and the Father. Yes, it does but remember something: no matter how you determine all of the grammatical argumentation, I would argue that the third clause of John 1:1 describes the nature of the Logos, the Word. He is divine. He is deity in the fullest sense because I also believe that he is eternal and that John 1:1a describes that. But remember something, this is the part of the prologue of John and there is a parallel, it's called bookending, you make a statement here, then you have the prologue, and then you repeat your opening statement, in essence, in verse 18 of John 1. And what do we have there? In John 1:18,

we have the Logos again described to us, the one who became flesh in verse 14, and he is described as the monogenes theos, translated in various ways as "unique God, God the only Son," but the point is he is described as the one who has made known the Father.

No one has seen God at anytime, John says. Well, wait a minute, people saw God in the Old Testament all the time. There are a number of references. Isaiah saw Jehovah sitting upon his throne, lofty and lifted up, Isaiah 6. Well, that's why John will tell us in John 12:41 the person he saw was Christ. But you see, someone will say, "Well, see, He's differentiated from the Father." I certainly hope so. He is the one through whom we have knowledge of the Father. He is the one who has voluntarily taken the role in the eternal covenant of redemption of being the one who reveals the Father to us. He is the unique Theos, but that does not make him merely a theos like an angel. Jews would never have spoken in this way in the Scriptures. This is not their language. This is not their worldview in any way, shape or form.

Colossians 2:9 is a tremendous passage but I would argue that, again, if we read it within the context of Colossians where Paul is arguing against that proto-Gnostic movement that is coming into the churches where these people are saying, "Yes, Jesus is a great person, he is one of these eons, he's one of these creatures that is powerful and godlike." If we recognize, again, the apologetic nature of the epistle, we will not interpret Paul to, in essence, play right into the hands of his opponents, for if all Paul is saying is that "for in Him all the fullness of that which makes a god a god dwells in bodily form," then he is not only abandoning the monotheism that we've already established but he is, in essence, on a position where he cannot argue with his opponents for they would say, "Well, certainly." They would disagree with the bodily part but you're left in Colossians 2:9 with the bodily aspect being the only element of Paul's argumentation and that's not his point. He's saying the fullness of deity dwells in him in bodily form.

Now who is deity to a monotheistic Jew? I think we all know the answer to that question, and so when we consider this issue, I want to bring us back to what I said initially: are we monotheists who believe that only one God exists who is worthy of our worship, being acknowledged as our Creator, and being identified as Yahweh, or are we henotheists and as henotheists, what message do we have for the world? Whose name do we proclaim? What are we doing when we encounter other religious movements and their gods? How do we present biblical truth against all the religions of men when we have to admit, when we have to say, well, our foundational documents, that which we believe comes from God directly, actually doesn't give us a clear means of recognizing who he is? I submit to you, that in my opening statement I have laid out an argument and we need to have it, it needs to be rebutted fully for there to be any chance of the thesis of Jesus being a god to succeed this evening and, that is, we need to have an answer given to us. How can we avoid the sin of idolatry? If it is wrong to give the highest form of worship to Jesus Christ, what in the world is going on in Revelation 5? And if you can look at Revelation 4 and then you can look at Revelation 5 and say, "Well, it's very obvious that in Revelation 4 we have true religious worship going on, but in Revelation 5 we don't." Upon what basis? Upon what basis? Exegetically, where do we derive this from the text?

And Mr. Stafford began by saying what he wants you to do is to consider that it might be possible that Jesus is a separate ontological god from the Father, a second god. I do not, I cannot begin to understand how that is not, in essence, saying it might be possible that henotheism is true. And some might say, "Well, that has pejorative connotations." I don't know what other term to use. It accurately represents the idea of one major god but then the existence of minor gods who are acknowledged and, in some sense, worshiped, done obeisance to, communicated with, play some part in the scheme. I don't know how else to describe the term. I'm not using the term to try to raise emotions, I'm using it to describe the position as accurately as I possibly can. That's what this debate is about this evening, for obviously if someone says Jesus is "a god," they must believe in some way, shape or form in henotheism functionally, and I say to you, the Scriptures do not teach that. When Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8 not all men have this knowledge, what he's saying is we know that while there are many gods and many lords out there, for us, one God the Father, one Lord Jesus Christ. We exist for him. We exist through him. Yes, they've taken different roles in regards to creation. Yes, they've taken different roles in regards to redemption. Now I'm awfully glad that they did for it was the Son's great love that caused him to voluntarily make himself of no reputation and to take on human flesh. Thank you very much.

Greg Stafford. I'm going to tell you what's going on in Revelation 4 and 5 right now. I've been holding off on that and waiting on it. There's something I hope you noticed when we read that whole account during Dr. White's opening statement but if you didn't, I'll be sure to point it out right now.

Going back to Revelation 4. He referred to verses 9 through 11 and whenever the living creatures offer glory and honor and thanksgiving to the one seated on the throne, the one that lives forever and ever, the 24 creatures fall down before the one seated on the throne and worship the one that lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne saying, "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God," etc. New World Translation as Jehovah, the Greek text says "Lord." Then he used that as a basis for reading Revelation 5:6-14. I never once saw the word "proskuneo" used towards anybody directly in that entire account. Maybe I missed it. Let's take a look.

"And I saw standing in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders as though it had been slaughtered, a lamb having seven horns and seven eyes which mean the seven spirits of God that have been sent before the whole earth. And he went at once and took it out of the hand of the One seated on the throne. When he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb," that's not the word proskuneo, "and each one had a harp and golden bowls that were full of incense. (The incense means the prayers of the holy ones.) And they sing a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, for you were slaughtered and with your blood you bought persons for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and you made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they are to rule as kings forever and ever.'" The text goes on, "I saw and I heard a voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them was myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands saying with a loud

voice: "The Lamb who was slaughtered is worthy to receive the power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing." No mention of proskuneo. "And every creature that is in heaven and on earth and underneath the earth and on the sea, and all the ones in them, I heard saying: 'To the One sitting on the throne and to the Lamb be the blessing and the honor and the glory and the might forever and ever.'" No mention of proskuneo. "And the four living creatures went saying: 'Amen!' and the elders fell down and worshipped." There's proskuneo.

Not once in that entire account did you have a proskuneo reference directly applied to anyone but the one seated on the throne. At the very end, you have a general reference to worship and that's supposed to be the convincing argument that's going to lead us to believe that no creature is so exalted and worthy of the kind of worship that the one seated on the throne receives? He never receives it, not in this context. That was all implied. You read that as much as you want and you will never find a reference in there to the Lamb being given the same kind of worship being given to the one seated on the throne back in Revelation 4:9-11.

So let's not operate under a misunderstanding here. The Lamb is worthy to receive blessing, riches, glory and honor because he was slaughtered and bought persons for God out of every tribe, tongue, nation, people on earth. God is worthy to receive worship because he created all things and because of his will they existed and were created. So we'll talk about the relationship between those two in creation a little bit later on, but there's nothing anywhere in here that suggests that the Lamb was ever given directly proskuneo. Not once. Not in that context. So the argument never gets off the ground.

Let's go back to John 10 for just a second because Dr. White did, in fact, address that point but I don't believe his answer was sufficient or satisfactory and I'll tell you why, because it seemed to suggest that he simply was referring to the Jews as a category of unrighteous judges and condemning them based on their actions. That's not necessarily the case, in fact, there's a number of arguments that can be shown that this, in fact, does apply to angelic beings, perhaps unrighteous judges, maybe even false gods. It doesn't matter. Remember the question: how does Jesus' use of this text answer the charge? Dr. White did not answer that question. He suggested an application of the text being made by Jesus but I didn't see how that made Jesus' point in answering the Jews' charge.

Let's take a look again. Verse 33, "We are stoning you, not for a fine work, but for blasphemy, even because you, although being a man, make yourself God or a god. Jesus answered them: 'Is it not written in your Law, "I said: 'You are gods'"?' Now the claim, the charge, "you claim to be a god. Is it not written in your law that you are gods?" You see, there's a charge, there's an answer. That's the relationship going on here. Anything else and Jesus is not answering the charge. In fact, he goes on, "If he called 'gods' those against whom the word of God came, and yet there's no problem, do you say to me whom the Father sent forth that I blaspheme, because I'm God's Son?" Now we know he's answering the charge. Why? Because of the charge of blasphemy. "You because of blasphemy, because you though being a man make yourself a god, you say I blaspheme

because I said I'm God's Son?" He's answering the charge. He does that by quoting a text that calls others gods. That's what's going on here.

Now if Dr. White would like to readdress that later, fine, but Jesus is making use of a text that calls others gods in his own defense of their claim that he claimed to be a god. If it's not a legitimate use of the text, then Jesus didn't legitimately answer their point. I believe he did and that's why he used that text and not some other text that called God God, or a messianic reference like Isaiah 9:6, how easy would that have been? Why that text? Why Psalm 82? Because that's the kind of god he's claiming to be, not in terms of unrighteous human judge but in terms of a divine authority which is what those judges were. Jesus' godship is different from the kind of Godship that which God himself possesses and he proved that by quoting this text. He didn't have to do it. He did it.

Let's talk about a couple of other texts that Dr. White mentioned. John 12:41 refers to several Scriptures in Isaiah, actually the whole context of John 12 is talking about Isaiah 53, Isaiah 6. Dr. White suggest that in John 12:41 when it says that Isaiah saw his glory and spoke about him, it's talking about the glory that's referred to in Isaiah 6 about Jehovah's skirts filling the temples and his glory being noted by all. I don't think that's necessary at all. In Isaiah 53 in the Septuagint, Isaiah 53:13, it makes a very specific point that the Messiah would be glorified, and all throughout John 12 it talks about Isaiah and the messianic references in Isaiah 53. All throughout, it's talking about the future glory of the Messiah and how he would remove the sins of many. That's the glory that Isaiah saw, the glory that the Messiah would bring to humankind by atoning for our sin, and he would be glorified as a result of his resurrection. There is nothing that proves anything at all in relation to Isaiah or John referring to Isaiah 6 exclusively, in fact, I don't even think it's a good argument.

Next if you move to Hebrews 1, Dr. White used verses 10 through 12 as a basis for explaining Hebrews 1:3 and 1:8. I have no problem with that. The point is, what is Hebrews 1:10 through 12 talking about? It's talking about laying the foundations of the heavens and the earth. This is something that we don't deny. Christ was and is described in Proverbs 8 in his pre-human form as being a master worker. This is not denied by any of the early church fathers, in fact, it's often spoken about. Christ's role in creation is certainly well-known and it's consistent with what's described here. It also talks about how they would perish and he would remain continually. It's not talking about how he's eternal, it's talking about how he's never going to die and that's how he's different from anyone else. He's now immortal since his resurrection. "They will be wrapped up and removed but he will remain the same for your years will never run out." That's the point being made here. If the point here is to identify Christ as Jehovah the Creator, then why in verse 2 does it say that God is the one who made all things through his Son? That's the role Christ had in creation. There must be some consistency here. What we have are a series of points being made about a unique being, Christ, that are not true of anyone else except for those from whom the application is made, namely Solomon, Jehovah, and persons of that kind.

So there is no one else we could have applied the text from to prove that Christ is immortal because no one prior to Christ was immortal but Jehovah. Even in the Septuagint, there is a variation that suggests a messianic application of this text but there's no problem at all in applying this text to Christ for those purposes. The text doesn't tell you why it's being applied to Christ except for the language that's used and that, I contend, is for the purpose of showing that Christ is immortal and that his years will never run out. He'll never die. This isn't a king who's going to be enthroned and one day die and have to be replaced. He's the King eternal. That's why in verse 8 it begins with the reference to his throne, "your throne is forever." The permanency of Christ is what's at stake here, my friends. We're not talking about an identity of Jehovah with Christ. How absurd would that be since it says that the one identified has a God in verse 9? "That is why God, your God, anointed you." God does not have a God. Jehovah doesn't. That's just absurd to even suggest and yet that's what we would be suggesting if we're going to make that claim.

So there's no problem at all in merging these verses together and interpreting them in light of each other, but let's do so correctly. Let's not jump to conclusions and add things that aren't in the text itself. That Dr. White referred to Hebrews 1:3 and talked about how he didn't need to refute it, I didn't hear him explain it in a way that suggested anything other than what I said, though. All he seemed to imply was that, "Well, if he's an exact copy, that must mean he's just as eternal because God's infinite and his being is eternal, therefore if you're an exact copy, you have to be eternal as well." Well, that's interesting. I didn't realize that being a copy of something meant you had to transfer along with it the same time or age as the original. Usually when you have a copy, the very notion of copying suggests a temporal distinction. The ring is obviously in the wax and was put forth and the symbol on the ring was before the symbol on the wax. Any notion or suggestion of a copy must imply a temporal distinction. It doesn't need to be further defined or explained, it's obvious. To suggest that a copy, even an exact copy, has to have the same age as the original is just absurd. What kind of copy is that? But he is a copy, that's what the text says and Dr. White's illustration was perfect. It's exactly what the word means, character, a signet ring that's sometimes used to place a seal in a wax, but that shows you that they're not the same God. It shows you that they're not both eternal as well because one is a copy of the other. And there's no question about what we're talking about in terms of what being a copy of, a copy of God's being, and that's what the argument is about, a distinction in being or nature. These terms are very simple and used by the Bible writers to convey very simple concepts and notions and we don't need to get bogged down and suggest these ideas that somehow a copy must involve a transference of age.

So these texts still stand unrefuted in terms of my position that there is a division in nature. If there's a division in nature, there are two separate divinities. If Jesus used the text that refers to other gods in support of his claim to be a god, that has to be answered. If Paul says that Jesus is a copy of God's being, that has to be answered, not just set aside and suggest that, well, he's really a copy, then he's exact in every respect. Well, that's not how copies work.

This idea of Colossians 2:9 and the fullness of that which makes one a god existing in Christ is further supported by the idea that Paul makes in Colossians 1:19, that God decreed that this fullness dwell within him. Now Dr. White has a very interesting rebuttal to this comment in his book and that is that it's a different fullness that God decreed dwell in Christ and the fullness that makes him a god in Colossians 2:9. So apparently there are two fullnesses that dwell in Christ. I'm not exactly sure what the other one is but in Colossians 2:10 it says that the believers are possessed of the same fullness. Now I find it hard to believe that there's any other fullness in mind than the same fullness referred to in Colossians 2:9, and that's why Peter suggested that they would also be partakers of the divine nature.

Christ is a divine being. Those who become spirit beings and rule beside him in heaven will be so as well. Obviously they're not as powerful, they're not as old as Christ himself or even the angels, but that doesn't keep them from becoming spirit beings like them. And again, when we're talking about angels or created beings, where is this notion of a creature in the Bible discussed that suggests that they just can't be exalted high enough to really matter? I don't find that anywhere. You mean to tell me that an exact copy of Jehovah God himself isn't worthy of glory and honor and blessing? I find that incredible to suggest that anyone could think of a copy of Jehovah God as anything other than something so magnificent and powerful that to suggest that they're not worthy of almost everything that Jehovah God himself is worthy of, and that is exactly what Jehovah God suggests by the way he allows those others to treat his Son.

In Hebrews 1:6, it doesn't just say the angels worshiped the Son, it says God says "let all the angels worship him," *proskuneo*. This is something God allows for his Son. I don't know how many of you have children in the audience, we're not just talking about some angels, some created being, we're talking about God's special Son, his firstborn. Now some may say, "Well, you know, it's not really, he's not really a firstborn literally, it's just preeminence." Really? Then who's God's real firstborn? Shouldn't that be someone of importance, don't you think, given the importance attached to firstborn in the Bible? Don't you think that God... someone had to be his first creation. Who is it if it's not Jesus Christ himself? And if it's not, why are we talking about that one? Where is the special place given to him?

It is Jesus Christ and that's why he's talked about the way he is. He's God's firstborn Son and there's no reason at all why he shouldn't be given all of the praise and honor and relative worship that his position as King of God's kingdom deserves. There's nothing wrong with that, there's nothing idolatrous about it because the only idol that Christ represents is the very image of God himself. Colossians 1 says so. The image of the invisible God. And if that's an idol, then I'll worship it because that's what the Bible tells me to do. I'm not coming to the Bible trying to figure out how I can fit my religion with it and my concepts. If the Bible tells me to do something, then I'm going to do it, but the Bible tells me he's God's firstborn and he's God's image and that he so perfectly reflects God's will and attributes so that I should look to him and give him my respect and worship, then that's what I'm going to do. Why? Because for the very reason Paul said, to the glory of God the Father. It would be idolatry if it was to the glory of Christ himself

but it's not and that's the key. It's not idolatry because everything we do to worship or show honor and respect towards Christ is a reflection on how we would worship and treat his Father. He said so, so many times. He was not here to gain his own will. He was not here to teach his own teachings. Everything he did and taught and showed was from the Father. Everything we do towards the Christ goes through him to the Father.

So we do not have these problems, this problem of idolatry in terms of setting up a second God and worshiping him in place of God. Christ is the manifest image of God in everything he does and his even appearance according to the Scriptures. So these aren't problems that we actually have to face, they're imaginary, they're conjured up. Not that they're done so by an ill motivation but they're misleading ideas because, again, this is a difficult concept. It's easy to think of God in terms of having exclusive devotion and only having one being and not being complicated with other secondary individuals, but this idea of secondary and creature and you get caught up in the rhetoric that suggests that there's some impropriety involved in giving a creature this kind of worship. Again, this is a perfect being, sinless, exact representation of God but a representation nonetheless. If the Bible says that's okay, then it's okay.

So again, we still are left with the problem of trying to explain how Christ is the same God as the Father when the Bible never says so. But yet the Bible does tell us that Christ is an individual deity. He was with God and was a god. As far as what "a god" means in that text, it's very simple, it either means he was God, namely the Trinity, because there's only one God, right? If you believe in the Trinity, there's one God. That's the Trinity. If Christ was God, he was the Trinity or you don't mean God when you say God, and that's what I meant by that earlier. I mean God when I say God, or a god. By God, I mean the Father. One God the Father, just like Paul said. When I say a god, I mean a god, an individual deity. So in the case of John 1:1, you have a very clear instance of Jesus being with God and being a god. You can't get around the fact that he's either identified as God, capital G-o-d, and he'd have to be the Trinity or the Father in that case, or he's a god. There's no other way to get around an indefinite or definite semantic and that's something I'll bring up in my cross-examination a little bit later on. Thank you.

Moderator. Okay, that concludes the beginning. We will take a 20 minute break. Mike, would you like to [cross talk].

Announcer. Oh, also, we are going to have a Q&A session and that's going to be 20 minutes at the end. I will state right now, you are going to have 20 seconds to ask a question. You must ask a question. This is not a time for you to preach. If you do start preaching in any sense, we will stop you, okay, because we have paid a good amount of money to bring these gentlemen here and it's them that we really want to hear. You may ask your question but after that, that's the end of it. There's no interchange that's going to be allowed. You have to ask it right away. Mr. Graham will control that so it's up to him when you're stopped or not, okay? But from then, let's go ahead and introduce Mr. Graham again.

Mr. Graham. Welcome back. We're now going to enter into the next part of the debate which will consist of two 20 minute cross-examinations. Our participants will remain seated and we will start with Dr. White. Thank you.

Dr. James White. Thank you, sir. Mr. Stafford, I believe it is your position that John 12:41 does not identify Jesus as Yahweh because you believe John to be referring to Isaiah 53 in the suffering servant rather than Isaiah's vision of Yahwen upon his throne. Is that a correct summary of your position as found on page 176 of your book and I think in your last statement?

Greg Stafford. It is correct and I believe that this statement in John 12:41 with respect to the glory that Isaiah saw is not a reference to Isaiah 6 but a reference to Isaiah 53. Correct.

Dr. James White. Okay, if that is the case, could you explain why it is that the Septuagint, that Isaiah 6:1 uses all the key terms found in Isaiah 12:41 including idon and doxo which means glory, and says the house was filled with his glory, all terms not found in Isaiah 53? Why then assert John is referring to anything other than Isaiah 6?

Greg Stafford. Because it's not true that those terms are not found in Isaiah 53. As I mentioned, Isaiah 53:13 in the Septuagint does use the verbal form of doxa in reference to the glorification of the Messiah. So that's one point that the words are, in fact, used in Isaiah 53:13 of the Septuagint which John not only uses sporadically but heavily in John 12, and specifically in terms... was there another part to your question?

Dr. James White. Yes, specifically I was asking why in light of the fact that the Septuagint in Isaiah 6:1 says that, "I saw the Lord," and it specifically says, "I saw His glory," in the exact same term and as a substantive, not a verb there in the Septuagint. Why would you believe that he's quoting from something else when it's very clear he's quoting from the Septuagint there?

Greg Stafford. Because he goes on to say that he saw his glory and spoke about him. Where did he speak about him in Isaiah 6?

Dr. James White. I can't answer your question during my cross-examination.

Greg Stafford. Well, that would be my question. That would be a basis for....

Dr. James White. If you'd like to ask me that question during your section, I'd be happy to do that.

Greg Stafford. So my point would be, then, that the term for "glory" is used in Isaiah 53 and Isaiah 6 but that in Isaiah 53, that is where Isaiah speaks about him relative to the glory that is seen.

Dr. James White. In your book, "Three Dissertations," page 216 you write, "Also, to truly take on the weaknesses and limitations of humanity, Christ would have to have given up that which would have prevented him from really owning such human limitations, namely his divine nature intrinsic to which are attributes that cannot coexist with the intrinsic attributes of human nature, and therein lies the great fallacy of the Trinitarian incarnation." Is that a correct citation?

Greg Stafford. Yes.

Dr. James White. Two questions based on that. First, is it truly your position that Yahweh is incapable of the act of incarnation in the Trinitarian sense, specifically this act resulting in one person with two natures? And secondly, would not the historic Trinitarian exegesis of the text which sees the participles *labon* and *gonomenos* as circumstantial modals answer the very objection you have raised regarding the voluntary self-humiliation and limitation of the incarnate Son who is eternally equal with the Father?

Greg Stafford. I'm not certain whether or not it's possible for Jehovah to take on or be a part of the incarnation in the classic Trinitarian sense. That would be my answer to the first question. My answer to the second question, I'm not sure what the point is that you're making with respect to the Greek words you used.

Dr. James White. Have you ever examined the fact that the participles *labon* and *gonomenos* explain how it is that the emptying took place?

Greg Stafford. Oh, I see what you're saying. I don't think that's a problem. The fact that Christ emptied himself by taking the form of a man makes the same point. If you are a man, you are not God therefore you are devoid of that which makes you God, thus a man.

Dr. James White. But isn't that just going back to what I just asked, and that is, that seemingly it is your assumption that God is incapable of doing this. What if God could, wouldn't your response be circular?

Greg Stafford. No, because God is not man therefore if he becomes man, you can't have.... Based on my knowledge of the Scriptures and understanding of theology and metaphysics, if one becomes a man, that one is no longer God. If one is God, one is no longer a man. They are two different categories of being.

Dr. James White. So from your perspective, then, it is a given that cannot be questioned that God cannot be incarnate, hence he cannot both be God and man. That is a fundamental presupposition of your understanding?

Greg Stafford. Based on my limited knowledge of metaphysics and theology, yes.

Dr. James White. Is it your position that Jesus was an exalted angelic creature and properly called a god?

Greg Stafford. At what point or in what text?

Dr. James White. Well, is it your position that today he is an exalted creature and properly called a god?

Greg Stafford. Yes.

Dr. James White. Would it follow that you, likewise, believe Michael or Gabriel would be properly called a god, small "g," as well?

Greg Stafford. Not in the same sense as Christ.

Dr. James White. Why would that be?

Greg Stafford. Because they are not exalted to the same position as Christ.

Dr. James White. So the term "god" has something to do with a relative exaltation?

Greg Stafford. The meaning of "god" does have something to do with the level of authority or position that one occupies.

Dr. James White. Well, where does the Bible define where that cutting off point is?

Greg Stafford. It doesn't.

Dr. James White. Okay. If all of creation can bow before a created being, lauding that being with glory, honor, majesty and blessing, proclaiming his worthiness, how can we recognize idolatry?

Greg Stafford. You can recognize idolatry by the fact that whatever idol is the object of attention either takes away from and takes upon itself that which is rightfully due to God or does not.

Dr. James White. How do we know what is rightfully due to God if you can use every term such as power, glory, honor, blessing, proskuneo of one who is not truly God in the fullest sense?

Greg Stafford. Because you can use those terms to describe one who has demonstrated those attributes in line with God's purpose, recognizing at the same time that all of those attributes and the actions done to demonstrate them were done not to further the glory or position of the one individual but that of God himself. An idol would not do that.

Dr. James White. When in Revelation 4:8 we read, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, the One who was and is and is to come," did I understand your response to me at the beginning of your rebuttal period to be that that is not an act of worship?

Greg Stafford. In Revelation 4:9-11 that is an act of worship.

Dr. James White. Okay. What about Revelation 4:8? The term proskuneo is not used there so when these creatures are saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come," obviously paralleling Isaiah 6, are you saying that worship is not going on there because the term proskuneo is not used?

Greg Stafford. My point was that you made a point about the use of proskuneo in the context of those other actions being done towards the one seated on the throne, and then proceeded to make a parallel with the actions done towards the Lamb in chapter 5, implying that this use of proskuneo and the associated actions surrounding these events somehow imply that the proskuneo given to the Lamb, which is never given to the Lamb in this context but yet it seemed you implied that it was, was of such great significance because of all these associated actions that it could only be the proskuneo due to God alone. My point was that since proskuneo was never given to the Lamb directly in this content, your point was moot.

Dr. James White. But is it not fundamental to your argument that proskuneo itself has to be used for your argument to be relevant?

Greg Stafford. It's fundamental to your argument. I pointed out that it wasn't there and therefore it was a fundamental flaw.

Dr. James White. Okay, so the whole point I'm trying to make, I'm trying to understand what you're saying here because in Revelation 5:14 when it says the elders bowed down and worshiped, this is after all created things address him who was sitting upon the throne and the Lamb. Would you agree that the phrase "and the Lamb" is in verse 13?

Greg Stafford. Yes.

Dr. James White. Okay, so upon what textual exegetical basis do you believe that the proskuneo of verse 14 all of a sudden ignores the Lamb?

Greg Stafford. I'm not saying it ignores it, I'm saying it doesn't make it specific to either one or the other or both. You asserted that it was specific to the Lamb at least, and so that would be a question you would have to answer.

Dr. James White. Is it your position that in Philippians 2:6-7 the pre-human Jesus gave up an equality or similarity of form or nature with God instead of choosing to exploit it for his own gain as did Satan, and that this similarity of form had to do with his spiritual nature, not an actual ontological equality with the Father? I was almost quoting your book there.

Greg Stafford. Yeah, you were absolutely correct all the way up until the end because I would not see a difference between his ontological nature and his spiritual...the two things that you said at the end I would see as the same so....

Dr. James White. Okay, but you would say that the pre-human Jesus gave up an equality or similarity of form or nature with God?

Greg Stafford. Correct.

Dr. James White. Okay. If the form of God in Philippians 2:6 does not imply ontological deity in the Trinitarian and monotheistic sense but only a spiritual nature shared by angels or whatever other created beings, does it not follow that all angels who have not sought to become equal with God would serve equally well as examples of humility for Paul?

Greg Stafford. Not in the same sense that Christ did.

Dr. James White. Why would that be?

Greg Stafford. Because the angels did not give up the kind of form and existence that Christ had which is a more exact correspondence toward God and therefore giving up a more lofty type of existence, and they also did not endure the same type of life and death that Christ did on earth, thus serving as a much more finer example.

Dr. James White. Except you went on to his life on earth, but at the point of the kenosis, kenoo, if that was simply going from a spiritual nature to a human nature, then why wouldn't any angel who does not seek to hold to his equality of form with God, why isn't that an equal example of humility?

Greg Stafford. Because no angel did what Christ did in giving up that form.

Dr. James White. Did not some angels seek for an equality with God?

Greg Stafford. Yes.

Dr. James White. And hence fell?

Greg Stafford. Yes.

Dr. James White. So not seeking for that equality is an example of humility even though they're not equal with him?

Greg Stafford. It's not simply a question of not seeking it but giving up the equality you already have.

Dr. James White. Okay.

Greg Stafford. That's something the angels did not do.

Dr. James White. All right. In Hebrews 1:3, help me to understand your comments that were just made in the rebuttal period. It seemed to me that you seemed to understand charakter as a verb?

Greg Stafford. No.

Dr. James White. Well, you kept using it as a verb when you say that Jesus was copied at a point in time. Where do you derive from charakter that there was any type of temporality? When was Jesus copied according to this text?

Greg Stafford. Well, I guess I'll have to admit I assumed that if he is a copy, that the act of copying preceded the copy.

Dr. James White. So charakter, so what you're saying, then, are you not assuming as a presupposition, Unitarianism, that there could not be two equal, eternal, unlimited, eternal persons?

Greg Stafford. I'm not assuming that that's not possible, I'm simply pointing out that one is said to have been a copy of the other and so I take that in the temporal order that is laid out in the Scriptures.

Dr. James White. Is there anything in the Greek term charakter that implies temporality?

Greg Stafford. Absolutely.

Dr. James White. In what way?

Greg Stafford. The entire usage throughout any period of Greek literature you can find will suggest that charakter is, in fact, something that denotes a copy of one thing that existed before the copy was made.

Dr. James White. So you believe that the term itself implies some sort of verbal aspect and, hence, there can be no possibility in the use of this term that the Son is the perfect representation of the Father as a divine person, that simply could not happen? Is that a presupposition of your philosophy?

Greg Stafford. I'm not sure I understand your question. Can you rephrase it?

Dr. James White. If we could for a moment lay aside the presupposition of Unitarianism, if there were two equal and divine persons who were fully equal with one another, you could say that the one is the charakter of the hypostasis of the other even though there is never a time when that was not true if they are both eternal. Is that not the case?

Greg Stafford. When setting aside the assumption of Unitarianism, you accept the assumption of Trinitarianism in that example, and you still don't... you would have to then say that each could have been described as a copy of the other without any

difference resulting, and yet that's not what we have in the text. We have a specific reference to one being the copy of another, not simply two that look alike.

Dr. James White. So not assuming Trinitarianism, just simply in the hypothetical, it would simply be impossible for there to be two divine persons who are both eternal, immutable and unchangeable. It just simply does not fit within your worldview?

Greg Stafford. No, I didn't say that was impossible.

Dr. James White. Okay. In John 10, right before the Jews pick up stones to stone Jesus, what does he say that causes their anger? What in his words causes such a problem?

Greg Stafford. His relationship with the Father is described in terms that they find inappropriate.

Dr. James White. Is it not specifically that he says he and the Father are one in the salvation of God's people, which is something that is reserved to Jehovah alone in the Old Testament?

Greg Stafford. That would be an accurate summation of what he's described discussing.

Dr. James White. Would you agree that in Deuteronomy 32 the language that Jesus uses when he says, "No one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand, I and My Father are one," could be derived from Deuteronomy 32:39 that says, "See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand." Would you say that it is highly probable or likely that the Jews would recognize the language here is used in light of a passage such as this?

Greg Stafford. It's possible.

Dr. James White. And so if they did understand him to be using this passage in regards to Jehovah God, then would that not impact your translation of the word God whether it's God or a god?

Greg Stafford. No. I didn't say that I understand it in relation to him and Jehovah God but there's certainly no problem with him using language that would suggest the same type of security in salvation used in the Old Testament Scripture that he uses here, and that they sense in that a similar connotation, but I'm not going to read anything into it more than that.

Dr. James White. But wouldn't it follow that if the background passage says "there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life," and they understand him to be claiming deity, that they understood him to be claiming to be Yahweh?

Greg Stafford. They may have understood that but that's why Jesus went on to correct them and point out that others are called gods and therefore that would be a mistaken view on their part.

Dr. James White. So when Jesus then contrasts himself with them in John 10, and it's amazing, we've talked about it all this time, we never actually read the whole thing. I guess that's the problem with debates, but when he says, "If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?" Do you not see there a strong differentiation on the part of the Lord Jesus between those to whom the word of God came, which I would identify as judges, and him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world?

Greg Stafford. I absolutely do and that's what makes the point so strong, that if he can call those people gods, it makes it even more impressive the fact that he's using that text in his own defense because there is such a strong distinction between them and yet he still uses this text to defend against their claim that he was a god.

Dr. James White. How can you say that Jesus is paralleling himself with the unrighteous judges of Psalm 82 in light of his own description of himself, interestingly enough in a third person, "do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

Greg Stafford. Can you repeat that last part again?

Dr. James White. How can you say that he is paralleling himself? He's using this, God's text, to defend his lesser deity when, in point of fact, when he refers to himself in verse 36 he says, "do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world." Those judges were not sanctified and sent into the world, were they?

Greg Stafford. No.

Dr. James White. So does he not differentiate himself from them?

Greg Stafford. Absolutely, and I've never denied that. My point is not that he's paralleling himself with these unrighteous judges and that in terms of his deity, my point is that he's using a text that refers to these secondary type deities in defense of the claim that he is a god.

Dr. James White. What if he is, have you considered the possibility that, in point of fact, he is utilizing that text to accuse them of being false judges and that his defense is what is found in those words when he says, "do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?" Especially in light of John 19:7?

Greg Stafford. You know, I don't see that that point... he can make that point in association with answering their claim. Either he's answering their charge or he's not. What part of this would you say...well, I can't ask you a question, so. My point is that he's answering their charge and making a point about his station as God's representative at the same time.

Dr. James White. Could it not be, and I'll answer your question by my question, could it not be that the answer to their charge is the demonstration that they are rejecting the one that the Father has sealed and sent into the world which would be a very consistent theme throughout the gospel of John?

Greg Stafford. How would that answer their charge that he's making himself a god or God?

Dr. James White. Do you want me to answer?

Greg Stafford. Well, I can't....

Dr. James White. I'll go ahead.

Greg Stafford. You know, it's like....

Dr. James White. I'm trying to figure out how to answer that as a question. If in point of fact....

Greg Stafford. I don't mean... I'm sorry.

Dr. James White. That's all right. It's all right. It happens, yes, I know. I've got 39 seconds. If in point of fact Jesus is identifying them as false gods, as false judges, would that not be a demonstration that their charge of blasphemy is what is false? The Father has sealed the Son and has sent him into the world, it is their charge that is false, they are false judges. Would that not be an answer to their charge?

Greg Stafford. No.

Dr. James White. Okay.

Moderator. Thank you. Now, Mr. Stafford, you have 20 minutes to cross-examine Dr. White. So you may begin.

Greg Stafford. I'll let you ask me a question too.

Moderator. We appreciate you not answering questions with questions.

Greg Stafford. Dr. White, where in the Bible can we find any articulation or use of the terms for God that suggest any of the terms meaning anything other than a definite or

indefinite sense when applied to an individual? For example, in your book, "The Forgotten Trinity," page 55, you discuss indefinite qualitative sense for theos in John 1:1 and you give translations for each. Where is it that we can find any use of theos or the terms for God in Scripture that suggest any other meaning than an indefinite or an indefinite sense when implied to an individual?

Dr. James White. Well, I think, obviously I believe John 1:1 does that because of the context which is provided and the context of the absolute monotheism of the writers of the New Testament so that certainly the Holy Spirit can address the reality that someone is divine or is deity as to their nature, otherwise we say that the language cannot express such a concept whatsoever. I think theotetos at Colossians 2:9 would likewise be descriptive in that way of that which makes God God in regards to Christ.

Greg Stafford. Well, theotetos certainly can do that but being an abstract noun, its nature is to do just that. Since we're talking about a singular countdown in John 1:1, how is it that we can disassociate an indefinite or definite sense from a noun?

Dr. James White. Again, by the context in which it is found. Now I know that you don't agree with the context and I'm not sure if what you were saying about theoteos was supposed to be taken as a question, I didn't get a chance to answer that, but in John 1:1, I know we disagree on the context, you don't believe that this has anything to do with an eternal relationship that exists between the Father and the Son, but I believe that it does. I believe that the use of the imperfect of eimi there, the fact that this is a description of the relationship between the Father and the Son, and I also do not remove John 1:1 from the prologue. I believe that it needs to be interpreted in all 18 verses of the gospel of John, and when I look at verse 18, it bears out that very understanding of theos describing the logos at John 1:1c.

Greg Stafford. Is there any other example in Scripture you can point to that would show us that this term "theos" or any term from "theos" has a similar meaning or is this the only example you have?

Dr. James White. Well, the only example that I know of of a discussion of the relationship of the Father and the Son in eternity is John 1:1, Philippians 2, and there you have the phrase which I think you would...at least agreed in your "Three Dissertations" book that this was referring to an equality between the Father and Son, though we disagree on the nature of what that equality is. Probably Hebrews 1 would also be the same thing but the term "theos" is only used in John 1:1 in that way as far as this eternal relationship. I'm sorry, I'll take that back, and John 17. Those would be the passages. But in each one of those, only John 1:1 is using the term in that way.

Greg Stafford. But again, I don't understand how does the context change the grammar? We're talking about a noun. It doesn't use theotetos or other terms, it says the word was theos. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with ha theos, and the Word was theos." So we're dealing with a noun. How is it that this noun does not have a

definite, that is, an identity, or indefinite, that is, a categorization, of the individual to whom it is applied?

Dr. James White. I don't think that there is any question, again, and this is where I think we have demonstrated very clearly a fundamental foundational exegetical difference. I interpret John 1:1 in the context of the monotheistic Jew who wrote it and, hence, in the context in which he wrote it, the idea of these multiple ontological separate gods is not a part and parcel of what he believes, especially in light of the parallel to 1:1 and 1:18. And so to, in essence, what you're asking is cannot the language express this? And I say, yes, it can express it and does express it in light of John's own explanation which he goes on to give us in verses 2 through 3 and all the way through the rest of the prologue. He doesn't stop there. That word "theos" is not the end of the discussion in John 1:1. It goes on to 1:2, 1:3, ascribes creation to him, etc. etc.

Greg Stafford. Okay, but wouldn't those all be appropriate to one who is identified as God definitely as well?

Dr. James White. You mean as a god or as the....?

Greg Stafford. No, the God.

Dr. James White. I don't understand your question.

Greg Stafford. Wouldn't it be appropriate to have all of these things you referred to in the context apply to one who is the God, God identified definitely?

Dr. James White. You mean....well, the problem is John differentiates between the logos who became flesh and the theos that the logos reveals and, hence, John then explains to us this is the role of the incarnate Son Jesus Christ in revealing the Father. And so it's properly applied to him, most certainly, but it's done so in a way that differentiates him from the Father who is not the Father...

Greg Stafford. I understand that but would it be appropriate to...contextually you're using all of this theology and monotheistic inference to explain the meaning of the term, why couldn't that be appropriate for one who is identified definitely as God? Why do you, why can't it be one who is definitely God? Why does it have to be qualitative?

Dr. James White. Well, I don't know what you're, what your point is. The point of being that John himself makes the differentiation between the two divine persons in the prologue.

Greg Stafford. That's not my point, though. Let me redirect the attention of the question. The word is called "theos." We have three grammatical categories, definite, indefinite, qualitative. You select qualitative. Why?

Dr. James White. Again, because of the entire context. When it says, we have just been told that the Word is eternal, we are then told that there is a relationship that exists between the Logos and theon, and so 1c is not going to then contradict 1b, and in light of the explanation of the passage in verses 2 and 3, verse 14 and verse 18, you say I'm using a lot of theology here, I think it's John that's using the theology here. I think that's where the theology is coming from.

Greg Stafford. I don't have a problem with the theology but when you're using the theology to take a noun and change it from a noun to a descriptive phrase like theotetos. For example, you said the Word was with God, ton theon. Are all these contextual references and theology appropriate to ton theon as well?

Dr. James White. I never made any such statement that could be taken that way and I didn't say that it should be taken just like theotetos, however, I would point out to you that monogenes functions in that way in verse 18....

Greg Stafford. But let me go back to 1:1.

Dr. James White. ...and can be used by John.

Greg Stafford. Let's deal with my question, though. I don't mean to interrupt but I think we're getting a little far afield. Is ton theon God in John 1:1b?

Dr. James White. The Father?

Greg Stafford. Yes, okay. Is that a definite reference grammatically I'm talking about, Dr. White? Is God....

Dr. James White. Grammatically and contextually. You cannot separate the two.

Greg Stafford. Well, you can but you don't have to.

Dr. James White. Well, not if you want to translate correctly you won't.

Greg Stafford. Well, if you're categorizing you can. We're not talking about translation at this point, we're talking about categorization.

Dr. James White. I thought we were talking about what John meant in John 1:1.

Greg Stafford. Well, let me repeat it then. If ton theon is definite in 1:1b, why isn't theos in 1:1c definite?

Dr. James White. Because you'll notice as you...and I know you're well aware of this and you know even if I took the next 12 minutes and 20 seconds to discuss the history of the discussion of the grammar of John 1:1c, I don't know how it would really help anyone in the audience. But to very briefly summarize it, because of the form that is used, because

of the context that is used, because of what follows and because of what came before, especially 1:1a, the subject remains the logos. We're being told something about the logos here and the idea that what we're being told is that he is somehow a separate ontological theos from the Father is not something that the gospel of John presents to us.

Greg Stafford. Actually, it does and that's what I'm getting at and that's why I'm curious to know why you won't tell me exactly why theos in 1:1c is not definite.

Dr. James White. I reject the assertion that I won't tell you. You don't accept my explanation. That's not the same as not telling.

Greg Stafford. Well, I've asked you five times.

Dr. James White. And I have answered it five times. I'm sorry you don't accept my explanation but I don't know how to do Greek translation outside of the context.

Greg Stafford. Well, if a noun is applied to a person, it's either definite or indefinite. So which is it?

Dr. James White. Again, if you're saying that the language cannot describe to us that the logos is as to his nature God, that he is truly deity, then you're disagreeing with a large portion of the Greek scholars that I know, you're disagreeing with the context of the gospel of John as well. Again, the only explanation I'm going to be able to give you....

Greg Stafford. Nothing in the context says anything about that, though.

Dr. James White. I'm sorry?

Greg Stafford. Nothing in the context says anything about what it might mean but we know it's a noun and we know that nouns when they're applied to persons are either definite or indefinite. Nouns carry with it qualitative connotations. It can convey the same amount of divine nature and deistic references as any other noun can. The point is it's either definite or indefinite being a noun.

Dr. James White. John used the noun in John 1:1 to tell us something about the logos. I refuse to isolate one phrase from the entirety of the context and therefore rob it of its meaning.

Greg Stafford. Not asking you to do so, I'm simply asking you to point out whether or not grammatically this is a definite or indefinite noun.

Dr. James White. I've already explained to you.

Greg Stafford. You can have all the meaning, you can take all the meaning you want with it in either case, I'll give you all that meaning, just tell me whether or not it's definite or indefinite.

Dr. James White. I've already explained to you the translation. You read from my book. I don't know that I can give you anything now. I think we're wasting our time.

Greg Stafford. So let me move on, then. I think we covered that. So since Jesus said the Father is the only true God in John 17:3, then if that is so, what kind of God is Jesus? A false God? Some other kind of God? Or did he not really mean only when he said only in John 17:3?

Dr. James White. Oh no, he meant only because there's only one true God. Again, here again is where we have to read more than one sentence at a time because not only has he referred to his Father and, again, I view Jesus Christ here as the God-man, that's what John describes him as in the sense of the logos has become flesh. He is praying to his Father. He's differentiating himself from the Father. He was not a polytheist and so he believed there is only one true God and he said, "This is true and eternal life, to know You, the only true God, and the One whom You have sent, Jesus Christ." And so to know eternal life is to have a joint object, the Father and the Son, and right after this some would even punctuate it as one sentence.

Greg Stafford. [unintelligible] right now.

Dr. James White. He says, "Glorify Me together with Yourself, Father, the glory which We had before the world was."

Greg Stafford. So is the Father the only true God?

Dr. James White. For Jesus Christ, certainly.

Greg Stafford. For you?

Dr. James White. In the sense that Jesus meant these words, yes.

Greg Stafford. And so the Father is the only true God?

Dr. James White. In the sense that Jesus meant it.

Greg Stafford. And what sense is that?

Dr. James White. Well, as I just explained, there is only one true God, there cannot be more than one true God....

Greg Stafford. And that's the Father.

Dr. James White. ...and that is why in Revelation 22:3 the word for service and worship in the temple is used of both the Father and the Son. A singular pronoun referring to both of them because of the close relationship that exists between them.

Greg Stafford. Well, that's an assumption that it refers to both of them collectively and not one individually. The point is, though, is Jesus correct that the Father is the only true God? We all know what "only true God" means. Is he correct when he said that the Father was the only true God?

Dr. James White. I've already answered this question. Is there a point that you want to make?

Greg Stafford. It seems like you said yes and then you said no.

Dr. James White. It's like I would never say that Jesus was wrong in a statement, so obviously it's what we understand that to mean. Jesus as the incarnate Word would never refer to false gods as the true God. The question is, it seems that you're engaging in category error to say that if Jesus, the Father is the only true God, then Jesus who is glorified with him cannot be identified by someone else as the true God as Thomas did when he bowed before him and said, "My Lord and my God."

Greg Stafford. Well, but that's the question. If the Father is the only true God, then what kind of God is Jesus?

Dr. James White. Again, you assume a differentiation not only in the fact that the nature of God cannot be shared between two divine persons, the repeated assumption of Unitarianism, but also it's, again, a category error that you are not differentiating between person and being.

Greg Stafford. I assume there's one category of true God and I assume there's one person in that category of the Father, that's what Jesus said. Do you agree with it?

Dr. James White. No, because you just assumed Unitarianism.

Greg Stafford. Oh, you don't agree with it.

Dr. James White. No, I don't agree with your second statement which was you assumed there is only one person in the category. That's where your error comes in.

Greg Stafford. How many persons does Jesus assume in his statement?

Dr. James White. Well, obviously since he goes on to talk about being glorified with his Father before the world was, that would not...

Greg Stafford. That's a different statement.

Dr. James White. ...delimit. Well, it's within the same paragraph. That's, again, the difference between this and exegesis.

Greg Stafford. The category we're talking about is the category of true God. How many persons did Jesus place in the category of the true God?

Dr. James White. Well, again, you are assuming that when Jesus says, "You are the true God," that he was a Unitarian, and I say to you in light of verse 5 which I allow, I like to read the entire paragraphs.... I'm sorry?

Greg Stafford. I'm not assuming any such thing, I'm just assuming that Jesus meant what he said.

Dr. James White. And did he also mean that he was to be glorified with the Father with the glory which he had with him before the world was?

Greg Stafford. Absolutely, but that's.... I'm sorry.

Moderator. You're asking the questions, not Dr. White.

Greg Stafford. Well, he got me back on that one. So again, I'm still not quite clear. We have a fairly simple statement made by Jesus, the Father is the only true God. We have a category, true God. We have a member, Father. Are there any other members to the category of true God according to Jesus' statement in John 17:3?

Dr. James White. No, in John 17:5.

Greg Stafford. Are there any other members in the category of the true God other than the Father according to Jesus in John 17:3?

Dr. James White. Well, if you want to only look at verse 3....

Greg Stafford. We'll look at verse 5 after that. So in verse 5 it says what about the true God and who being a part of it? It says he exists alongside him, the angels exist alongside him according to Job 38:7. Existence is different from being classified as a particular type of being, so I have no problem with Jesus existing alongside the only true God, my question is who is identified as the only true God according to Jesus in John 17:3?

Dr. James White. Well, we've already answered that question and my point in going to 17:5 was that for any creature to pray the words of John 17:5 again means that we have no idea who God is, we have no idea how to.....

Greg Stafford. That's not my question. My question is about...

Dr. James White. You were just making a statement, I'm just trying to respond to it.

Greg Stafford. You're making an argument about a different point. My point is that in John 17:3 we're talking about the true, the only true God, monotheism.

Dr. James White. Yes.

Greg Stafford. Who is identified as the only true God? The Father. No one else.

Dr. James White. Excuse me, are you...is that a question? It sounds like you were making a statement.

Greg Stafford. I'm prefacing my question that I've asked several times. If the Father is the one identified as the only true God and that's monotheism, on what basis do you change the categorization of the Father as the only true God by Jesus?

Dr. James White. Because I do not read into Jesus' words the implicit Unitarianism that you read into everything that he says. In light of what he, himself, says in verse 5 and due to the fact that as I believe we've pointed out, you have as a presupposition the fact that no incarnation could ever take place. How would the incarnate one address God? Would he be an atheist?

Greg Stafford. You can address God all day long but to call him the only true God...

Dr. James White. Why?

Greg Stafford. And the Holy Spirit's not quite incarnate, is it?

Dr. James White. No.

Moderator. Mr. Stafford should be asking the questions.

Greg Stafford. And that one I hold against you. [laughter] The point is that even Jesus in an incarnate state can tell the truth, and if the Father's not the only true God...

Dr. James White. Those are statements, not questions.

Greg Stafford. This is a preface to part of my question. If Jesus can tell the truth as an incarnate person, then he can certainly say that the true God is more than one person. He didn't. Do you accept his statement or not?

Dr. James White. I do not accept your statement that he didn't.

Greg Stafford. How about his statement that the Father is the only true God?

Dr. James White. Mr. Stafford, we're spinning wheels here. I have automatically, I have said from the beginning I believe what Jesus said and I do not accept your disassembling of the text.

Greg Stafford. I'm just quoting it.

Dr. James White. Well, but you're not quoting all of it.

Greg Stafford. What part am I missing?

Dr. James White. Well, you seem to forget that verse 5...

Moderator. Go on and ask another question.

Dr. James White. That's a good idea.

Greg Stafford. We're getting the same result with each question. What is the name given to Jesus in Philippians 2:9 through 11 that is above every other name or every name?

Dr. James White. Well, some people feel that it's the name of Yahweh. I don't think that it is. I think that it is the name Jesus personally.

Greg Stafford. So the name Jesus is above every name?

Dr. James White. I believe so, yes.

Greg Stafford. Even Yahweh?

Dr. James White. I believe it is the way Yahweh has revealed himself, yes.

Greg Stafford. So but it would have to be above it because it's above every name.

Dr. James White. I believe so, yeah.

Greg Stafford. So Jesus is the highest name in the universe, even above the Tetragrammaton?

Dr. James White. I believe that if we accept what this passage says, that to confess Jesus is to confess that he is Yahweh, so we are doing both, yes.

Greg Stafford. So essentially, then, the name Jesus is the equivalent of Yahweh?

Dr. James White. Only in the sense that it's accepting the incarnation of Yahweh, that Yahweh has become Immanuel, God with us.

Greg Stafford. So how could Jehovah be given the name that is above every name?

Dr. James White. As I said in my opening statement, that assumes the fundamental error of what you called in a previous debate something that's bogus and that is exactly what I talked about here from Philippians 2, the fact that Jesus has two natures.

Greg Stafford. Is his human nature given the name above every name?

Dr. James White. No, Jesus is one person that has two natures and as a result of his obedience and his humiliation, verse 8, and then his obedience also in verse 8, even death on a cross, then he is given that which he voluntarily had already given up to enter into human flesh.

Greg Stafford. So if the human....so did he still possess this name in some sense while he was on earth?

Dr. James White. What do you mean possess this name?

Greg Stafford. Well, if he was given it, he either had it or didn't have it prior to receiving it.

Dr. James White. Well, obviously when it says "given the name" in verse 9, this is in regards to, as you can see it, the verb follows right after, "highly exalted Him." So the context has to be within the context of exaltation.

Greg Stafford. That's my point. So if the name is the equivalent of Yahweh and it's given to the exalted nature of Christ which would have to be his human nature, how could that human nature be given the name above every name?

Dr. James White. Where did you get exalted human nature? I just said he's one person...

Greg Stafford. Well, what would be exalted if not his human nature?

Dr. James White. He's one person. He's the God-man.

Greg Stafford. Yeah, I know, but you can't exalt God any higher than he already is.

Dr. James White. But he's one person. You're trying to divide him up. Because he has accomplished what the Father willed for him to do, then as the God-man, he is highly exalted and so that at the name of Jesus every knee bows to the glory of God the Father. It is a joint fulfillment of Isaiah 45:23.

Greg Stafford. I'm sorry.

Moderator. Last question. 10 seconds.

Greg Stafford. That was the last question?

Moderator. No, there's 10 seconds.

Greg Stafford. Okay. I'll just go ahead and end it on that point because we wouldn't have time for a significant follow-up.

Moderator. Thank you. Well, that was fun. Let's finish with the final summations here and Dr., you have the court. Would you like to take the podium or would you prefer...

Dr. James White. Oh, no, I'll take the podium, yes. We're supposed to for the closing statements. Besides the glow will make everyone stay away. 10 minutes, not enough time.

We have accomplished our goal this evening. There could be no clearer line drawn between monotheism and henotheism than we have seen this evening. I would like to ask all of you to do something tonight even those of you going on the cruise, despite the fact that you will lose sleep as a result, you can sleep on the bus, it's no big deal. I want you to go home, I want you to go to your rooms or wherever it is you go, I want you to read Revelation 4 and 5 again, and then I want you to ponder a statement that we've heard. We heard, "I never saw the term proskuneo used directly in that passage of Revelation 5, so the whole position falls apart." So in other words, the Lamb is not worshiped in Revelation 5. Folks, read it. I honestly believe God's word is so clear, the Spirit of God is so compelling that all I have to do is ask you just read it. If that is not every created thing, if bowing before the Lamb, "Worthy are You, honor and glory," well, that's not worship. Yes, it is, and it is worship that is due only to the one true God and if that worship can be given to any creature then, my friends, I have proven my point, we don't know what worship is and we don't know who to give it to. What if Michael comes to earth or Gabriel comes to earth and he becomes highly exalted, will we have three people standing before the throne? If we take that perspective, we can never figure out what the Bible is talking about on any subject ever again. We have no message left.

We have looked at John 10. I think that I have given a very clear answer and in light of Jesus' own words both before and after that passage, it is clear he is not paralleling himself with unrighteous judges, he is paralleling himself as the one having the power of life and death and only Yahweh does that, Deuteronomy 32.

We also looked at Hebrews 1 and that passage quoted from the Psalms. Remember one thing, if you can take a passage, and we were told, "Well, it's just about the fact that at his resurrection Jesus won't die," read Psalm 102 again, read verses 25 through 27, read the description. I'm going to do it. Despite the fact this is the eyestrain Bible, I'm going to make it happen anyways. Eyestrain, not ice cream. Eyestrain. You all thought it was a new translation. We've got too many of them anyways. "Of old You founded the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. Even they will perish, but You endure; And all of them will wear out like a garment; Like clothing You will change them and they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not come to an end." My friends, that is not merely about the fact that the resurrected Jesus isn't going to die, this is about Yahweh as the Creator contrasting the one who makes all things with everything that he has made that passes away. These are the words that are applied to Jesus. Again, if those words were applied to Christ and he is not truly God, then there is no way of knowing who to worship in any way, shape or form.

We were told, "Well, it can't mean that in verses 10 through 12 because back at verse 2, we're told that all things are made through Christ, and the passage has to be consistent." Well, again, I pointed out in my opening statement there are times when in reference to the Father it is said things are made through him. I have not heard a response to that in any way, shape or form. So that argument doesn't hold, but beyond that, yes, we do need to be consistent. All things were made through him and for him and he is before all things. That's the Creator. That's the one who made you and I and his name is Jesus Christ, the eternal Word who became flesh.

We were told how absurd would that be since God can't have a God. Over and over again we have heard the assumption of Unitarianism, the assumption that the Trinitarian incarnation cannot take place, that Jesus cannot be the God-man. I say to you that if we were to remove the constant assumption of Unitarianism, "Well, it can't be this because there's only one person of God," which we just saw in John 17:3 and 5 in that discussion, that we can't understand this about Jesus because he can't be the God-man, and I quoted from Mr. Stafford's writings where he said, "Well, to really have those attributes, he couldn't be divine and human at the same time." There is this assumption if we took those things out, the Scriptures would be so clear in what they're saying. If we got rid of those things, we'd understand why it is that in light of the fact that the Bible says there is only one true and eternal God, and then the descriptions that are used of the divine persons, why it is that through church history people have believed in the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. It is because we accept all that the Bible has to say, not just certain sections and not with assumptions. Why would it be that the very God of the universe who is unlimited in his being, why would that unlimited being be shared by only one person? Could be but why? Why is that taken as a presupposition? If the Bible reveals otherwise, we need to allow the Bible to speak. You say, "Oh, but it doesn't use those specific terms." Well, you've got to use terms to explain what it does say. When we turn to the Scriptures, we find that the writers under the direction of the Holy Spirit of God producing that which is theon pneustos, God-breathed, that those writers described the Lord Jesus Christ with words, terms and phrases that would be blasphemous when applied to any creature no matter how exalted he is.

Why is this so important? It's become even more important, I think, just over the past number of years. Christianity is under persecution around our world. In Muslim countries today, Christians suffer persecution for believing in the deity of Christ. We need to be clear because we live in a society where post-modernism has seeped into the very fabric even of Evangelical churches so that we are afraid of being clear and saying, "This is right and this is wrong." And my friends, when we proclaim Jesus Christ to this world, we cannot be confused as to who he is. He is either the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Lord of glory as Paul described him, who was yet crucified, he is either that in its fullness or he is not worthy of our praise, our worship, and our faith.

This is a vital issue and we can argue all night long but the fundamental issues could come down for each one of us, what are you going to do with Christ? Are you going to relegate him to a secondary position or are you going to deal with him as your Creator, as

the one upon whom you are dependent for every breath that you take, every beat of your heart? Paul described him as the one in whom all creation sunestic and it holds together. Creation does not hold together in an angel. Creation was not made for a part of the creation. And when we talk about the firstborn, if Jesus Christ is not truly God of truly God, if he is not true God of true God, then what was that relationship? The Son that was given, would that be like me giving a computer program or something, something that's different than me? No. The one who was given had eternally been at the Father's side and was glorious with him. He was seen upon the throne in Isaiah 6. He is God, our Redeemer and our Savior. Thank you.

Moderator. Let's go to Mr. Stafford and we'll close with his final comments. 10 minutes.

Greg Stafford. I'd like to first start off by addressing a point that Dr. White mentioned and I did ignore earlier that was certainly not because I intended to, I do, in fact, discuss it at great length in my book and that is the use of the preposition dia in relation to the role of creation in Romans 11:36 and Hebrews 2:10. It is true that it is used of the Father there, but dia has both a causal and intermediary sense as is explained in most Greek grammars. It's actually a fairly basic point. How do we know that it's causal in relation to the Father? Because the Father is the one out of whom all things are, very clearly made by Paul in 1 Corinthians 8:6. How do we know that it's intermediary with respect to Christ? Not only because he's contrasted with the Father as the source in that very same text but in Colossians 1:16-17 it uses passive Greek verb forms, ekteste, showing that Christ could not have created, something was created through him by another. It's very clear and irrefutable.

This idea of the two natures and competing attributes, why would I say that's something that's impossible? I not only didn't say it, in fact, there are a lot of things that were said that I said that I didn't quite say that way, but let's think about that for just a second. Can you know all things and not know all things at the same time? Would you say that's possible? I'll let that answer the question.

This idea of worship in Revelation 4 and 5, I did not say that proskuneo wasn't used. I did not say that Christ as the Lamb was not worshiped in some sense. I said that proskuneo was not used with respect to the Lamb the same way it was used in Revelation 4:9-11 and it wasn't. That was what I said and that's the point that needs to be remembered.

John 10. I did not hear an answer to the question of why Jesus' use of Psalm 82 was relevant in answering the charge. I heard a lot of discussion about how the Jews were these unrighteous judges and how this somehow justified his claim that they were incorrect in condemning him for blasphemy, but I still don't understand how that represents an answer to the charge, "you claim to be God, you claim to be a god. Is it not written, 'You are gods'?" Take a good look at that text and see what you think.

With respect to John 1:1, you saw in the cross a lot of discussion. I don't have a lot of time to go over all kinds of different points, I'd like to stay with one and hammer it and figure it out. I couldn't get an answer to my satisfaction for what is actually a very simple

grammatical point. If you have a noun applied to a subject, that noun is either definite or indefinite. It's either identifying that subject as something, it's a predication, or including him in the group, still a predication but making a different point. The point is that the noun is used, not some adjective like theos, divine, or a genitival form of a noun, of God, which might have made a point similar to that of Dr. White's, but the point is that it's a noun, a predicate nominative describing a subject as what? Theos. If there's only one God and if that one God is the Trinity, then Jesus is the Trinity according to that text. That's why Dr. White couldn't accept the definite rendition even though for centuries or decades at least, that was the standard scholarly answer in the Trinitarian community but, of course, the problem was realized around the 1970s.

Nevertheless, that translation is something that's so easy to refute. Jehovah's Witnesses have been the object of unnecessary scorn and ridicule over that translation. They're right. It is not "the Word was God." In fact, even most Trinitarians know that nowadays. That's why they won't say it's definite. That's a definite translation. They'll say, "Well, the Word was God but we mean this." Yeah, we know you mean that, why don't you say it? Say what you mean and mean what you say. Don't translate it one way and then define it and explain it because it's confusing. But Jehovah's Witnesses have been unfairly criticized for that point and you all need to know that and the scholarly community should be ashamed of themselves for the way they've handled that text and misrepresented the New World translation in doing so.

Jesus is a god, he's a god who exists alongside the Father. He's the exact representation of his God and Father. These are the words of the Bible. I'm not even defining or really articulating them much at all. I'm certainly not reading into it Unitarianism, that's just the result and he hears it, and so it's all of a sudden an assumption on my part. Do you think maybe there's assumptions coming from both sides? Possibly, but who's reading the text and what does the text say? That's something you as individuals have to decide. It's not for me to come up here and try to change what might have been decades of reading and thinking on your part and maybe you even studied these issues far more than Dr. White and myself and have reasons for believing them that are legitimate. My point is that we have both also taken time to look at these issues and tried to give you a presentation that may stimulate some further thinking on your part, and I hope we have, but in order to really appreciate these points, it's essential to set aside prejudices and views that you might have about these concepts and that's why initially I started off talking about the things I did, because I know how hard it can be to overcome the kinds of thinking and language that can be poured into terms like henotheism, monotheism, none of which are used in the Bible. You don't need any of those terms to categorize your thinking and theology, but if you're going to do it, if henotheism describes what's in the Bible, then I'll accept it. If it's polytheism, I'll accept it. If it's monotheism, I'll accept it. The point is, I don't care what label you give it, I accept what's in the Bible and if the Bible says that the only true God is the Father, I'm going to accept that. If the Bible says that the one God is the Father, I'm going to accept that. And if it calls someone else God, even in lofty and grand terms, even borrowing language used to describe the only true God, I'm going to accept that, but I'm going to accept it in the context in which it's presented to me in the totality of what the Scriptures teach. I'm not going to try to isolate a text and use it to try

to prove a point that's in clear contradiction to something else. I have to try to make sense out of it. If I read a text that says that one is a copy of another's being, that means something. That's not just something I'm making up and throwing out there that just is kind of a negligible point. That means something.

So sometimes it's important to give the other side a fair hearing. Even if you still disagree, we have reasons, you have reasons, I've read your reasons, believe me, I have, maybe I don't get them all but I've read them and I'd ask you to do the same. Give it some thought. I know how much is at risk. I know that any kind of change in thought on Dr. White's part or your part would be considerable. I know because I've had to make those same decisions myself with respect to my own religion. The point is it doesn't matter. Jesus said that all those who are on his side are on the side of the truth, not any particular religion or tradition, the truth. And I genuinely believe that Dr. White and myself and all of us here in attendance tonight are in search of truth, but it's hard. It's not easy. It's more difficult today because of the plurality of Bibles, the different religious groups, the different voices saying different things. Look at how much effort you'd have to put in to trying to figure out just what we were talking about tonight. It's hard for me to try to even answer a question because there's so much more I need to say to properly explain it and I can't get it all out in the amount of time I have. So it's a challenge. It's very hard and it's going to be hard for me to do the same, so that's something each of us as individuals have to deal with and our responsibility we must each individually accept.

I didn't really hear an answer myself to Colossians 1:19 with respect to the fact that God decreed that the fullness of all that which makes one a god or God dwells in Christ, but it's something you might want to take a look at, Colossians 1:19 and 2:9 and 10.

A couple other important Scriptures to consider before I close. John 5:26 with respect to Dr. White's comment about life and how this was associated with Christ and his comments with the Jews in John 10 and Deuteronomy 32. It's important that you remember where life comes from and why Christ has the power to give it. In John 5:26 he says himself, "For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted also to the Son to have life in himself." Then John 6:57, even more pertinent to the discussion that we had earlier, "Just as the living Father sent me forth and I live because of the Father, he also that feeds on me, even that one will live because of me." Jesus is God's Son, God is his Father, these are terms that make sense in the context of human understanding with the terms given to us in the Bible. The Father is Jesus' life-giver. He lives because of the Father, John 6:57. We can live because of Christ. There's no need for assumptions about preachers or Unitarianisms as long as we're all in search of the truth and decide to put the necessary time and energy into it, our search will be worth it. I thank you for your time this evening.

Moderator. Thank you. Mike, do you need to take a few minutes to work the microphones? This last section, I want to take 20 minutes and allow you to ask questions of the participants. We'd like this to be a balanced question and answer session. We don't want all of the questions going just to Dr. White or just to Mr. Stafford, so if we could, in

some fashion, Mike, maybe you could help coordinate this to make sure that we get alternating questions to the participants.

Mike. Will do.

Moderator. And again, let us remind you, this is not a chance for you to make a dissertation, to quote from your Bibles, it is an opportunity for you to ask a question of one of the participants here, either Dr. White or Mr. Stafford. So if we could maybe start a line right behind this gentleman in the black jacket. He's number 1. Who would you to address your question, sir?

Question. To Mr. Stafford.

Mike. I don't think we're quite ready yet. Hold on.

Moderator. As soon as we get the sound up.

Question. Should I go ahead?

Moderator. No, wait until Rich signals us. Good to go? Okay.

Question. In your book and I don't have the page reference so I apologize for that, you make a connection between Jesus as the wisdom of God with Proverbs 8:22. One of the passages you use is 1 Corinthians 1:24 where Christ is said to be the wisdom of God and on that basis you make the equation. Yet that passage also says Jesus is the power of God and in Romans 1:20, the power of God is said to be eternal. Using your method of exegesis, why don't you conclude that because Jesus is the power of God, he is therefore eternal in light of Romans 1:20? How come you're not consistent in your exegesis, that's my question?

Greg Stafford. Page 231. Because the power of God is never personified in the way that wisdom is in the book of Proverbs. The book of Proverbs personifies wisdom in a number of ways that are attributable to Christ and identification of Christ as the wisdom of God is simply one means by which one can connect the dots, so to speak. There's no reason to go looking for someone who's called the power of God because no one ever is in a personified way. The power of God is never personified outside of that reference, I should say, whereas wisdom is.

Moderator. Do you have a question for Dr. White?

Question. Either one, I don't care who answers it. I got lost in trying to follow. There was a great extent of differentiation made in Revelation 4:8, 9 and 10 where the point was trying to be made that there was no worship in 8 but there was worship in 9 and 10, and since there were no chapters and verses in the original text, how can we distinguish that there was no worship in 8 when there was in 9?

Dr. James White. I think what you are...I'm assuming since we're going back and forth, you want me to answer that?

Moderator. Go ahead.

Dr. James White. I think what you were pointing to is the fact that I pointed out in one of my statements that all of this is worship and if you have to have the word proskuneo for worship to exist, then what happened in verse 8 or when it says, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God," that that's allegedly not worship. It's not my point that that's a valid issue, in fact, that is my whole point. It's clear that the worship is all through Revelation 4 and Revelation 5 because of the fact that there weren't chapter and verse divisions, as you point out, and that that is the immediate context of worship. So I believe it's all worship.

Greg Stafford. Since he didn't direct that to anyone in particular, can I make a joint response briefly to that too? Not in response to Dr. White but in answer to his question?

Moderator. Could you, say, in 20 seconds [unintelligible]?

Greg Stafford. Because he didn't really answer that question.

Moderator. Go ahead.

Greg Stafford. My point is simply that I understand your question about the chapter divisions but I'm not suggesting that worship isn't described throughout there, my point is that the worship that's specific to Revelation 4:9-11 is not necessarily continuous throughout the rest of that account all the way through the end of chapter 5 but we're just using chapter and verse numbers because that's the way the Bible is currently divided.

Moderator. Next question.

Question. For Mr. Stafford, do you believe in the eternity of Jesus Christ?

Greg Stafford. Meaning that he never had a beginning?

Question. Yes.

Greg Stafford. No.

Question. Then what do you do with the passage in John 9 when Jesus says, "before Abraham was, I am"?

Greg Stafford. That's John 8:58, but that text simply refers to his existence prior to Abraham and there's nothing specific mentioned in association with that beyond that time.

Question. But if you look at the....

Moderator. Time. We've got an argument going now. Okay, thank you.

Dr. James White. 20 seconds? Obviously there's much more than can be said in 20 seconds about Jesus' use of ego eimi. I believe there is a very clear consistent use of ego eimi in the gospel of John and we see it most clearly in John 18:5-6 where when Jesus says it and the soldiers fall back upon the ground, this is connected with the Old Testament in the book of Isaiah and other passages there.

Moderator. His question was about eternity, though, not identity. Next question.

Question. Dr. White, it's a privilege. If Jesus is not the literal firstborn as I believe is expressed in Colossians 1, Revelation 3:14, then who is?

Dr. James White. Well, I believe that he is in the sense that the term is used in each one of those passages. The term prototokos does not mean first created, and so when you say who is, well, Jesus is the firstborn but the passage then says, "let all the angels of God worship the firstborn," in Hebrews 1:6, and then Colossians 1 demonstrates that the firstborn has preeminence over all of creation because he created it and it was created for him, using eis.

Greg Stafford. That's just the point, he didn't create anything. It says it was created through him using the passive verb forms I mentioned already, showing that he was not the direct Creator. Your question is very good because it points out that someone had to be God's first creation. If we're going to suggest the firstborn doesn't mean first created, then who was the first creation, because in a literal sense, in a human sense, the first human male born had primogeniture status and that would certainly be relevant.

Moderator. Thank you. Next question.

Question. Can I have just a phrase to build this up, to take a couple of seconds in build-up to what I was going to say?

Moderator. You've got 20 seconds.

Question. Okay.

Moderator. Who are you addressing?

Question. Mr. Stafford. You said Jesus was a copy of the Father. Is that what you're saying?

Greg Stafford. A copy of God's being.

Question. A copy of God's being, okay. Then if he is a copy, then the copies should be the same. If I was going to copy something for everybody, it would be the same that I

handed out to everybody, but yet you also said in your opening argument that they were different, that he was at a higher level. So how can they be a copy, copies being separate, how can they be, you can't have it both ways. How can you argue that one is better than the other one when they're the same.

Greg Stafford. Well, I'm not aware of any example of a copy that's exactly the same as the original, hence, it's a copy. So there would be differences but there would be so many similarities that it is a copy, so the copy is as good as it can be after the original but it's never as good as the original. That's why it's a copy.

Dr. James White. Part and parcel of Mr. Stafford's presentation on the meaning of the term "charakter" both includes the assertion of some sort of verbal element and the idea that it can mean an inexact and, in fact, incomplete copy. I dispute both on lexical and textual realms.

Moderator. Next question.

Question. My question is for both of you. First, I want to thank you for doing all the legwork on all this stuff. I wouldn't have the time to research everything you have. My question is a little basic but I'd like for each one of you to please define what God is. When you say Jesus is or is not a god or whatever, what do each one of you, how do you define the word God.

Moderator. Start with Dr. White.

Dr. James White. When I use that term, I am using it as defined in my opening statement, Yahweh is God, he has eternally been God, he is the Creator of all things, and he is worthy to be worshiped. He is the only true God, the ground and being of all other things that exist. Nothing exists outside of his will. That is how I would define it.

Greg Stafford. The term "god" in the Scriptures is used in a variety of ways. It's used exclusively of the one true God and identified as the Father, Jehovah. It's also used of other beings such as judges, angels, Jesus Christ, false gods, Satan. So it has a variety of applications. In terms of tradition classical Trinitarianism, God refers to the Trinity. One God, the Trinity.

Moderator. Thank you. Next question.

Question. This was already asked before me, I didn't know, but let me see if I can make it more specific, though. In relation to the copy, Hebrews 1:3, if I make a copy of the one and only true Constitution, would not the copy also fall into the category of the one and only true Constitution? Similarly, would not Jesus fall into the category of the one and only true God?

Greg Stafford. No, because it's not the one and only true Constitution, it's a copy of the one and only true Constitution.

Dr. James White. And obviously my perspective is this is a very limited and improper use of the term "charakter," and only by the insertion of Unitarian concepts as a presupposition can you come up with the idea this somehow refutes the eternality and the full deity of Christ.

Moderator. We need a question for Dr. White. A question for Dr. White? Go ahead.

Question. Dr. White, can you explain Mr. Stafford's quick dismissal of the incarnation by how do you know and don't know? Will you enlighten us?

Dr. James White. Are you asking about....

Question. Yeah, will you explain the incarnation. He dismissed it by saying how can you not know and know. Can you explain that?

Dr. James White. Well, thank you. I didn't know what you were referring to. Yeah, I think this is one of the major issues. The Scriptures are very clear on this point that's why I attempted to emphasize Philippians 2 and the fact that the incarnation, what Jesus does in Philippians 2 is a positive thing, not a negative thing. He takes the form of a servant. He takes the form of man, and that is why there is that veiling, for example, of his glory. He's still glorious but that veiling appears upon the Mount of Transfiguration. For certain purposes, he entrusts himself to the Father, for example, in regards to issues of knowledge and things like that, in regards to his messiahship, all sorts of issues like that, and those passages are in the Scripture. We can't ignore them, that's why I kept using the term Lord of glory, being crucified, Lord of glory, deity, being crucified is obviously in reference to his humanity, both one person. It's biblical teaching.

Moderator. Would you like to respond?

Greg Stafford. Well, his question was how do you deal with my objection that Christ both knew and did not know all things at the same time. I didn't hear an answer to that so I'll just let it go.

Moderator. Another question for Mr. Stafford.

Question. This question is for Mr. Stafford.

Moderator. Question for Mr. Stafford. I have a question for Mr. Stafford.

Dr. James White. I figured you did, that's why I was looking, why are you turning around?

Question. [unintelligible] Okay, well, that's my second question. Okay, under the reference, this is a copy of the Kingdom Interlinear translation, okay, or the Kingdom, yeah, that's what it says.

Moderator. We're not going to read the whole thing, are we?

Question. No, we're not, at least not tonight. But in the portion on Romans 10:9 which it says "Lord Jesus," it says in the footnote, "Lord, kurios," and then it gives some manuscript references, ha adon, and it says specifically there "not Jehovah." Then if you look in your reference Bible there which I'm sure you have in the appendix on page 1,455 it says there specifically yet we read in the appendix, ha adon is a reference to, you have to look in your reference....

Greg Stafford. I know. I'm familiar with the argument.

Question. Okay, in the reference it says ha adon, a reference to Jehovah only, okay? And also let you know that Malachi 3:1 uses ha adon and that's an obvious I think agreed upon reference to Christ.

Greg Stafford. Since I already know the argument...

Question. Okay, the question is, well, if you can use preferences, so can I, but the question is, is that not a contradiction between the reference there saying that it's not Jehovah, and Jehovah can't be used to mean Jehovah or it can't be used for Jehovah and this being referred to Jesus Christ, and yet there in the appendix in your reference manual it says it's only used to refer to Jehovah. So would that not make Jesus Jehovah according to your reference even though there's a contradiction between that and this? And I'd also let you know that Malachi also uses ha adon.

Greg Stafford. The answer is no and no because in the appendix to the reference Bible of the New World translation is talking about the use of ha adon in the Hebrew Scriptures, it's always a Hebrew phrase. This is talking about the reference of ha adon in the "J" documents which are Hebrew translations of the Greek Scriptures. Ha adon is not used in Romans 10:9. There's no contradiction.

Moderator. We're not debating.

Dr. James White. There's a good deal of information on the inconsistent use of the "J" documents by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, especially in the fact that there are a number of places where those "J" documents do identify Jesus as Jehovah and there is inconsistencies in the creation of the footnotes in the New World Translation as a result of that that I believe are plainly due to the fact that the "J" documents, a number of them that are used do identify Jesus as Jehovah.

Greg Stafford. And I should point out real quickly, I'm not here to defend every comment made in the New World translation or their publications, but that's not a contradiction in my opinion.

Moderator. Next question.

Question. In your discussion about John 1, you said if a noun is applied to a person, then how can it be indefinite. In John 4:24, Jesus describes God as pneuma ha theos, and there is by context, it seems that it's a qualitative description, it's not....

Moderator. What is the question?

Question. Does that not allow for a qualitative understanding of theos in John 1:1c?

Greg Stafford. Well, first of all, in John 4:24 you don't have an express verb. It's a verbless expression but we'll accept it as a similar syntax. Why couldn't it be God is a spirit or God is the spirit? There doesn't appear to be any reason why you couldn't take it indefinitely or definitely.

Question. I mean, would it be, if you allow for that, then would you not allow God to be one of many spirits. There is no distinction.

Greg Stafford. God is one of many spirits and Hebrews 1 it talks about the angels being his spirits, Jesus was resurrected a life-giving spirit, so God is one of many spirits. He's the Almighty Spirit.

Dr. James White. I disagree firmly in the sense that the point of John 4:24 is God is Spirit, not merely a spirit as if he's being numbered. He's the big Spirit and there's lots of little spirits. He is Spirit, that is his nature and that is, I think, how translation that needs to be done and it's very clear in the context in light of what then Jesus says about those who he's seeking to worship him.

Moderator. Question for Dr. White. Dr. White question. Anybody?

Question. I have actually this for Dr. White.

Moderator. We'll start with Dr. White. Under 20 seconds, okay? You've got a couple in the back. You said you had a question for Dr. White.

Question. Well, actually both.

Moderator. We can let him respond to it.

Question. Okay, Dr. White, I have in hand probably the article of amendment to the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society dated January of 1945 pursuant to paragraph 2, in part it reads this way, "The purposes of this Society are to send out to various parts of the world Christian missionaries, teachers and instructors in the Bible, and Bible literature from public Christian worship of Almighty God in Christ Jesus." I'd like your response on that.

Dr. James White. I'm sorry, did you say the Almighty God and....?

Question. And Christ Jesus, that's correct.

Greg Stafford. That's the 1942 Charter?

Question. 1945, I have it certified. I have a copy.

Dr. James White. Well, obviously the question would be a little bit better directed to Mr. Stafford but there is, I think it's very clear that there have been numerous changes in Watchtower theology over the years, and even the translation of *proskuneo* in the New World translation has not been consistent from the beginning of the translation as well. So obviously that might reflect that but I don't think that I'm the best person to try to respond to that.

Greg Stafford. Yeah, the problem is it's an assumption on most people's parts that Jehovah's Witnesses don't worship Christ in some sense. It's simply false. We simply don't worship him as Almighty God nor on the same level as God, but we most certainly do accord him the appropriate worship that we believe is outlined in the Scriptures. And so in that document as well as the translation of Hebrews 1:6 in the early versions of the New World translation, terms for worship in relation to Christ were used and acceptable until it became problematic in terms of people not understanding the degree of worship accorded to him so they substituted terms like obeisance in place of them. But we have no problem worshiping Christ, I certainly don't, it's simply relative to his position to his God and Father.

Moderator. Next question.

Question. Question for Mr. Stafford. Since you say you don't worship Christ as Almighty God and you said that Christ is a copy of God, is omnipotent, the attribute of omnipotence a copy part of that copy? Yes or no? If it is, can there be two omnipotent beings? Do you believe in that? And if not, in what sense, then, is Jesus an exact copy of God the Father? Why does Paul say he's an exact copy if he's not even omnipotent?

Greg Stafford. Well, you see, these kind of attributes aren't transferable. I mean, you can't transfer age, you can't transfer knowledge. When you have a son, he's essentially a copy of you or at least in some sense a pretty close replica, but he doesn't know as much as you, he's not as strong as you, he doesn't have the same degree of attributes. He's a baby, a child, and it won't be for a long time and he'll never have the same age or knowledge as you. So those are not the kinds of things we would properly associate with the act of copying or reproduction, and so it's really not a difficult concept to grasp once you look at it in terms of how we typically deal with replication. These are not my words, by the way, those are the words of Paul in relation to Christ being a copy of God's being.

Dr. James White. Well, we don't know who wrote these words but I think the author is very clearly seeing that the meaning of *charakter* that is being put here, is replication and copying but that's not what it means and I think the point has been very well established

that it is being read into the text to say that, well, this is referring to some replication in the past. It says that he is the charakter, the stamp of his being, of his being as omnipotent, eternal, unlimited. Then the charakter must be as well or it's not truly a charakter, it's not that stamp. And what we're being told is, well, it's not as clear, it's not as big, it's not as powerful, then it's not a charakter.

Greg Stafford. That's just not how copies are made.

Moderator. Next question. A question for Dr. White.

Question. Actually, the question is for both of you. Both of you have gone through very long explanations as far as the grammar for John 1:1, could you try to simplify it as simple as possible so that everybody could understand the distinction between ha theos and theos in John 1:1c?

Dr. James White. I went the first and the last double one. Could we ask Mr. Stafford?

Greg Stafford. Am I being asked too?

Dr. James White. We were both asked about that.

Greg Stafford. Is Dr. White asking me to or is....?

Moderator. No.

Dr. James White. The last time both of us were addressed, I had to go first so you got to respond to that and I'd like to have the opportunity to go the other direction.

Greg Stafford. I just sense a reason behind this.

Dr. James White. Yeah, I just explained what the reason was.

Greg Stafford. It's very simple. You have in John 1:1 a reference to two beings, one who was with God in the beginning. That one is described as theos without the article. God is described as theos with the article. You have a distinction made in terms of theos, one with the article, one without. The only fair thing it would seem to do is to carry over that distinction into our English translations. Few of them do it.

Dr. James White. John 1:1 says the Word existed in the beginning, it was eternal, the Word was in personal relationship with the Father, and the Word is, as to his being, deity. This is paralleled with verse 18 which says he is the monogenes theos who has revealed the Father. How can a mere God reveal the Father if he is, indeed, and this takes us back to the issue we had before, the exact representation of his person.

Moderator. We have time for one more question.

Question. This question is for Mr. Stafford. Why would the Father allow the logos to use so many names that he uses for himself like Jehovah, Mighty God, Almighty God, Wonderful God, the first and the last, etc. and yet expect people not to understand that Jesus is God in a non-Unitarian sense, i.e. in the context of those passages stating there is one God?

Greg Stafford. You mentioned a lot of titles and I'm not familiar with a lot of names that are given to the logos outside of the divine name itself, which I do believe is given to the logos in some sense just as it is given to other spiritual beings in intertestamental Jewish literature, and even angels in the Hebrew Scriptures who are directly addressed as Jehovah or God on occasion as they stand in place of God delivering his will and message to his people. I can think of no one who would be more befitting of the titles and descriptions that belong to God than his own Son.

Dr. James White. The question illustrates the point that we've been making all evening and that is, if we believe that Jesus is a god and all of these titles of deity can be applied to him and we have to use that term "in some sense," then we do not have any way of identifying what is idolatry, we have no way of identifying the true God and worshiping the true God in spirit and in truth, and that's been, I think, the primary issue this evening.

Moderator. Thank you very much and I'd like to commend both of you on the professional job you did and the decorum that was here. Thank you very much.