February 2011

Frank W. Nelte

CORRESPONDENCE WITH WADE COX REGARDING UNITARIANISM

A little over a week ago a friend asked me to explain Psalm 45:7, Hebrews 1:9 and 1 Peter 3:21-22. After several emails I asked some questions to help me understand what needed explaining in these verses. I then received simultaneous responses from my friend Tom and also from Wade Cox. Since I saw numerous flaws in Wade's message to me, I decided to write a reply to address the main issues that are of concern to me.

That reply ended up being about 20 pages long. Below I present my email in which I asked my questions, followed by the two responses from Tom and from Wade Cox, followed by my reply to the issues Wade raised in his message to me. The whole article is about 28 pages long.

In my reply I explain a number of issues that I believe are of general interest to most of you, issues that I haven't really addressed in any of my other articles. I have also received a request from other people who attend with Wade Cox that I reply to Wade's message. And so I have turned my reply into an article, with the emails leading up to my reply providing some general background.

So let's start with my email, in which I asked my questions. Please note that all emphasis in bold print throughout this article is mine, which I added especially to Wade's message to help me quickly locate the key issues to which I wanted to respond.

MY EMAIL TO TOM

Hi again Tom,

I am getting ready to start writing an article on Psalm 45, etc. Before I get into the actual writing though, it would be helpful if I correctly understand **your position**. Based on what you have said thus far I understand your position as follows. Please point out to me if I don't have it correct.

1) You believe Jesus Christ pre-existed as a "Son" with God the Father, whom you refer to as "Eloah", the Most High God (this is an observation not a criticism). I don't know if by "pre-existence" you mean that Jesus Christ ALWAYS existed with the Father, OR that Jesus Christ only CAME INTO EXISTENCE at some point BEFORE THE TIME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT?

Can you please help me here to understand which case correctly reflects your position?

2) You believe that Jesus Christ, however long you believe He has existed, has ALWAYS been a Son of God. You believe that the Father-Son relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ certainly goes back to before the time of the New Testament? Does that Father-Son relationship go back to the time of Adam, or earlier?

3) Does this mean that you believe that God the Father CREATED Jesus Christ at some point before the New Testament, or even before the creation of Adam? IF God created Jesus Christ, HOW did that creation differ from the creation of angels? Or was it the same type of creation? IF you believe God the Father created Jesus Christ, THEN exactly what is it that sets Jesus Christ apart from the angels?

4) Do you believe that the God who did the creating in Genesis 1 was God the Father or Jesus Christ?

5) What role or function did Jesus Christ have prior to His birth as a human being, since you believe that He did exist?

6) When Jesus Christ was born as a human being, did He become a Son of God for the SECOND time? WHAT PURPOSE did Christ's birth as a son of Mary have if Christ had ALL ALONG already been a Son of God?

These are not intended to be trick questions. They are all aimed at helping me to understand your perspective on Jesus Christ's position within the greater confines of God's plan. Correctly understanding your position on these matters will help me to approach the explanation of Psalm 45, etc. from the most suitable perspective.

Thank you.

Frank

REPLY FROM TOM

Hi Frank,

Lois and I host Sabbath Services here in our home which is an all day event since after services we sit and have a Sabbath meal with the small group who meet with us. **Your questions are certainly valid ones for clarification.** Since I still work and tomorrow is a work day for me, if it is all right with you **I am going to send you some study papers that will answer your questions**, since your questions will require more than just a quick or short explanations. These papers will give detail that will assist you with the approach you decide to take.

Stay safe in these turbulent weather times. Are you still in Texas?

Tom

SIMULTANEOUS EMAIL RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM WADE COX

Mr Frank Nelte

Dear Frank,

Over the years members of CCG have sent me the papers that you have distributed to them from time to time. **I watched with interest as you progressed in understanding over the calendar and saw the real horrors and heresy of the Hillel system and came to grips with the fact that it could not be supported.** CCG had done away with the Hillel system and restored the Temple Calendar and New Moons and the Jubilees from its inception on **1 Abib 1994**.

The matter of great concern to me is the fact that **you seem unwilling to address**, or ignorant of, **the history of the doctrines of the Churches of God over the last two millennia and particularly from the First and Second Centuries**. The history of the churches of God are **contained in the two works** General Distribution of the Sabbath-keeping Churches (No. 122) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p122.html and the paper The Role of the Fourth Commandment in the Historical Sabbath-keeping Churches of God (No. 170) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p170.html. The table in # 170 give a good outline of the eras and doctrines of the COGs.

I saw that one of the CCG **ministers** in California, who knows you, **had sent you two papers that deal**

with the errors of the WCG and Herbert Armstrong's doctrine of Ditheism (Ditheism No. 76B) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p076b.html and How God Became a Family (No. 187) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p187.html. **You would do well to study those texts and the others that I will refer to you below.**

For you to be of greater use to the faith you must redress these deficiencies in your understanding. To continue to spread these errors damages many in the faith and perpetuates the errors of the WCG system and for which **God is having it destroyed**. I write to you along these lines because **you appear to have been able to break free of the Calendar errors** and there is hope that you may well do the same on the Nature of God. I note that **you appear not to be dependent upon these offshoots for a salary** which is a great blessing.

I see that **you are going to write a paper on Psalm 45**. CCG issued a paper on that Psalm and on Psalm 110 **many years ago** and it may be of use for you to examine those papers.

http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p177.html and http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p178.html.

The **simple fact** of the matter is that **Herbert Armstrong and the WCG had no understanding of the Church of God's doctrines on the Nature of God** nor did they understand that they had unwittingly adopted **a polytheist and** incorrect form of the **pagan** doctrines of the **worship of Attis** that had entered the church from Rome. In the East it was in the worship of **Adonis** among the Greeks and **Osiris/Isis** in the Egyptians, and **Baal** and **Mithra** in the Middle East and **the Sun cults** generally.

Most if not all significant theologians agree that the Bible is Unitarian. For example **Calvin**, **Harnack** and **Brunner all agree** that is the case and **also** with **the Early Church and Islam**. The facts of the belief of **the Early Church** show that the teaching and beliefs of **the disciples of John** and his disciple **Polycarp** and their disciples **were unquestioned subordinationist Unitarian**. Their disciples **Irenaeus** and **Hippolytus**, who were both **trained** at Smyrna, **were Subordinationist Unitarians** as were **the theologians at Rome until the Middle of the Second Century**. Binitarianism did not exist in Christianity **until ca 170 CE**. It is doubtful that **Armstrong's form of Ditheism** ever did. The doctrines of the early church are explained in the text Early Theology of the Godhead (No. 127) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p127.html and see also The Original Doctrines of the Christian Faith (No. 088) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p088.html. **At this time they began to elevate Christ above the other sons of God in the Host** as you will see from their writings quoted in the papers.

After **the heretic Anicetus** introduced Easter to the church ca 154 at the urging of the **Christianised followers of Attis** they had to rewrite the theology. **Up until that time** the entire church was in **agreement that Christ was one of the Sons of God** and was **the Angel of Yahovah that gave the law to Moses at Sinai**. **Justin Martyr** at Rome was also firmly of that view, as was the entire church. The progression from that view to **the Binitarianism of the god Attis** was formed by **these heretics of Attis** who had not repented. That process is explained in **the papers** Origins of Radical Unitarianism and Binitarianism (No. 76C) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p076c.html.

From your refutation of Anthony Buzzard, you appear not to understand **the difference between the Radical Unitarianism advanced from the Reformation and the Biblical Unitarianism of the First Century**. That is understandable, in that the attacks on the First Century doctrines were to label them as **Arians**, which is **logically absurd** as the doctrines were in place from the First Century and **three hundred years before Arius** was of significance. See the papers Arianism and Semi-Arianism (No. 167) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p167.html and Socinianism, Arianism and Unitarianism (No. 185) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p185.html

It was a basic requirement of the faith that **Christ was a pre-existent son of God with the other sons**

of God who was the Angel of YHVH (see the paper The Angel of YHVH (No. 024) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p024.html). This view had not changed in the churches of God until **Herbert Armstrong** introduced **the Ditheist heresy** (see the paper The Pre-existence of Jesus Christ (No. 243) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p243.html). **The doctrines of the COG (SD)**, and especially in the Caldwell Conference, no matter what the modern day plants in Denver say, **were Biblical Unitarian and they kept the Temple Calendar**. Caldwell kept the feasts but Oregon did not save for the Lords Supper. **Armstrong was silent about them to conceal their doctrines.** It is impossible that he did not know about them.

The many texts involving the Sons of God and the position of Christ in the Bible are in the other papers on the Nature of God and the Names of God The Bible is quite clear that **there is One True God who alone is immortal (1Tim 6:16) and he is the Father of Christ and the other sons of God**. **His name is Eloah** (Prov. 30:4-5). He is referred to by **Moses** in Deut. 32:15; **Job** mentions Him in approx 45 places; and He is named **numerous times in Ezra 4:24-7:26** where the Temple is the Temple of Eloah, the Law is the Law of Eloah, The priest are the priests of Eloah and they sacrifice to Eloah and worship Eloah. **He is the One True God**. The WCG referred to Eloah in the Long Correspondence course in Lesson 8 as the basis of the word Elohim but they speared off into Ditheism in the next lesson. **Eloah is singular and admits of no plurality whatsoever**. It is the same being as **Elahh** in the Chaldean, and into the Aramaic which is the basis of **Allah**' in the Arabic. **Eloah extends himself to become Elohim** (elahhin (Chal.)) as the Ha Elohim where the sons of God were the elohim and of the Council of the Elohim in both **Det. 32:8** (RSV) as the 70(2) sons of God (The MT changed the text to read sons of Israel, which we now know to have been **a forgery** of the Sopherim from **the LXX and the DSS**). These are the inner council in Revelation chapters 4 and 5. These are also explained in the work Arche of the Creation of God as Alpha and Omega (No. 229) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p229.html. **This being is referred to as Eloah, Ha Elohim, The Elyon, Yahovah Elohim, Yahovah of Hosts, or Yahovih** (SHD 3069) this version of the name is only ever used of The One True God and is read by Jews as Elohim whereas they read Yahovah (SHD 3068) as Adonai to distinguish the two beings. **Yahovah is used of many of the Host appearing for Eloah** and is a third person form of the verb meaning He causes to be. It is an honorific (see the paper The Angel of YHVH No. 024 above).

Job states that the redeemer was one of the thousand (Job. 23:33). Jacob says he was **the Angel that redeemed him** who was also **the elohim that fed him** (Gen. 48:15-16).

He was **the Angel of the Lord** at the head of the Elect and the Household of David (Zech 12:8). **These elect will become elohim as are the sons of God in the Host** (see the paper The Elect as Elohim (No. 001) at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/p001.html)

All of the Host are sons of God and Satan is among them (Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:4-7) and **many are also Morning Stars** as 38:7 demonstrates.

Look also at the papers in the Bible Study section on the Nature of God at http://www.ccg.org/english/s/b1.html. The audios on the topic will also be of use. A list is from the B1 below.

I hope you do well in your studies and that you are **able to divest yourself of the errors of Armstrongism**. To restore the Churches of God in the US and BC this error has to be properly addressed and corrected.

Wade Cox

Coordinator General

CCG

www.ccg.org

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MY REPLY TO TOM & TO WADE COX

Hello Tom & Wade,

Thanks for your reply, Tom. Yes, we still live in Texas. And while we have twice had snow for 2-3 days each time, the weather in our area hasn't really been a problem. It's been in the low 70's for some time now, and our one peach tree and one plum tree already have a lot of blossoms, though we may still get another cold spell in the next 3 weeks or so?

I see that you forwarded my email to Wade for his input, which is fine, since he is the author of the things you now believe. However, I must admit that I am somewhat surprised at the complexity of your (Wade's) reply. I thought my questions were simple enough to warrant simple and straight-forward answers. **For example**: (The Answers I provide for you below are what I have gleaned from Wade's reply. In some of those answers I may still be missing something?)

My Question #1:

I don't know if by "pre-existence" you mean that Jesus Christ ALWAYS existed with the Father, OR that Jesus Christ only CAME INTO EXISTENCE at some point BEFORE THE TIME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT? Can you please help me here to understand which case correctly reflects your position?

Your Answer:

Christ was a pre-existent Son of God with the other sons of God, who are also called angels. All these sons of God were created before the time of Adam. Or some answer to this effect?

My Question #2:

You believe that Jesus Christ, however long you believe He has existed, has ALWAYS been a Son of God. You believe that the Father-Son relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ certainly goes back to before the time of the New Testament? Does that Father-Son relationship go back to the time of Adam, or earlier?

Your Answer:

Yes, Jesus Christ like all the other angels has also always since His creation been a Son of God. That Father-Son relationship certainly predates the time of Adam. Or some answer to this effect?

My Question #3:

Does this mean that you believe that God the Father CREATED Jesus Christ at some point before the New Testament, or even before the creation of Adam? IF God created Jesus Christ, HOW did that creation differ from the creation of angels? Or was it the same type of creation? IF you believe God the Father created Jesus Christ, THEN exactly what is it that sets Jesus Christ apart from the angels?

Your Answer:

Yes, God the Father created Jesus Christ at the same time as all the other angels. In type Jesus Christ is the same as all the other angels, since God the Father is the only One who is immortal. So there is no major distinction between Jesus Christ and all the angels. Or some answer to this effect?

My Question #4:

Do you believe that the God who did the creating in Genesis 1 was God the Father or Jesus Christ?

Your Answer:

God the Father did the creating in Genesis 1. Or: Jesus Christ did the creating in Genesis 1. After going through Wade’s reply I am still not sure what your position here is?

My Question #5:

What role or function did Jesus Christ have prior to His birth as a human being, since you believe that He did exist?

Your Answer:

Before His birth as a human being Jesus Christ was one of the many sons of God, another designation for angels. In that capacity He interacted with the people of God as God’s messenger. Or some answer to this effect?

My Question #6:

When Jesus Christ was born as a human being, did He become a Son of God for the SECOND time? WHAT PURPOSE did Christ's birth as a son of Mary have if Christ had ALL ALONG already been a Son of God?

Your Answer:

Yes, Jesus Christ did become a Son of God for the second time. Or: No, he had been a Son of God all along and for God's purposes He just assumed a human existence. Or some answer to this effect? Actually your email gave no clue as to how you would answer this question.

Well, Wade, that's more or less what I was expecting from Tom. The answers I have provided on your behalf above may not yet correctly reflect your position? But I did try my best to discern what your views are on all these questions. If I am still somewhat off the mark regarding your views, then that is due to a lack of clarity in your response. I tried to find your answers to my questions in the response you sent me.

However, I believe it is unrealistic to expect me to read 10 or 20 or more of your articles just so that I can have six simple questions answered, where all the answers put together hardly take up one full page. You need to discern the difference between a request for answers to very specific questions on the one hand, and a request for understanding of a general subject on the other hand. I am really looking for answers to very specific questions; I am not really looking for a series of lectures that expound your total position, because at this stage **I am not interested in the reasons for your position** (even as you aren't interested in the reasons for my position). **I simply want to know what your position actually is.** Please give me the freedom to decide for myself whether your position is justified or not, without having to listen to all your reasons. After all, that is exactly what you yourself do when you read (or skim?) any of my articles: you don't necessarily follow my reasoning in those articles either. No, you decide for yourself whether you agree with my explanations or not, independent of any reasoning I may present (e.g. in my recent article in response to Anthony Buzzard you didn't follow any of my reasoning).

Now the reason I asked my questions is this: I still have no idea what your problem with Psalm 45:7 is? Exactly what is it that YOU read into this verse that I don't see; what is it that you deduce from this verse? And as long as I don't understand what you seem to get from this verse (and its repetition in Hebrews 1:9) I can't really write about it, since my main purpose for considering to write such an article is to address the points that are of concern TO YOU (Tom). You, Tom, are the one who asked me to explain this verse, and I still don't know what I am supposed to explain?

After all, the text is almost self-explanatory: Jesus Christ is called God and He has a throne with God the Father. Is the "mystery" here, which I seem to not get, about drawing distinctions between "Elohim" and "Eloah" and "El"? Surely you can tell me in one or two pages what your deductions here are? Surely I don't have to go through your whole website and through all the articles you listed in your email to get an answer to these simple questions? What is it that YOU deduce from this verse.

Next, I believe that I need to respond to some of the things you, Wade, mentioned in your email to me. In each case **I'll quote the relevant statement from your email**. I want to make clear that none of my comments are directed at you as a person. It is your views that I believe are terribly flawed. It is the flaws in your reasoning that need to be directly confronted and exposed. I trust that you will be able to discern that, while my comments are very direct and emphatic, they are without malice. You yourself tend to do the same thing, i.e. to speak bluntly and directly. Just put it down to our military backgrounds. So here goes:

1) **YOU WROTE:** "I watched with interest as you progressed in understanding over the calendar and saw the real horrors and heresy of the Hillel system and came to grips with the fact that it could not be supported."

MY REPLY: Does that sound benignly condescending, like you are the authority on the calendar? After all, I rejected the Jewish calendar about 15 years ago, and that process took less than two months. What took some time after that rejection of the Jewish calendar was figuring out a correct replacement. Generally, identifying problems is a whole lot easier than offering viable solutions to eliminate those problems. Lots of people can identify problems in various areas of life, but most of them can't give you

viable remedies for the problems they are able to identify.

Next, I never really viewed it as “the real horrors” of the Hillel system. You make it sound rather dramatic. To me every heresy is on the same level as all other heresies; they are wrong before God. The only exceptions to this approach are heresies that constitute a direct affront to Jesus Christ (e.g. Matthew 12:24, 31-32); then it is always far more serious as far as I am concerned. But for me calendar issues have nothing to do with any “horror”, any more than I would use the word “horror” to describe someone’s insistence that God requires Christians today to observe new moons. (They also tie in with the calendar, right?)

2) **YOU WROTE:** “CCG had done away with the Hillel system and restored **the Temple Calendar** and **New Moons** and the Jubilees from its inception on **1 Abib** 1994.”

MY REPLY: There is no such thing as “a Temple Calendar”. That is something you yourself have devised, and it has nothing at all to do with any “Temple”. You are trying to confer credibility to your particular calendar model by attempting to associate it with “the Temple”. To borrow an expression from you, it is “logically absurd” to attempt to link any calendar to the Temple (Solomon’s or Zerubbabel’s or Herod’s?). You know that the Bible doesn’t use that expression, any more than it uses the expressions “God’s Calendar” or “the Sacred Calendar”. WHY are you trying to artificially create **a fancy name** for your calendar? Are you trying to achieve “credibility by association”, somewhat like grouping new moons “in the company of” Sabbaths and Holy Days?

Next, **WHY** do you use the word “**ABIB**”? Don’t you understand that “Abib” was rejected by God’s servant Ezra in favor of the Babylonian name Nisan? Don’t you understand that during His ministry Jesus Christ observed the Passover during NISAN, and not Abib? Using the term Abib when you really mean Nisan is like speaking in King James English TODAY, if thou knowest what this meaneth (i.e. if you get my drift)? Does Abib sound more righteous or more godly to you? In using Abib you are trying to resurrect a name that died out about 2500 years ago. Why not live in the real world, where, if you want to use the Jewish names for the months, you use the real Jewish names, not the dead names. There is really no justification for wanting to refer to the first month as Abib. God’s people from Ezra’s time onwards dropped that name in favor of Nisan. Furthermore, if you want to insist on using Abib, THEN you also need to know ALL of the OLD Hebrew names for the other 11 months of the year. But you don’t know all those names.

It is very farcical to refer to the first month as Abib (old Hebrew) and then to refer to the seventh month as Tishri (new Babylonian), as you do in your article “TISHRI in Relation to the Equinox”. To use the names Abib and Tishri together is like giving a cell phone to Davy Crockett at the Alamo; they just don’t go together. If you are going to accept the name Tishri, then don’t be a hypocrite by insisting on using Abib instead of Nisan. If you are going to have to use SOME of the Babylonian names which Ezra authorized for use, then be honest enough to use ALL OF THEM!

Next, there is no such thing as “restoring” new moons. New moons (except for Trumpets) were never kept in any religious sense! I have posted an article on my website which utterly demolishes your statement on new moons. Since that article deals specifically with something you have written, some members of CCG have surely forwarded it to you for your attention. Yet you have made no attempt “to redress that deficiency in your understanding”. You know as well as I do that there is no instruction anywhere in the Bible that tells us today to observe new moons (except Trumpets). It is presumptuous on your part to try to elevate new moon observance to the level of Sabbath keeping and Holy Day observances, because you have no biblical authority to do so. Somebody has to tell you this.

Lastly, your claim that you have “restored” Jubilees is also presumptuous. Doesn’t a jubilee involve a period of 50 years, and hasn’t your church only been around for less than 20 years? Exactly HOW have

you “restored” jubilees? On what evidence do you know exactly which years should be jubilees, since there is no evidence anywhere in the OT that Israel ever observed a jubilee year?

3) **YOU WROTE:** “The matter of great concern to me is the fact that you seem unwilling to address, or ignorant of, **the history of the doctrines** of the Churches of God over the last two millennia and particularly from the First and Second Centuries.”

MY REPLY: What does history have to do with **THE TRUTH**? What is it that makes us FREE from false teachings: history or the truth? Check John 8:32. Yes, I did look into the history of the early Church of God. And what becomes clear from any such examination is that for most subjects there isn’t very much reliable information available, when it comes to the years 70 - 200 A.D., as far as the history of the NT Church is concerned. Any interpretation of the history of that specific period requires an enormous amount of spin, and considerable speculation, if any supposedly definitive and precise conclusions are to be reached on most issues. There are scanty details here and there, and any interpretation frequently requires a considerable amount of author’s licence.

The things I believe and teach do not depend on history! The things I believe are based on how I understand the Bible, and history is an excellent SUPPLEMENT in that process. History is the cart, but it is not the horse. Biblical instructions lead and history can supplement.

You, Wade, are trying to use history to build up some **artificial support** for your rather unbiblical teachings regarding Jesus Christ. That doesn’t really cut it! FIRST prove your position conclusively from the biblical facts (which happen to contradict your position), and IF you could do that, THEN you could bring in history to augment the information you have already proved to be true.

THE DOCTRINES that are spelled out in the Bible are on a higher level of authority and credibility than whatever doctrines your research into the history of the first two centuries may reveal. Don’t try to use history to contradict clear biblical statements regarding Jesus Christ. I’ll comment more on some of your historical references in a moment.

4) **YOU WROTE:** “I saw that one of the CCG ministers in California, who knows you, had sent you two papers that deal with the errors of the WCG and Herbert Armstrong’s doctrine of Ditheism.”

MY REPLY: Just who has given you the authority to ordain ministers? Did you just take that authority upon yourself? Aren’t you in danger of acting presumptuously here? How do you know that God has called you to be a minister? Are you SURE that God has given you, Wade Cox, the authority to ordain other men? For the record, I myself have thus far never yet ordained any man into the ministry, neither before nor after leaving WCG. So how do you know that you have the authority to ordain ministers? Do you just “feel” that you have that authority? Or is there some other way that helps you to know that God wants you to ordain ministers?

Next, your papers don’t in any way disprove what Mr. Armstrong taught regarding God the Father and Jesus Christ. In this matter the error really lies with you and not with Mr. Armstrong’s teachings.

5) **YOU WROTE:** “For you to be of greater use to the faith you must redress these deficiencies in your understanding.”

MY REPLY: Here our feelings are more or less mutual. I believe that it is you who needs to redress the deficiencies in **your** understanding, some of which I will address in this response.

6) **YOU WROTE:** “You appear to have been able to break free of the Calendar errors”, and “you appear not to be dependent upon these offshoots for a salary”.

MY REPLY: Since you expressed some uncertainty, I'll confirm your impression. I MOST CERTAINLY rejected the Jewish calendar about the time you did. The calendar articles on my website amount to many hundreds of pages, all of them devoted to exposing the flaws with the Jewish calendar. My rejection of the Jewish calendar is a lot more than "appearances".

And since leaving my employ in WCG back in 1994 (that's about when you started CCG, right?) I have NEVER received a salary from any CoG. And I don't solicit money from God's people. I did notice that your website does solicit donations via the red button "**Online Contributions**". Hmmm?

7) **YOU WROTE:** "The simple fact of the matter is that Herbert Armstrong and the WCG had no understanding of the Church of God's doctrines on the Nature of God."

MY REPLY: The simple fact of the matter actually is that Mr. Armstrong had a far better understanding of the nature of God than you have. You can't prove correct doctrines by history! **History is just a record of what happened in the past**. FIRST prove the truth about the Family of God from the Bible AND THEN you can back up that proof with historical information. Never forget that HISTORY contains far more examples of people, including Israel and the Church, doing things WRONG, than history provides examples of people doing things right! That's one lesson from the messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3. Get history into the correct perspective. And NEVER attempt to use history to argue against clear biblical statements.

Whenever people put a great deal of emphasis on history, then it always tells me that they are trying to cover up some weaknesses somewhere else. After all, when you have clear, unambiguous biblical statements to make your case, then you don't even need history as an appeal to authority. **It's when you lack strong biblical support for your position** that suddenly history becomes enormously important. It's a second-fiddle avenue for seeking support where real biblical support is scanty or non-existent.

If it seems that my response to you is blunter and more confrontational than it perhaps could be, I would like to make clear that your assertions that Mr. Armstrong adopted "polytheistic pagan doctrines" are to me likewise somewhat confrontational and provocative. You certainly have the freedom to call the things I believe polytheistic and pagan, but then you should not be surprised when I respond equally bluntly. It's nothing personal, just some good old militaristic bluntness.

8) **YOU WROTE:** "Most if not **all significant theologians** agree that the Bible is Unitarian. For example **Calvin**, **Harnack** and **Brunner** all agree that is the case and also with t**he Early Church** and **Islam**."

MY REPLY: For a start, what on earth do supposedly "significant theologians" have to do with **THE TRUTH**? Instead of proving your point from the Scriptures, you appeal to pagan "theologians"! You appeal to human beings for support! How is it that your first line of appeal is not to the Bible?

Next, do you really not know that **Calvin** had the Spaniard Miguel Serveto burned at the stake for denying **THE TRINITY**?! So was Calvin a "trinitarian unitarian"? Don't you understand that John Calvin has about as much credibility amongst God's people as the Pope?

Next, you appeal to **Adolf von Harnack** (died in 1930) for support. Do you really not know that Harnack was nothing more than a jackass theologian who openly rejected the validity of the Gospel of John?! Do you know that Harnack taught that the Epistle of **Hebrews** was **WRITTEN BY A WOMAN**, by **Priscilla** of Acts 18:2, 18? Is that the clown you look to for support of your ideas? Do you want to be identified with Harnack? Do YOU, like Harnack, reject the Gospel of John? Do you not know that Harnack in his lectures entitled "Das Wesen des Christentums", which literally means "The Essence of Christianity", though the English translation of those lectures is titled "What is Christianity", denied the possibility of

miracles?! Harnack wrote (quoting the English translation): “That the earth in its course stood still; that a she-ass spoke; that a storm was quieted by a word, **we do not believe, and we shall never again believe**; but that the lame walked, the blind saw, and the deaf heard will not be so summarily dismissed as an illusion.” So, Wade, do you also not believe that “a she-ass spoke” or that “a storm was quieted by a word”, that **those things were just “illusions”**? By his own evidence Harnack was a pagan who didn’t believe the Bible and who rejected Jesus Christ’s power to perform miracles. Is that the authority for your teachings?

Next you appeal to **Emil Brunner**, a Swiss theologian who died in 1966. Do you really not know that Brunner did nothing more than try to establish compatibility between the Lutheran and the Reformed (i.e. Calvinistic) ideas about salvation? Don’t you know that Brunner, like Harnack, openly rejected many of the miracles recorded in the Bible? Don’t you know that Brunner also rejected the belief that the Bible records the words of God? So, do you, Wade, share Brunner’s views on these matters as well? From a Church of God perspective there isn’t really any difference between Harnack and Brunner.

Next, exactly who do you have in mind with your reference to “the early Church”? Do you mean the **Catholic Nicene Church Fathers**? All your other references here make this the most logical inference.

And then you refer to **Islam**! Are you out of your mind? Are you really looking to Islam to tell you what **the Bible** teaches about the nature of Jesus Christ?

Why is it that in all your reasoning you appeal to non-Christians? Do you not understand that Calvin, Harnack and Brunner were just as much non-Christians as are the followers of Islam? How is it that you need to appeal to non-Christians to support your views about Christ’s nature? None of the people you have quoted here have any real credibility at all! And their views are clearly contrary to the Scriptures. By their own admission Harnack and Brunner reject all those sections of Scripture that they didn’t like, following in the footsteps of Martin Luther. And these are the people you consider to be “significant theologians”?

It’s hard to imagine how you could possibly make a weaker case for your ideas than by appealing to Islam and Calvin and Harnack and Brunner!

9) **YOU WROTE**: “... the teaching and beliefs of the disciples of John and his disciple Polycarp and their disciples were **unquestioned subordinationist Unitarian**. Their disciples **Irenaeus** and **Hippolytus**, who were both trained at Smyrna, were Subordinationist Unitarians as were **the theologians at Rome** until the Middle of the Second Century.”

MY REPLY: It is quite clear that you are appealing to THE CATHOLIC CHURCH for support for your position. **Irenaeus** (died in 202) was one of the Catholic Ante-Nicene Church Fathers, who **faithfully taught Catholic doctrines**. He was the Catholic bishop at Lyons, France. And he was instrumental in establishing the Catholic teaching about Easter. Here is a quotation from page 618 of Volume 1 of the Ante-Nicene Fathers (Ages software edition):

> M. von Engelhardt has attempted to extend this line of treatment to **Justin's entire theology**, and to show that **his conceptions of God**, of free will and righteousness, of redemption, grace, and merit **prove the influence of the cultivated Greek pagan world** of the 2nd century, dominated by the Platonic and Stoic philosophy.

Justin’s “conceptions of God” came from Platonic and Stoic philosophy, from “the cultivated Greek pagan world”. So when you appeal to Justin Martyr that is like appealing to Plato and Socrates and his

whole gang. It's becoming pretty clear that your views about the nature of Jesus Christ rely very heavily on Catholic "saints" and other theologians, who were influenced by pagan Greek philosophies. That's not the same as presenting book-chapter-verse from the Bible to support your views, is it?

Since Justin Martyr is the subject of your sentence, the logical deduction is that your reference to "the entire church" means "the entire CATHOLIC Church" at that time. Is that what you mean?

13) **YOU WROTE:** "... **Armstrong's form of Ditheism**" and "...**the Binitarianism of the god Attis**".

MY REPLY: Without any proof whatsoever you attempt to link the things Mr. Armstrong taught about God to pagan teachings. You are appealing to "guilt by association". Such appeals never prove anything. The things Mr. Armstrong taught about Jesus Christ are all based on "book-chapter-verse", the approach that you yourself have clearly avoided. It's immaterial whether or not you can find similarities to some things which you can find in pagan religions, because if you look hard enough you can find parallels to just about everything somewhere in some pagan religion. But with these statements you are clearly attempting to discredit our appeals to very specific Scriptures in support of our beliefs.

However, your attempts to link our beliefs to paganism do afford me the freedom to speak equally plainly about your ideas. And for that I am thankful, since just like you I also don't like beating around the bush.

14) **YOU WROTE:** "From your refutation of Anthony Buzzard, you appear not to understand the difference between the **Radical Unitarianism** advanced from the Reformation and the **Biblical Unitarianism** of the First Century."

MY REPLY: You are correct in that I had not focused on the splits within the unitarian community. However, the division you refer to is artificial. There is no such thing as "BIBLICAL Unitarianism" because the Bible simply doesn't teach Unitarianism. That's why instead of referring to BIBLICAL PROOF for your position, you have instead opted for a focus on the history of the Catholic Church, attempting to draw the attention away from the Bible itself.

And the main reasons I put forward to refute Anthony Buzzard's position actually apply equally to your position. While you attempt to explain Psalm 110:1 somewhat differently from the way Anthony attempts to explain it, your explanation cannot negate the fact that TWO GODS are specifically mentioned in this verse. Can you understand that NO ANGEL WILL EVER SIT AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD? Because that is what Paul made very clear in Hebrews 1:13. So Psalm 110:1 cannot be a reference to an angel, even if you, Wade Cox, decide to call that angel "a son of God".

It's got nothing to do with history! It has to do with the significance and the ramifications of someone actually sitting at the right hand of God the Father. And there is a meaning and significance attached to the fact that One specific individual is told that He will sit at the right hand of God the Father ... it is because that individual is also God!

15) **YOU WROTE:** "It was a basic requirement of the faith that Christ was a pre-existent son of God **with the other sons of God**."

MY REPLY: To you that may seem like just an ordinary matter-of-fact statement. But to me that statement is tantamount to **blasphemy**! I believe it is an extremely serious insult to Jesus Christ, to consider Him to be or to have been on the level of angels. It is that type of insult that stirs me up to speak bluntly without regard for anyone's feelings. If anyone can speak like that about Jesus Christ, then the last thing on earth that I am going to be concerned about is perhaps hurting the feelings of the people who speak that way about Jesus Christ. For someone who professes to be a part of the Church of God, let alone views himself as a minister of Jesus Christ, that statement displays a huge lack of

respect for Jesus Christ. Your statement here about Jesus Christ basically amounts to saying that **Jesus Christ is** "**JUST ONE OF THE BOYS**"! That's what your statement is saying, isn't it? He is supposedly "just one of all of those sons of God". That is also the basic insinuation in your earlier statement that "at this time (i.e. 170 A.D.) **they began to elevate Christ above** the other sons of God in the Host", implying that He really shouldn't have been elevated.

I am not saying these things in malice. But neither will I tiptoe around statements that are an insult to Jesus Christ.

16) **YOU WROTE:** "The doctrines of the COG (SD) ... were Biblical Unitarian and they kept the Temple Calendar."

MY REPLY: First of all, history can never prove your point! Do you agree **with everything** that the "COG (SD)" taught and believed? Or do you pick and choose from amongst their beliefs, as you have clearly done with the beliefs of the nascent Catholic Church? Next, your appeal to some supposed "Temple Calendar" is nonsense. The only way you could claim to have "a Temple Calendar" is if you found the instructions for such a calendar **IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER INSTRUCTIONS THAT PERTAIN TO THE TEMPLE**! Anything that is not recorded in the Old Testament cannot possibly be identified as a "Temple Calendar". Show us the Scriptures that spell out the instructions for your "Temple Calendar".

It's got nothing to do with Mr. Armstrong supposedly attempting "to conceal" certain teachings. Besides your claims in this regard being ridiculous, it once again gets back to the fact that history does not establish the right doctrines. The right doctrines are established by a correct understanding of the Scriptures, and in some cases that correct understanding may then be supplemented by historical data.

17) **YOU WROTE:** "The Bible is quite clear that **there is One True God who alone is immortal** (1Tim 6:16) and he is the Father of Christ and the other sons of God. **His name is Eloah** (Prov. 30:4-5)."

MY REPLY: Are you saying that Jesus Christ is NOT immortal? Are you saying that the angels, whom you call "the other sons of God", are not immortal? Can the angels die? If the angels are supposedly not immortal, is God keeping them alive artificially? Can there be spirit beings that are mortal, if they supposedly don't have immortality? What is it that would make a spirit being mortal? Jesus Christ said that He, Jesus Christ, had the ability "**TO GIVE ETERNAL LIFE**" to certain human beings (see John 17:2). So Someone who Himself supposedly is not immortal has the ability to give eternal life to other individuals. Doesn't that strike you as odd?

Next, you claim that "**Eloah**" is the name of God the Father, right? Now Jesus Christ plainly said "I have manifested (i.e. made known) **YOUR NAME** unto the men which You gave Me" (John 17:6). That is obviously an important statement. Yet nowhere did any of those apostles ever mention the name "Eloah". It is not found anywhere in the New Testament. The Greek word "theos" is used 1343 times in the NT, and 1320 times it is translated as "God" in the KJV. Why isn't this name "Eloah" mentioned at least now and then amongst these more than 1300 references to God? More on Eloah under the next point.

18) **YOU WROTE:** "**Eloah is singular and admits of no plurality whatsoever**."

MY REPLY: That's a very dogmatic statement, presented without any proof. But you are not the authority on biblical Hebrew. So let's look at the facts.

For example, one recognized authority on the Hebrew names for God was Marvin H. Pope who in 1955 wrote the book "EL IN THE UGARITIC TEXTS", in which Pope discusses the names "El", "Eloah" and

“Elohim” in great detail. Are you familiar with the information Pope has presented in this book? He was without question a highly qualified authority on this subject.

On page 9 Pope points out that all 57 occurrences of “Eloah” are found exclusively in poetry, and 41 of those occurrences are in the Book of Job (not “45" as you stated). There is a reason for why the name Eloah is only used in poetry.

On page 9 of his book Pope also states regarding **Elohim**: “**Morphologically it is the plural of ‘eloah’**”. So your claim that Eloah “admits of no plurality whatsoever” isn’t really correct, is it? Do you know more about Hebrew than Marvin Pope?

The Old Testament was written over a period of about 1000 years (i.e. from Moses to Malachi). You understand that all living languages are constantly changing, right? The only languages that don’t change are dead languages. And just like Greek and Latin and English, the Hebrew language underwent some changes in the course of that 1000-year period in its history.

Very briefly:

There are differences between syntactic languages and inflective languages. English is a **syntactic language**, which means that in English **the functions of words depend on their positions in a sentence**. The word order is extremely important in order to establish the correct meaning. Thus, for example, there is a huge difference between saying: “the dog bit the boy”, and in saying: “the boy bit the dog”. The words in these two statements, including all their endings, are identical, but the meanings conveyed are vastly different because of the differences in word order. That is typically the case in a syntactic language.

Hebrew, Greek and Latin, on the other hand, are **inflective languages**. In these languages the intended meaning is NOT conveyed by the word order in the sentence as much as it is by the endings attached to each word. In these languages it mostly doesn’t matter whether the word order is: the dog bit the boy, or whether the word order is: the boy bit the dog. Both forms can convey the same meaning, because in these languages **the functions of words are indicated by their endings**, largely independent of their positions in a sentence. Different endings for words in inflective languages convey different meanings.

Highly inflective languages also have declensions for nouns and adjectives (e.g. **Latin** has: nominative, vocative, accusative, genitive, dative, ablative; and **Greek** has: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, vocative; i.e. Greek does not have the ablative case of Latin.) In a syntactic language like English we don’t decline the nouns, etc.; instead we employ prepositions plus positioning within the sentence to convey those same meanings.

When we translate Hebrew into English, we are not just translating a set of words from one language into another language; we are also translating from one WAY of thinking into another WAY of thinking. Language experts and translators are obviously aware of these things. But most of us “amateur translators” who depend totally on the Strong’s numbering system, and who argue vociferously based on thumping our Strong’s Dictionary, are oblivious to these finer distinctions.

How does all this affect the word “Eloah”?

Inflective languages put very great importance on word endings and on a certain **compatibility of sounds** for adjacent words. Marvin Pope points out that sometimes there are grammatical reasons why one word (i.e. El, Eloah or Elohim) is chosen over another word ... i.e. certain combinations just wouldn’t sound right in Hebrew. Don’t expect those reasons to make sense to us English language speakers, because our language doesn’t function that way. Some reasons Marvin Pope presents for selecting one

of these names over another name in certain contexts in the Old Testament include:

1) to avoid the problem of numerical concordance of the noun with its attributive; e.g. “elohim gedolim” is embarrassingly ambiguous as applied to either pagan gods or to the God of Israel;

2) to avoid grammatical incongruities (e.g. “elohim gadol”)

[COMMENT: “Gadol” is a Hebrew adjective which means “great”.]

The point is this: A careful examination of these Hebrew names and the ways in which they are used, and **the reasons why** in certain contexts some combinations are linguistically inappropriate, leads to the conclusion that none of them are “personal names for God” more than any other names recorded in the Bible.

This also becomes clear from the use of **the vocative case**, briefly mentioned above.

The vocative case in inflective languages is the form of **direct address**, and this case was very significant in ancient times. In English this case is frequently rendered with the interjection “o” or “oh”, as in “O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?" in Shakespeare’s play. Similarly, in the sentence: “John, come here” the word “John” is in the vocative case. This vocative form is usually reserved for addressing people, though in poetry it is at times also applied to inanimate objects (e.g. “Oh Shenandoah, I long to see you”, or “Oh mountains, you are my home”). But in spite of such poetic licence the vocative case is used primarily for addressing a person directly.

Now the point for us here is that when we use someone’s name to address that person directly, then that is always the vocative case. So when people in Old Testament times addressed God directly, we would expect them to use **the Hebrew name in the vocative case**. So let’s examine the use of the vocative case with these names of God. That is easy to do, thanks to Marvin Pope already having made such an assessment in his book. The information below is based on Pope’s book.

Here is what we find:

1) The name “Elohim” is used 2606 times in the OT, of which number about 2346 refer to the true God. The absolute of **Elohim in the vocative** occurs **52 times in the Psalms**, of which 47 occurrences are in the so-called “Elohistic Psalms” (i.e. Psalms 42-83). The vocative for Elohim never occurs outside of the Book of Psalms. The Psalms are the places where the writer was typically addressing God directly. Thus approximately **1 in 45 occurrences** of Elohim (references to the true God) is in the vocative case.

2) The name “El” is used 245 times in the OT, including some references to idols. The absolute of **El in the vocative** occurs **6 times**, of which **5** occurrences are **in the Psalms** (Psalm 10:12; 16:1; 17:6; 139:17; 139:23) and **once in Numbers 12:13**. Numbers 12:13 is the place where Moses passionately besought God to heal Miriam’s leprosy (“heal her now, O God (“El” in the vocative), I beseech You”). Thus approximately **1 in 40 occurrences** of El is in the vocative case.

3) The name “Eloah” is used 57 times in the OT, including 6 references to pagan gods or idols. This name **Eloah** is used **only once in the vocative**, which is in **Psalm 139:19**. The 6 references to false gods are: 2 Chronicles 32:15; Daniel 11:37, 38 (two times), 39; Habakkuk 1:11 (the Chaldean leader “... shall impute this his power **unto his ELOAH**”). Overall, **1 in 51 references** of Eloah to the true God is in the vocative case.

This illustrates that the ratios of the vocative case to total uses for the true God is very similar for these three names, ranging from 1 in 40 uses to 1 in 51 uses. When addressing God directly, none of these

three names is favored over the other two names. If anything, the name Eloah is used both proportionately and in absolute terms less often to address God directly than either of the other two names. Even David's use of these names in the vocative case in the Book of Psalms (i.e. 52 + 5 + 1 = 58) shows that David clearly favored using the names Elohim and El over the name Eloah, when he, David, wished to address God directly with one of these three names. But at times **poetic considerations** also influenced which name for God David decided to use.

So in the **59 cases overall** of the vocative (i.e. including Numbers 12:13, the only place outside of the Book of Psalms) where God is directly addressed (i.e. the vocative case for the three nouns Elohim, El and Eloah) **only once** is this with the name **Eloah**. The vocative is used when we address an individual by his or her name. 98% of the time the names Elohim and El are used in preference to the name Eloah. Clearly the writers of the OT did not view Eloah as a more significant name for God than any of the other names.

All three of these names (elohim, el, eloah) are at times **also** used to **refer to idols**. This all by itself should make clear that none of these three names are the personal name of God the Father. If any one of these names was God's PERSONAL name, then it would never have been used in the Old Testament for any pagan idols. That should also be clear from the wording of Habakkuk 1:11, which tells us that the Chaldean leader imputes his power "**unto his eloah**". In fact, this wording makes clear that Habakkuk viewed the name "Eloah" more as a generic term for "God" or "gods", rather than a specific personal name.

Now let's go back to the usage of the name **Eloah over the course of 1000 years**. Here is what the THEOLOGICAL WORDBOOK OF THE OLD TESTAMENT (TWOT) says about "eloah":

> "It occurs in some of the oldest OT poetry {De 32:15,17} and very frequently (41 times) in the debates between Job (an ancient believer) and his friends. **It appears therefore to be an ancient term for God which was later dropped for the most part until the time of the exile and after ...**"

Indeed, this word is only used 16 times outside of the Book of Job, and 6 of those 16 uses refer to pagan gods! And "TWOT" is clearly correct in stating that this is an ancient term which was dropped **as the language continued to develop**. Here are the facts. All dates below are approximate in round numbers, and for relative comparison purposes only.

1) **1600 B.C. - 1450 B.C.** = the time of Job & Moses. The word "Eloah" appears **43 times** (41 in the Book of Job, plus Deuteronomy 32:15, 17). This tells us that Moses himself, who referred to God many hundreds of times in his writings, used this word "Eloah" only two times. All 43 uses are in poetry, meaning that poetic considerations influenced the choice of the word "Eloah" in these contexts. Moses NEVER used the word "Eloah" outside of poetry.

2) **1050 B.C. - 900 B.C.** = the time of David & Solomon. The word "Eloah" appears **5 times** (4 times in Psalms and one time in Proverbs). All 5 uses are in poetry, where again poetic considerations influenced the choice of "Eloah" over other words. So between 1450 B.C. and 1050 B.C. "Eloah" was never used (i.e. the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1. and 2. Samuel never use "Eloah").

3) **750 B.C.** = the next use is by Isaiah, **1 single time** (Isaiah 44:8), again in poetry.

4) **620 B.C. - 550 B.C.** = the time of Habakkuk and Daniel. The word "Eloah" appears **6 times**, **5 of which are references to pagan gods**! Those 5 references to pagan gods are: Habakkuk 1:11; Daniel 11:37, 38 (twice in this verse), 39. The only reference to the true God in this time period is Habakkuk 3:3.

All 6 occurrences are in poetry. And the association of this word “eloah” with pagan gods heavily outweighs the association with the true God at this time in history.

5) **450 B.C. - 400 B.C.** = the time of Nehemiah & the writing of Chronicles. The word “Eloah” appears **2 times**: one time applied to the true God (Nehemiah 9:17), and **one time** applied to **pagan gods** (2 Chronicles 32:15). Both occurrences here are also in poetry.

So here is the sum of the matter: Outside of the Book of Job the word “Eloah” is used only 16 times during a period of 1000 years. Every single use, including in Job, is in the context of poetry, where poetic considerations influence which name is used for God in a specific context. Where all 49 uses **before 700 B.C.** were only used to refer to **the true God**, **from 620 B.C. onwards** the word was used freely to refer to **pagan gods**, with 6 out of a total of 8 uses being references to pagan gods.

This picture is still somewhat lopsided due to the 41 uses in the Book of Job. Outside of the Book of Job, the word “Eloah” is only used 8 times before 700 B.C. and 8 times after 700 B.C.. It was never a particularly favored name, considering that in the whole OT YHVH is used around 6500 times and Elohim is used about 2600 times. When we consider that all of the names of God together (YHVH, El, Elohim, etc.) are used around 9,500 times in the Old Testament Hebrew text, and when we then consider that “Eloah” is only used 57 times in poetic contexts, and that 6 of the 16 uses outside of Job refer to pagan gods, then it should be clear beyond doubt that “Eloah” is NOT the specific name of God the Father, more than any other Hebrew name for God. The word “Eloah” certainly applies to God, but it is not singled out as a name above any other name. Your assertion regarding Eloah is totally flawed!

> **I have thus conclusively proved that your assertion regarding Eloah supposedly being the name of God the Father is wrong!**

19) **YOU WROTE:** “**Eloah extends himself to become Elohim** (elahhin (Chal.)) **as the Ha Elohim** where the sons of God were the elohim and of the Council of the Elohim in both **Det. 32:8** (RSV) as the 70(2) **sons of God** (The MT changed the text to read sons of Israel, which we now know to have been **a forgery** of the Sopherim from **the LXX and the DSS**).

MY REPLY: First of all, it seems like you don’t understand the meanings of the Hebrew words you are quoting, otherwise you would realize that the expression “**as the Ha Elohim**” is absurd! The Hebrew prefix “ha” is the definite article meaning “the”. So you could say EITHER “as the Elohim” OR you could say “as haElohim”, but you definitely would never say “as THE HA Elohim” because that would literally mean “**as the the Elohim**”, which is rather absurd, wouldn’t you say? It seems clear that you don’t understand that this Hebrew prefix “ha” has nothing whatsoever to do with titles.

Next, your claim that **Deuteronomy 32:8** should read “**sons of God**” is also rather flawed, as I will prove on several different levels! First of all, THE CONTEXT of this verse makes clear that this is speaking about human beings. This verse reads in the KJV:

> When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of **the children of Israel**. (Deuteronomy 32:8)

Look at the whole verse. **FIRST**: “when the Most High divided TO THE NATIONS their inheritance” = this is speaking about **HUMAN NATIONS**! **SECOND**: “when He separated THE SONS OF ADAM” = this is speaking about **HUMAN BEINGS** being separated. **THIRD**: “He set the bounds OF THE PEOPLE” = this is speaking about God setting boundaries **FOR PEOPLE**, HUMAN BEINGS. **FOURTH**:

“according to the number of ...” = now you all of a sudden want to switch this whole context to some supposed focus on **SPIRIT BEINGS???** That’s weird!

The next verse continues the thought. So here is verse 9.

> **For** the LORD’S portion is **his people**; **Jacob** is the lot of his inheritance. (Deuteronomy 32:9)

Notice that verse 9 starts with the conjunction “for”. This is a translation of the Hebrew conjunction “kiy” which means “**BECAUSE**”! Both parts of verse 9 speak about HUMAN BEINGS (“His people” and “Jacob”). The undivided focus in verse 9 is on Israel! And when this verse is linked to the last previous statement by the conjunction “because”, it requires that the last previous statement must also be about “His people”! Inserting the expression “according to the number of the sons of God” into the last part of verse 8 is absurd! It makes no sense whatsoever!

Next, your claim that the LXX supports the translation “sons of God” **IS NOT TRUE**! And the claim that it supposedly means “**70(2)**” sons of God is very deceptive! Here is the Greek LXX text for this expression in Deuteronomy 32:8.

“**kata arithmos aggelon theou**”

The word “sons” is not used at all in the LXX! This LXX text doesn’t say anything about “sons”. Where in this LXX text do you see the Greek word for “sons”? It isn’t there, is it?! This Greek text translated reads:

“according to **the number of THE ANGELS of God**”!

Can you not see how absurd that Greek LXX text is? Do you know how many angels of God there are? Do you not understand that there are MILLIONS of angels of God?! This Greek LXX text is an obvious perverse corruption of the original Hebrew text.

For you to read the word “sons” into this LXX text is very dishonest! And for you to read “70" or “72" into this text is also very dishonest! The Greek LXX text says nothing about “sons” and it says nothing about “70" or “72", and you have no right whatsoever to read these things into this LXX text.

Next, the LXX and the Dead Sea Scrolls are about the worst possible “authorities” you could possibly quote to support your views. The Dead Sea Scrolls have less credibility than Jim Jones and his “Peoples Temple”, the fanatics who committed suicide in Guyana back in 1978. And the credibility of the LXX is on that same level.

If I was writing about Deuteronomy 32:8, I would also quote the LXX. But I wouldn’t be quoting it to support my explanation; no, I would be quoting the LXX to expose the source of one more heretical teaching. Do you not know how many DOZENS of heretical views can all be traced back to the LXX? The LXX is notorious for the poor quality of its text! And it is notorious as a source for heretical ideas.

And yes, in case you are wondering, I am aware of Michael Heiser’s article entitled “Deuteronomy 32:8 and the sons of God”, which was published in the January - March 2001 edition of BIBLIOTHECA SACRA, in which Michael tries to justify “70" by appealing to the 70 family members of Jacob’s family who went into Egypt. But all that reasoning is foolish because Deuteronomy 32:8 simply doesn’t mention any numbers. Michael Heiser states his purpose as follows: **“The goal of this article is to show that viewing "sons of God" as the correct reading in Deuteronomy 32:8 in no way requires one to view Israelite religion as polytheistic.”** His goal is to try to convince the reader to accept

something that neither the Hebrew text nor the LXX Greek text says! The Greek word for “sons’ is simply not in the LXX text! And furthermore, Michael Heiser clearly also does not understand that all of verses 8 and 9 speak about human beings! The issue is not whether the perverted LXX reading implies polytheism or not; the issue is that the verse doesn’t mention any limitation on the number involved, and the Greek text doesn’t mention “sons”.

Yes, I know that the HEBREW text uses the words for “according to the number of the SONS of Israel”. But the GREEK LXX doesn’t say “sons”; the Greek LXX says “angels”! That by itself already proves that the LXX text is perverted.

You appeal to the RSV translation for this verse. The RSV here reads: “**according to the number of the sons of god**” (small “g”!). They have since revised this for the NRSV to read: “**according to the number of the gods**”. Now that is interesting. They also no longer believe that this verse should contain the word “sons” in connection with “gods”. Makes you think, doesn’t it? Looks like you are running out of translations to support your views?

Next, the RSV always wrote “god” with a small “g” from Genesis 1 onwards. That already shows you the lack of respect those translators had for God. In the NRSV they changed this to writing “God” with a capital “G”. However, for Deuteronomy 32:8 the NRSV uses a small “g” to read “the number of the gods”. Neither of these two translations is faithful to either the Hebrew text or the Greek LXX text for this verse. Both of these translations are dishonest as far as this verse is concerned.

It is well-known that the LXX text is corrupt! And so all the following translations still read “children of ISRAEL” for this verse: AKJV, ASV, AV, BBE, DARBY, DOUAY, ERV, JB2000, JPS, KJ21, LEESER OT, LIT, NAS, NIV, NKJV, ROTHERHAM, WEB, WEBSTER, YOUNG’S LITERAL TRANSLATION. They know better than to trust the corrupt LXX version for this verse.

So you and Michael Heiser and the RSV really pick and choose in creating your own version of this verse by doing the following:

1) You all (except the NRSV) accept the word “sons” from the Hebrew text, even while you reject the words “of Israel” in the Hebrew text.

2) Then you accept the word “god” from the Greek LXX text, even while you reject the words “the angels of” in the LXX.

In so doing you all obviously ignore the obvious context of verses 8-9, which speak exclusively about human beings. You also obviously read your own number for the supposed sons of God into this verse. In this way you produce **a syncretic version for this verse**. And it certainly lacks credibility.

As far as the Dead Sea Scrolls are concerned: taken in their totality they amount to a lot of garbage! Do you not understand the Jewish concept of “**genizah**”? While this word means “to hide”, it was literally the name for the rubbish dump for old worn-out books. The Jewish teaching was that any writing that contained the names of God could not simply be discarded; it had to be buried in some proper fashion. Frequently caves were used as the genizah (e.g. at Masada). In Jewish terms the genizah is what **the rubbish dump** outside St. Catherine’s Monastery at Sinai was to the Greeks (that was the place where Tischendorf found his super-corrupt Codex Sinaiticus, on the rubbish dump). All those Dead Sea Scrolls were in genizah caves because those scrolls were **considered useless** by the Jews who had owned those scrolls. And they are mostly extremely corrupt! Those scrolls have no more credibility than appeals to Harnack and Brunner.

20) **YOU WROTE:** “This being is referred to as Eloah, Ha Elohim, The Elyon, Yahovah Elohim, Yahovah

of Hosts, or Yahovih (SHD 3069) this version of the name is only ever used of The One True God and is **read by Jews** as Elohim whereas **they read Yahovah** (SHD 3068) **as Adonai to distinguish the two beings**. Yahovah is used of many of the Host appearing for Eloah and is a third person form of the verb meaning He causes to be. It is an honorific (see the paper The Angel of YHVH No. 024 above).

MY REPLY: First of all, you need to make up your mind whether in these names you want to use the English article "the" or whether you want to use the Hebrew article "ha". Stick with one or the other. But don't mix them indiscriminately. Do you not understand that "haElohim" = "the Elohim", and "The Elyon" = "haElyon"? The way you are using these different names it looks like you are trying to impress someone? Or are you just confused?

Next, your claim that the Jews read YHVH as "Adonai" in order "to distinguish the two beings" is again absurd! Where did you get this idea? Did you reason it out yourself? Because it has got nothing whatsoever to do with the facts. Where do you get the idea that the Jews think of "**two beings**"? Are you confusing the rabbinical ideas about numerous supposed "angels" with "Adonai"? (That is, "supposed angels" being angels for whom they have invented names and specific identities.) The truth is that the Jews read "Adonai" whenever the Hebrew text says YHVH because they believe it is wrong to pronounce the word YHVH. But they don't really think of "TWO Beings" as you claim.

Wade, I think you are really out of your depth when you make bold statements about various Hebrew terms. Your assertions in this regard don't square up with the facts.

21) **YOU WROTE:** "**Job** states that **the redeemer** was one of **the** thousand (**Job. 23:33**)."

MY REPLY: That's extremely sloppy work on your part! It shows that you don't really read the Scriptures correctly!

First of all, it is not Job 23:33 but **Job 33:23** that you are referring to. **Secondly**, in this verse JOB is not speaking at all! It is **ELIHU** who is speaking! **Thirdly**, the word "redeemer" is not even used in this verse! The word used is "**interpreter**"! And **fourthly**, the Hebrew text does not say "THE" thousand; it does not have the definite article and thus really only says "**A thousand**". Here is the verse you intended to refer to.

> If there be **a messenger** with him, **an interpreter**, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: (Job 33:23)

This verse also uses the word "messenger" (Hebrew "malak"). And while this Hebrew word malak is translated 111 times as "angel", it is also translated 98 times as "messenger" and 4 times as "ambassadors"; and this word is commonly used to refer to human beings as well as to angels.

However, the expression "one among a thousand" qualifies primarily the word "**interpreter**" and NOT the word "messenger". Now the Hebrew word here translated as "interpreter" is actually the hiphil form of **THE VERB "luwts"**. In the hiphil form this verb means: **TO MOCK, TO DERIDE**, **TO INTERPRET** (a language or a message).

For example, the verb "luwts", which is used 27 times in the OT, is used in the following places:

> My friends **scorn** ("luwts") me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God. (Job 16:20)
>
> Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of

sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of **the scornful** (“luwts”). (Psalm 1:1)

The proud have had me greatly **in derision** (“luwts”): yet have I not declined from thy law. (Psalm 119:51)

Surely he **scorneth** (“luwts”) **the scorners** (“luwts”): but he giveth grace unto the lowly. (Proverbs 3:34)

Smite **a scorner** (“luwts”), and the simple will beware: and reprove one that hath understanding, and he will understand knowledge. (Proverbs 19:25)

In fact, of the 27 times which this Hebrew verb is used, it is translated in the KJV as follows: **14** times “**scorner**”, **4** times “**scorn**”, **1** time “**scornful**”, **2** times “**mocker**”, **1** time “**mock**”, **1** time “**derision**”, **1** time “**teachers**” (**bad ones** are implied, Isaiah 43:27), **1** time “**ambassadors**” (and these guys were **spying** on Hezekiah, 2 Chronicles 32:31), and only **2** times “**interpreter**”.

So the question is: exactly what was Elihu saying in Job 33:23, the verse you intended to refer to? Was Elihu speaking about some spirit beings? Or was Elihu speaking about a human being who might be a mocker, scorner or interpreter? And IF Elihu intended to mean “interpreter”, then WHY would Elihu have thought that there was a need for any interpreting? Let’s examine this verse more closely, because your assertion regarding this verse is blatantly wrong as I will show.

I assume you understand that in Hebrew the pronoun “he” frequently departs from the rules of English grammar, in that this pronoun frequently does NOT refer to its antecedent (though it very often obviously does). That’s because Hebrew is not a syntactic language in which the position of a word is of the utmost importance. Being an inflective language, Hebrew does not strictly adhere to this English grammar antecedent rule. Job chapter 33 is a good example of this approach, with a number of switches between the identities of the individuals referred to as “he”.

Here is **the context** of Elihu’s speech in Job 33:

Verses 9-11 = you, Job, think too much of yourself and you are critical of God.

Verse 12 = in this attitude you are wrong, Job.

Verse 13 = so why argue against God when God obviously is not accountable to you, Job?

Verses 14- 16 = **God** works through dreams and visions, etc.

Verse 17 = **God** wants to help us overcome pride (which Elihu infers is Job’s problem).

Verse 18 = **God** keeps back man’s soul from the grave. In this verse the first “He” refers to God, and the two subsequent uses of “his” refer to man. So **from the second part of verse 18 onwards “he” refers to man**. Note that!

Verse 19 = the focus is clearly **MAN**. It is man who is chastened with pain, etc.

Verse 20 = the focus is still on **MAN**. It is man’s life that “abhors bread”, etc.

Verse 21 = the focus is still on **MAN**. It is man’s flesh and bones that exhibit problems.

Verse 22 = the focus is still on **MAN**. It is man’s life that is in danger of perishing.

In all these verses Elihu is in fact referring to **Job's exact condition** at that point in time. Verses 19-22 are all about Job! All these statements were true for Job. The focus is on Job!

Now we come to verse 23.

> **If there be a messenger with him**, **an interpreter**, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness:

The focus in this verse **is still** on man, or to be specific, **on Job**! Elihu is saying: "**If there be a messenger with a MAN**", i.e. with you, Job. Elihu has already earlier said that he, Elihu, would answer Job "in God's stead"(verse 6). In plain language, Elihu is here saying: I am God's messenger to you, Job.

Next, Elihu used the Hebrew word "luwts" which, while it predominately means "to mock" and "to scorn" can also mean "to interpret". Here Elihu was using both of these meanings. Isn't that obvious? It was Job who felt that his friends were only mocking and scorning him. And so Elihu said: Okay Job, what if that messenger actually mocks you to some degree ... does that make the messenger's message invalid? Does that entitle you to reject everything the messengers are pointing out to you? But Elihu also intended the positive meaning of "interpreter", by saying: Right, Job, I am God's messenger to you, TO INTERPRET to you God's approach to your whole situation, i.e. "to show unto man his uprightness". I am here to point out to you God's uprightness.

With this expression "to show unto man his uprightness" Elihu was saying: to show you, Job, exactly what real uprightness before God is, and how all of us need to approach God. The whole focus of verse 23 is that Elihu himself is God's messenger and interpreter to Job, Elihu having already stated that he thought of himself as clay (verse 6 again) and that he wasn't approaching this matter with a high-and-mighty condescending attitude.

And yes, Elihu was "one among a thousand", **a figure of speech in a poetic context** to indicate someone who is extremely rare! As a wealthy man Job personally knew very many people. Yet when disaster struck him, only three friends from a distant area actually made the effort to try to help him. However, NOBODY before Elihu had actually pointed out the real problem to Job. Elihu was in fact the only mortal man to correctly focus on Job's real problem. That made Elihu "one among a thousand", **a rare individual who could discern (i.e. "interpret") the real problem**, and who also then had the courage to address that real problem. And when Elihu eventually finished talking to Job, then God Himself took over and spoke to Job "out of the whirlwind" (Job 38:1).

It is absurd to want to apply Job 33:23 to spirit beings. The word "redeemer" appears 18 times in the OT, and in all cases it is a translation of the Hebrew verb "ga'al". But **this verb is not used in Job 33:23**. Thus it is either ignorant or dishonest to claim that this verse refers to "the redeemer". The only verse in the Book of Job that refers to "redeemer" is Job 19:25, but that statement there has nothing whatsoever to do with "one among a thousand", let alone "one of THE thousand" as you misquote this verse.

This should suffice to show that you have grossly misrepresented Elihu's statement in Job 33:23, and that your claims for this verse are incorrect.

Well, Wade, I have now examined 21 different statements from your email to me. In your message you have misrepresented and misapplied the Scriptures. And you have attempted to use the views of Catholic and Protestant "theologians" to establish your unitarian position. You have bungled your way through various Hebrew names. I believe that God wants us to establish the true teachings by examining

the Bible. This you haven't done. And as I said earlier, I am not interested in reading all your articles, because I am really not interested in the reasons for your views. I simply wanted to find out what your views actually are. And yes, there are biblical guidelines why I am not interested in the reasons you might provide for your views.

I suspect that many of the points in the articles you want me to read would be of a similar standard as your references here to Job 33:23 and to Deuteronomy 32:8 and to Eloah and to Abib, and to "the Ha Elohim", etc. There would be so many statements that I would object to, that I would never get through all the articles you would like me to read. You might notice that I have not asked you to read a couple of hundred articles on my website, because I doubt that you would do that, since you face the same time constraints that I face.

One other point that also concerns me is this: In your message you show respect for supposed "significant theologians" like Calvin and Harnack and Brunner, and you show respect for Catholic saints and "church fathers" like Justin Martyr and Irenaeus and Hippolytus. But for Mr. Armstrong you show nothing but disdain and contempt. That is of concern to me. Why are you so resentful and disrespectful towards Mr. Armstrong? When all is said and done, Mr. Armstrong was a better man than either you or I. Animosity towards Mr. Armstrong will never stand you in good stead with Almighty God.

In conclusion, you made a number of wrong assertions in your message to me. I believe that it is incumbent upon me to expose the flaws and weaknesses in your statements, lest you continue to assume that your ideas on these matters are factually correct. And I believe that exposing the flaws in your assertions might be of help to some people who may at some point be exposed to your line of reasoning. That is why I have presented my reply to you in the form of an article.

On the personal level I wish you all the best.

Frank W. Nelte