

Six Facts About Jesus and God

Two Facts from the Entire Bible

FACT #1: There is only one God.

- a. Deuteronomy 4:35; 32:39; Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6; 45:5-6; 46:9; Deuteronomy 6:4; Hosea 13:4; Mark 12:29; 1 Timothy 2:5; etc.
- b. There is one God and only one God. No more, no less. His name is "Jehovah" or "Yahweh," depending on how one translates the Hebrew letters. (Many translations use the word "LORD" - all capital letters - in place of the name "Jehovah.") According to God, *no* god was formed before him and none after him. He mentions no exceptions. *All* others are false gods.

FACT #2: God is uncreated Spirit and cannot be seen.

- a. Genesis 1:1, etc.; John 4:24; Luke 24:39; 1 Timothy 1:17; Colossians 1:15; John 1:18; Deuteronomy 4:15-20, 23; Exodus 20:4; Acts 17:22-29; 14:8-18; etc.
- b. God is uncreated spirit; God *cannot* be seen; nor can he be represented by anything which has been created, especially for the purpose of worship (this would be idolatry).

Two Facts from the Old Testament

FACT #3: God has been seen.

- a. GROUP 1: God has been seen: Exodus 24:10-11 (seen by 74 people); Judges 13:22; 1 Kings 22:19; Job 42:5 ("I see him with my eyes."); Isaiah 6:1-5; Amos 9:1; etc.
- b. GROUP 2: God has been seen as "the angel of Jehovah" or "the angel of God": Genesis 16:7+; Judges 6:11+; Zechariah 3:1-2; etc.
 - i. This "angel" is not introduced as "an" angel, but as "the" angel. Though in some passages, this "angel" may seem distinct from "God," in other passages, the two terms are used interchangeably.
 - ii. This term is restricted to the Old Testament. No New Testament phrase exactly parallels the term "*the* angel of Jehovah/God" (used as a title). The term "*an* angel..." does occur; but it is not used as a title of this specific "being."
- c. Those who saw God were often surprised that they didn't suddenly die, as they expected would be the case. Descriptions of God in this visible form indicate that he had taken on the appearance of a man. [Of course, other verses also indicate that God isn't *just* a mere human being - see Numbers 23:19; Job 9:32; and the verses listed under FACT #2.]

FACT #2 and FACT #3 are apparent opposites. At this point, I must decide between the following three choices:

CHOICE #1: I can accept FACT #2 and reinterpret the verses that support FACT #3.

In this case, I would probably say that those verses listed under FACT #3 were merely claiming that people had "mystical visions" - which they mistakenly thought were God himself, or which merely "represented" him. Or I could claim that those verses were just symbolic in some manner. (Maybe I could claim that they just meant that the people "understood" God!)

CHOICE #2: I can accept FACT #3 and reinterpret the verses that support FACT #2.

In this case, I would probably say that those verses merely say that, even though people can see God, they can't fully comprehend what they see. Or perhaps I could even make God into a "super man (or being)," who we could partially (not fully) understand or "seen." I could even claim that those verses were just symbolic of God's greatness, but weren't to be understood "literally."

CHOICE #3: I can accept both FACT #2 and FACT #3.

In this case, I could argue that the uncreated, invisible, infinite God can manifest himself in a *finite* manner, so as to be comprehended by humans. Since this manifestation is *finite*, it cannot fully represent the *infinite* deity. (There would have to be limitations of various kinds. Otherwise, it would *have* to be infinite!) Furthermore, this visible expression by God is *self-revelation*: He chooses when he will reveal himself and how he will do it. [It's not up to people to decide when they want him to appear, or what they want him to look like. Nor do they have the option of choosing or inventing *created* objects, and designating them as "representations of God."]

*** I choose this last alternative. ***

FACT #4: Certain verses seem to suggest that God is, in some manner, a "plurality."

- a. The use of "us" when God talks to himself (in some contexts).
 - i. Genesis 1:26-27; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8, etc.
 - ii. At least in Genesis 1, there is nothing *in the context* to indicate anything else was present. Rather, "God said, 'Let *us* do (whatever it was),' so *he* did it." [God has no need to consult others before he acts - especially when the context says *he* did it, with no mention whatever of outside help!]
- b. Certain words used to describe him are plural or can have connotations of plurality.
 - i. "Elohim" - Hebrew for "Gods" - is used to describe him. (This word is found in most places where the English Old Testament has the word "God.") [Note: I've been told that, in some ancient cultures, the people addressed kings with a plural title. (Maybe they copied the idea from the God of the Bible!) Some people who oppose the "plurality" concept in God would use these plural titles for kings as "proof" that the word plural word "Elohim" has no significance. I suppose if this was the *only* evidence to suggest plurality, I might not consider it to be as significant, but as one of the *many* strands of evidence, I think it *is* significant.]
 - ii. "One" in Deuteronomy 6:4 refers to a "compound unity," rather than a "simple unity" (a different Hebrew word). [It is the same word that is used to describe husband and wife as "one" flesh.]
- c. Certain verses seem to mention "Jehovah" as being sent by "Jehovah," or something similar - almost as if two "Jehovah's" are present.
 - i. Zechariah 2:8-11; 3:2, etc. (Found in original Hebrew and most translations.)
 - ii. Isaiah 44:6; 45:11; 48:6. (Found in some translations; this interpretation is permitted by the original Hebrew - though not the only possible interpretation.)
- d. "The angel of Jehovah," who is identified as *being* Jehovah, in some passages, is distinguished from him (described as being *with* him) in other passages.
 - i. Numbers 22:22-35; 2 Kings 1:3,15, etc.
 - ii. Judges 6:11-22; Zechariah 2:1-6; Genesis 16:7-13+; etc. (This second group of verses mentions *both* concepts in the *same* context: the angel *is* God; as well as, he *is with* God.)
 - iii. Note: *No* New Testament phrase corresponds to this phrase, "the angel of Jehovah."

FACT #1 and FACT #4 are apparent opposites. At this point I must decide between the following three choices:

I can accept FACT #1 and "re-translate" (or reinterpret) the verses that support FACT #4.

Over all, I would probably treat each verse in FACT #4 as though it were the only one of its kind, and then reply, "The rest of the Bible proves that such an interpretation is wrong." (It is easy to kill the significance of these verses - at least in the minds of some people - IF we do it *one verse at a time!*) I could also say, "Reason goes against it" - as though finite human reasoning determines the nature of the infinite God! Also, since few people can read the *original* languages of the Old and New Testaments, I could even "correct" the translation and nobody would know it! [One religious group has tried something like this.]

I can accept FACT #4 and re-do FACT #1 somehow.

I might say that there are *many* gods, but only *one* who is like Jehovah. If so, I would explain that when it says none were *formed* before or after Jehovah, it means that *none* were formed *who were quite like him...* but that *others who were different* were formed. If I believed this idea, I could say that the different gods are "one" in the sense of being "one in purpose," etc. I could also "re-translate" the Bible (as described above), to minimize the impact of any "offending" verse.

I can accept both FACT #1 and FACT #4.

If this is the case, I could argue that there is one and only one "*uncreated* reality or being" (God), who throughout Scripture is contrasted with all the "*created* realities" (heaven, earth, and everything in them). This *one* "being" is in some manner *both* "unity" and "plurality," co-existing simultaneously.

On the one hand, the Bible's assertion that there is *one God* would demonstrate *both* of these facts: 1) there is only *one* of these uncreated "beings," and 2) this one being is a *unity*. (Some passages may emphasize the first of these facts; others the second.) On the other hand, the various assertions in FACT #4 would demonstrate the *plurality aspect* of this "one" being.

If I accept this view, I could argue that a *finite* manifestation of this deity (such as when he appeared as "the angel of Jehovah") would both: 1) be God, and 2) be with God - and I could say it without contradicting myself. (I would not have to change the definition of "God," in the middle of making these two statements.)

***I BELIEVE THIS LAST ALTERNATIVE does most justice to the evidence. ***

However, FACT #3 and FACT #4 are only from the Old Testament, and it would be better to check the New Testament (God's fullest and final revelation for this age) *before* I reach my final conclusions.

Two Facts from the New Testament

FACT #5: Many verses indicate that Jesus Christ was human... complete with human limitations.

- a. Human parent (mother, but not father); physical growth; material and immaterial "parts" of a true human.
 - i. Galatians 4:4; Matthew 1:18; Luke 2:40, 46, 52, etc.
 - ii. Matthew 26:12 - body; 26:38 - soul; Luke 23:46 - spirit; etc.
- b. Physical and intellectual limitations, like a true human (including the ability to die).
 - i. John 4:6; 19:28; Matthew 8:24; 21:18; Luke 22:44; 1 Corinthians 15:3, etc.
 - ii. Luke 2:52; 11:13; 13:32; etc.
- c. Spiritually dependent on God, like a true human - a need for prayer, Bible, etc.
 - i. Mark 1:35; John 6:15; Luke 22:41-45; Hebrews 5:7; etc.
 - ii. Many passages seem to indicate that Jesus knew the Scriptures well. (Example: his quotations of Scripture, or his references to prophecy about himself, etc.)
 - iii. Note: This was the lifestyle of one who is *without sin* (Hebrews 2:18). If Jesus needed the Bible this much, how much more do we sinners need the Bible!

FACT #6: Many verses indicate that Jesus Christ was (is) God/deity. There are both direct and indirect statements.

- a. John 1:1, 18; Philippians 2:5+; Isaiah 9:6 (compare to 10:20-23; Jeremiah 32:18; etc.); John 5:18 (the apostle John's own definition of what "calling God his own Father" meant!); 10:30-31, 33; 20:28; Hebrews 1:3,8; Hebrews 1:6 (compare to Revelation 19:10 and Luke 4:8); Colossians 2:9; Philemon 2:11 (compare to Isaiah 45:23); Titus 2:13 (compare to 2:10; 3:6; Isaiah 43:11; etc.); Acts 20:28; 1 John 5:20; Romans 9:5 (probably - depending on where the punctuation should be placed); 2 Peter 1:1 (probably); Matthew 28:19 (all share *one name*); Matthew 18:20 and 28:10 (omnipresent); Revelation 1:7 (if compared to Zechariah 12:10 - "*me*, the one they have pierced" - most translations and Old Testament Hebrew manuscripts - refers to Jehovah); Romans 10:9-13 (refers to Jesus, but quotes Joel 2:32, which refers to Jehovah); Revelation 17:14 (compare to 1 Timothy 6:15); Revelation 22:13 (compare to 1:8, 17;

- 2:8) and innumerable names, attributes, titles, etc., which are applied to "Jehovah," "Lord," "God," in some verses, but are applied to "Jesus Christ" in other verses. See especially verses in which "God" claims to be the *only* one who has (or deserves) the specified attribute or name, etc.
- b. (Many other verses also exist.)

FACT #5 and FACT #6 are apparent opposites. At this point, I must decide between the following three choices:

I can accept FACT #5 and reject FACT #6.

I will ignore, "re-translate" or explain-away all verses listed under FACT #6, similar to the ways I used to explain-away FACT #3 or FACT #4, above. [Historically, this was done by various Gnostic heresies, Arianism, etc.]

I can accept FACT #6 and reject FACT #5.

I will do the same as with the above choice, but with the *opposite* group of verses. I will probably interpret FACT #5 as making reference only to an "apparent body" with "apparent (that is, not real) limitations," etc. [Historically, this was done by a theological system called Monarchianism.]

I can accept FACT #5 and FACT #6 as *both* true.

I might not be able to *fully* answer the question, "*How* can they both be true?" But I will note that there is a large amount of evidence supporting each. Moreover, this would tie in beautifully with the acceptance of *all* FACTS #1 through #4 (which focus on God as seen/unseen and one/plurality): The one invisible God would *finitely* manifest himself in human flesh - as "the angel of Jehovah" in the Old Testament and as "Jesus Christ" in the New Testament.

As revealed in human form, there would be limitations of various kinds within the bounds of that human flesh. (See, for example, the limitations described under FACT #5.) At the same time, however, this God would still be infinite (etc.). And so, this limited expression of deity would not only "be God," but would also "be with God."

*** What I have studied compels me to choose this last view. I can accept none other. ***

I can accept *all six facts*, in their full significance, and without denying, reinterpreting, or changing any of them.

One "Bonus Fact" from the New Testament

FACT #7: *Those who belong to God (his children) will someday get to see him.*

- a. Matthew 5:8; 1 John 3:2; etc.
- b. In the light of all the passages already mentioned, about people who have seen God, these passages probably have a special significance to those who belong to him!
- c. Guess who we will see! [Hint: Who was seen in the Old Testament? Who was seen in the New Testament?]