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EXAMINING ISLAMIC APOLOGETICS (PART TWO): UNUSUAL ATTACKS ON THE TRINITY

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SYNOPSIS

Islamic apologetics denies the accuracy and harmony of the Christian Scriptures, as well as the main Christian doctrines that conflict with Islamic theology, namely, the Trinity and the deity of Christ. To answer these claims, Christian apologists must first recognize the role of authority in the Islamic argument, particularly the ultimate authority of the Qur'an. Second, they must expose the hidden assumptions behind the majority of Muslim objections to the Trinity and the deity of Christ. They must challenge the assumption of Unitarianism (that God can be only one person) and they must explain the doctrine of the Trinity in light of Islamic misconceptions. This involves explaining that the Trinity is inalterably monotheistic and that the real issue is whether the statement that "God is one" means God is one in both being and person or one only in being. Muslim apologists will use the Bible to point out alleged contradictions in the doctrine, but Christian apologists can provide proper exegetical responses that support the consistent testimony of the Word of God to the truth of the Trinity.

Fielding questions from the audience is always the hardest part. As I wrapped up my first debate with a Muslim apologist, I wondered what would be coming my direction as a long line of men dressed in Muslim garb formed behind the single audience microphone. I did not have to wait long. The first questioner went on for at least three minutes before finally getting to his point: "Was Jesus a white man or a black man?" My answer took substantially less time than his question: "He was a Palestinian Jew, actually, as the Bible says."

The next questioner was more to the point:

- Muslim: "You say Jesus is our Creator?"
 White: "Yes."
 Muslim: "And you say Jesus was a man and walked the earth?"
 White: "Yes, the Word become flesh."
 Muslim: "And he was a real human being, you say?"
 White: "Yes, fully man."
 Muslim: "So this means Jesus ate food, and that would mean it would pass through his body and be eliminated, and since that is unholy, then how could he be God?"

When answering an audience's questions I never know what to expect, but I surely had not prepared for that particular objection. (My answer was straightforward, focusing on the questioner's mistaken idea that natural bodily functions are unholy.) This encounter illustrates one of the main problems we have in communicating the truth of the Trinity (and the attendant issue of the deity of Christ) to Muslims: the issues we are most prepared for often do not carry nearly the weight with Muslims that we would like, and the topics that cause them the greatest difficulties can throw us a real apologetic curve.

WESTERN ISLAMIC APOLOGISTS

Whereas historic, conservative Islamic belief is consistent between Muslims in Islamic nations and those in Western democracies, the methods of Islamic apologetics differ. Muslims in Islamic nations can use the sword (or in modern parlance, the gun) to effectively “win the debate” against systems that would conflict with any element of Islamic belief. Many Islamic nations fine, imprison, torture, or even execute those who are “guilty” of criticizing Muhammad, the Qur’an, or basic Islamic beliefs. These punishments are consistent with Qur’anic teaching: “The punishment for those who wage war against God and His Prophet, and perpetrate disorders in the land, is to kill or hang them, or have a hand on one side and a foot on the other cut off, or banish them from the land. Such is their disgrace in the world, and in the Hereafter their doom shall be dreadful. But those who repent before they are subdued should know that God is forgiving and kind” (Sura 5:33–34). “So, fight them till all opposition ends, and obedience is wholly God’s” (Sura 8:39).

The propagation of other beliefs, especially beliefs that contradict the Islamic faith (such as historic, biblical Christianity), is viewed in the same light. To declare that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and that salvation is found only through Him is to deny the heart and soul of the Islamic confession that Muhammad is Allah’s prophet and the Qur’an is God’s Word. When Islam takes power in a culture, apologetics comes to an end, and force becomes the final argument.

In Western culture, however, there is still an opportunity for dialogue and debate. Islamic apologists are forced to stand on equal ground with others and give a reasoned case, both for their positive confession of Muhammad as a prophet and their negative denial of the historic Christian views of Christ’s person and work. Muslim apologists in the United States encounter a pluralistic society that still maintains many distinctively Christian features (even if they have been, in the vast majority of citizens, divorced from the divine truths upon which they were initially built). As a result, conservative Islam has developed a form of apologetics that presents a number of unexpected twists and turns. Part of this apologetic focuses upon a defense of Muhammad and the Qur’an, but in most situations their apologetic is an anti-Christian polemic aimed at the Trinity, the deity of Christ, and His resurrection. The following study will equip Christians with answers to this particular apologetic challenge.

THE KEY ISSUES

What are the key issues that give form and shape to the Islamic apologetic challenge? (I will first list them and then address each in turn.)

Authority: Although Muslim apologists cite Scripture, they deny its ultimate authority and consistency, and they place the Qur’an as the highest authority over all matters.

Assumption of Unitarianism: Behind their arguments against the Trinity is the often undefended assumption of Unitarianism. This assumption must be exposed and challenged.

Arguments from Eisegesis: Despite questioning the veracity of Scripture, Muslim apologists are quick to quote from it, though they rarely do so with sound knowledge of its historical and grammatical context.

Authority

The doctrine of the Trinity is a biblical doctrine.¹ It is derived first and foremost from *Scripture alone and all of Scripture*. When Islamic apologists engage in a critique of this doctrine, they do not share Christianity’s foundational commitment to the authority and accuracy of Scripture that gave rise to the doctrine in the first place. Christians, therefore, must explain why we believe the Bible to be the Word of God and why we believe it has been accurately handed down to us today (the subject of the previous article in this series in the JOURNAL).² Even if a conversation about the Trinity does not lead to issues of the accuracy of the text of Scripture, the fact that we must allow *all of Scripture* to speak must be emphasized from the start; for as we are about to see, the primary issue with the Muslim denial of the key

truths of the Trinity flows from their unwillingness to allow the Bible to define its own theology. Instead, Islamic categories are pressed upon the biblical text, resulting in serious errors.

It should also be remembered that while the Qur'an directly addresses the doctrine of the Trinity, it misrepresents the doctrine. Since this is so, and since the Qur'an is held in the highest position of authority for the Muslim, the Christian often faces a real difficulty. Many Muslims will not allow the historic understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity to define the conversation. At times we face the strange situation of being told that what we are defending is not really the Trinity at all! We are told that the doctrine has been changed by Christians down through the ages to make it easier to defend. What does the Qur'an say about this important topic? Note these words:

They are truly infidels who say: "God is the Christ, son of Mary." But the Christ had only said: "O children of Israel, worship God who is my Lord and your Lord." Whosoever associates a compeer with God, will have Paradise denied to him by God, and his abode shall be Hell; and the sinners will have none to help them. Disbelievers are they surely who say: "God is the third of the trinity;" but there is no god other than God the one. And if they do not desist from saying what they say, then indeed those among them who persist in disbelief will suffer painful punishment.... The Christ, son of Mary, was but an apostle, and many apostles had (come and) gone before him; and his mother was a woman of truth. They both ate the (same) food (as men). Behold, how We show men clear signs, and behold, how they wander astray!... Tell them: "O people of the Book, do not overstep the bounds of truth in your beliefs, and follow not the wishes of a people who had erred before, and led many others astray, and wandered away from the right path." (Sura 5:72-73, 75, 77)³

A fair reading of this text tells us that a person who believes in the deity of Christ is an "infidel." The text, furthermore, assumes, but does not prove, Unitarianism (i.e., it denies the distinction of the divine persons and assumes that the being of God subsists in only one person). It puts words in Christ's mouth that may be only loosely drawn from John 20:17. Though the author of the Qur'an intended them to be a denial of the Trinity, these words, however, are a denial only of various forms of modalism,⁴ not of the historic doctrine of the Trinity itself.

This text also raises the serious issue of *shirk* — the concept of associating anything or anyone with God. Islam teaches that belief in the Trinity involves one in the sin of *shirk*, and for this reason Muslims truly believe we are enticing them to commit the sin of idolatry. This section of the Qur'an shows how serious this is in Islamic belief, for it dooms believers in the Trinity to hell itself, with the added declaration that none can help them. There is no forgiveness for such a serious sin.

This claim, however, is evidence that the Qur'an is not an inspired document, for it is clear that its author did not understand the doctrine of the Trinity, *which already had been established clearly and taught for centuries.*⁵ To say "God is a third of the Trinity" is to completely misrepresent the doctrine. The Father is not a third of God, nor is the Son, nor is the Spirit. Each is *fully* God. God's being cannot be divided. It is simple (i.e., not compound, not made up of parts) and indivisible. The author of the Qur'an suggested that Trinitarians deny this. A person would indeed be a "disbeliever" for saying, "God is a third of the Trinity," but they would also be disbelieving the doctrine of the Trinity to say so! The author of the Qur'an obviously misunderstood the doctrine of the Trinity. The Muslim scripture plainly represents belief in the Trinity as belief in the divisibility of the being of God, for how else could this involve one in the sin of *shirk* — of associating something or someone with God?

The following phrase expresses biblical monotheism: There is no god other than God the one. The Qur'an, however, teaches that the Trinity divides God up and violates its own understanding of monotheism (called "Tauhid" in Islam). Modern Muslim apologists repeat the refrain that the Trinity is fundamentally inconsistent with the confession of monotheism. When it is pointed out to them that the doctrine of the Trinity, in all of its classical expressions, begins and ends with the affirmation of the unity (indivisibility) of God's being and the absolute truth of monotheism, the response is to question the accuracy of the definitions, for the Qur'an says otherwise! This brings us back to the authority issue and to the fact that the Qur'an misrepresents the doctrine, a fact that is a valuable apologetic tool that demonstrates the true nature of the Qur'an's status as a supposed revelation from God.

The Qur'anic text goes on to prescribe "painful punishment" for those who "persist in disbelief" (i.e., continue to believe in the Trinity). It likewise asserts boldly that Christ was "but an apostle," or as another translation renders it, "only a Messenger."⁶ This statement clearly denies Jesus' divine nature. The Qur'an has the mistaken idea that Christians make Jesus *and His mother Mary* into two separate gods in addition to the true God. Note these words: "And when God will ask: 'O Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to mankind: "Worship me and my mother as two deities apart from God?"' (Jesus) will answer: 'Halleluja. Could I say what I knew I had no right (to say)?...I said nought to them but what You commanded me: Worship God, my Lord and your Lord'" (Sura 5:116-17).

It is easy to understand how Muhammad became confused about this. While visiting Jerusalem around the beginning of the seventh century, Muhammad would have observed a strong devotion to Mary. Combining this with his ignorance of sound Christian teaching and biblical revelation while operating on an unchallenged assumption of Unitarianism (discussed below), Muhammad could only have seen Christians as promoting a form of polytheism, with Jesus and Mary as gods. Muhammad argued that Jesus and Mary were human because they ate food. He assumed that everyone understood that God does not, and cannot, eat food. Of course, the Christian who understands that Jesus is the God-man, fully God and fully man, knows this objection is baseless. The difficult task is communicating this truth to Muslims, who follow the errors their religion's founder made many centuries ago.

Assumption of Unitarianism

The next important aspect of the discussion with a Muslim on the doctrine of the Trinity has to do with a common problem faced by the Christian apologist: category errors. Anyone who has dialogued with a Jehovah's Witness knows the importance of keeping one's categories straight. Many of the "strongest" attacks on the deity of Christ are based upon confusing the categories of *divinity* and *humanity*, especially when discussing Christ in His incarnate state, or when discussing the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit. This is even more important in dealing with Muslims since their category errors are derived from a part of their ultimate authority (the Qur'an).

The first issue that must be addressed is the ever-present assumption of Unitarianism on the part of Muslims. The vast majority of their arguments against the Trinity focus on a simple formula: "God is one. Therefore God cannot be three." What does this statement assume? It assumes that because God's being is one, it cannot be shared by more than one person. It asserts that when we affirm the unity of God's *being*, we likewise must affirm the singularity of His *person*. Trinitarianism likewise asserts that God's being is one but insists that this does not mean that *three divine persons* cannot fully share in one divine being.

Unitarianism commits a category error by insisting that the statement "God is one" applies to *both* "being" *and* "person." The Muslim who repeats the words of Deuteronomy 6:4 — "The Lord our God is one" — *assumes* this means both one being and one person, when, in fact, it refers only to God's being.

The Christian must explain the difference between "being" and "person" and then challenge this assumption *repeatedly*, for it will come up over and over again in the Muslim's attempt to string together a biblical case against the Trinity or the deity of Christ. Being is *what* someone is; person is *who* someone is. As human *beings*, each of us is a distinct person. Each human is only one "what" and one "who." God's being, however, is not limited to time and space as is ours. Three divine and eternal persons — the Father, the Son, and the Spirit — can fully share God's being. One *what*, three *whos*. You cannot assume the Muslim has ever heard these basic distinctions explained, and even then, you may have to repeat yourself and use different terms to get the message across. It can be a very frustrating experience, but if we love God's truth, we will not become weary.

The importance of avoiding category errors can be illustrated by examining the common use of John 17:3 to deny the deity of Christ. It says, "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (NASB). The argument used by anti-Trinitarians goes like this: Jesus, as a man on earth, prayed to God in heaven. He differentiated Himself from the Father by referring to God in the second person, "You." Most importantly, Jesus denied He was God by saying the Father is "the only true God." Jesus, therefore, cannot be deity if He said the Father alone is God!

How does one respond to such an assertion? Surely Christians can point to the surrounding context, including the clear reference to the deity of Christ in John 17:5 (“the glory I had with you before the world began”) as arguing strongly against this faulty interpretation of John 17:3.

Fundamentally, however, the interpretation offered *assumes its own conclusion*, and this is what must be challenged and corrected. Notice the unstated foundation of the argument: If the Father is the only true God *and if God is Unitarian in nature* (can be only one person), then Jesus cannot be deity. If we remove the assumed Unitarianism, however, the weight of the argument disappears.

It is obviously true that the Father is the only true God, for there is only one true God, and no one argues that Jesus taught polytheism! As long as the assumption of Unitarianism is left out of the equation, however, the conclusion is left without a foundation. Yes, the Father is the only true God, but since the *being* of God is not limited to a single *person*, then Jesus can likewise be called the “only true God,” for He fully participates in that same divine being (see John 1:1, 17:5; Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13). The only weight the argument has is its own implied Unitarianism. Sadly, this argument is often allowed to go unchallenged, no matter who is presenting it.

Islamic apologists establish their biblical arguments against the Trinity upon this assumed Unitarianism. They may not state it openly or even use the terminology itself, but the sharp apologist will identify the implied Unitarianism in the arguments placed before him or her. This will become clear when we examine some of the favorite passages used by Muslim apologists.

When challenged, Muslim apologists, like most anti-Trinitarians, have a difficult time defending Unitarianism. They are rarely challenged on it and hence have not had to explain why “God is one” *must* mean “God is one in being *and* in person.” Citation of such passages as the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4) may be provided, but very rarely will a substantive defense be mounted. The fact is, every passage that affirms monotheism (one God) is wholeheartedly embraced by every Christian Trinitarian. Going beyond “God is one” to “God is unipersonal,” however, is a completely different issue, requiring one to deal with the biblical evidence of three divine persons, and the Muslim apologist is generally not ready to tackle this.

To help the Muslim understand this doctrine, you might explain that Trinitarianism is not the opposite of monotheism (an assumption they may be carrying into every word you speak). You might say, “The opposite of monotheism is polytheism, and we both know that is wrong. Where you and I disagree is not about whether there is only one true God, but whether that God is limited to one divine person, or, as the Bible reveals, three divine persons. Our conflict is between your assumption of Unitarianism and my acceptance of the divinely revealed fact that three divine persons have eternally existed in relationship with each other.” At this point, a few questions might be asked to make sure the Muslim understands that you are not promoting polytheism and that the real issue is whether the Scriptures reveal the existence of more than one divine person.⁷

One other assumption that is common to Muslim apologists must be addressed. Just as the nature of the Trinity is unique, so too, the nature of Jesus Christ as the God-man is unique. Muslims hold to traditional beliefs that preclude the possibility of God entering into human flesh. Some are rather basic, but in general they all can be boiled down to the idea that Allah would never deem it fitting to enter into His own creation. They focus on the alleged difficulties that would exist if God were, in fact, to become incarnate (God in the flesh).

There are many speculative questions about Jesus’ life that the Word of God does not answer. We know almost nothing about what it was like to live with such a sinless person, or exactly how Jesus behaved as a child (outside of the fact that at age 12 He knew His Father and His Father’s business). Such questions know no end, but the Muslims can be answered by asking: “Does the Creator of all things lack the capacity to live within His own creation if He chooses to do so? Is God *incapable* of this?” Is the Muslim truly comfortable saying Allah has the power to create the universe but not the power to enter into it? Ask him or her to support the belief that God does not have this power. When the question of *why* is raised, move directly to the glorious condescension of the love of Christ that brought Him into human flesh (John 1:14–18; Phil. 2:5–11).

Arguments from Eisegesis

Eisegesis is the opposite of exegesis. Eisegesis is reading *into* a text a meaning its original author never intended. Exegesis, on the other hand, allows the text to speak for itself, or in other words, it seeks to draw the originally intended meaning solely from the text. Sound exegesis takes into consideration everything that shapes communication in written form: historical background, literary context, and language (grammar, lexical meanings of words, etc.). Doing the work of exegesis shows respect for the original text. Engaging in eisegesis shows no respect for the text or its author. None of us likes to be misinterpreted or to have improper assertions, motivations, or conclusions attributed to us by careless reading of what we have written. We show respect for God's Word, therefore, by handling it with care and seeking to hear what it says without inserting our own thoughts, traditions, desires, or beliefs in the place of God's truth.

It should be remembered that the majority of Muslims who present "biblical" arguments *against* the Trinity probably believe the Bible to be inconsistent and self-contradictory.⁸ As a result, they will not feel the need to interpret a passage in light of other passages that may be clearer or more to the point. In fact, the primary force in their interpretation will not be other passages of the Bible at all, but the overriding teaching of the Qur'an. When this is the case, using phrases such as, "Let's interpret this passage consistently with the author's own views expressed elsewhere," or, "Let's show respect to the text by not ignoring the context of this passage" can be helpful in communicating the concept.

Popular Islamic apologetics is virtually devoid of sound exegetical content. In comparison with other anti-Trinitarian groups, the material found in the standard Web sites promoting Islam in the United States and other Western countries is simply abysmal. The vast majority of biblical information presented to Muslims by their apologetics community is horrifically flawed on almost every possible level. Wild claims about alleged contradictions and corruptions are mixed in with "standard" types of arguments against biblical inerrancy, seemingly without any recognition or understanding of the problems with the argument and claims being presented. The fact that the argumentation is bad, however, does not make it much easier to rebut. A very flawed argument can be held just as firmly as a slightly flawed one can be held.

One highly effective way to reduce the number of Bible passages you will have to deal with specifically is to clear up one of the major misconceptions right at the start. The largest portion of the arsenal the Muslim likely will use is made up from those verses that differentiate between the Father and the Son. Passages such as Colossians 1:1, which contain the phrase: "an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God," will be thrust forward with the conclusion: "See, Jesus is not God!" (based upon Unitarian assumptions). These can all be handled at one time by stating at the beginning, "Proving that the Father is not the Son is not going to assist you in showing the Bible does not teach the Trinity, for that is exactly what the doctrine of the Trinity states. The Father is not the Son, and since the normal term for the Father in the New Testament is 'God' and the normal term for the Son is 'Lord,' all the passages you might present differentiating them from one another will only cause me to nod my head in agreement." Of course, merely explaining it will not stop the recitation of the verses, but after one or two examples are offered and responded to in the same fashion, the point will be driven home.

One argument that figured prominently in the debate mentioned earlier involves the differentiation between God and man that is basic to both Christianity and Islam. The argument was based upon Jesus' words recorded in John 8:40: "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do" (NASB). The argument is as follows: Jesus called Himself "a *man* who has told you the truth." We all know God is not a man, and since Jesus is a man, He cannot possibly be God.⁹ This one consideration alone makes it plain that the Trinity is in error.

Such an argument, however, clearly is circular. It assumes what it seeks to prove. It is based upon the assumption that Jesus could not be both God and man; therefore, the Christian belief in Jesus as the God-man is precluded, not by the teaching of this passage, but by definition. Jesus surely was a *man* who told the truth, but according to John He was also the eternal divine Word who became flesh (John 1:1, 14), who claimed to be the great I Am who was before Abraham (John 8:24, 18:5-6), and who was proclaimed by His closest disciples to be our Lord and God (John 20:28). John did not intend us to isolate one term to the exclusion of the rest of his testimony.

There are, of course, other classic biblical passages that one must deal with when responding to any argument that seeks to make Christ either a lesser deity or merely a creature. These passages also are often interpreted without concern for context. John 14:28 (“The Father is greater than I”), John 20:17 (“My God and your God”), and 1 Corinthians 11:3 (“God is the head of Christ”) are cited often, and the sharp apologist needs to be ready to give a fair, biblically based explanation of the relationship between the Father and the Son during the Incarnation¹⁰ as well as the roles taken by Father, Son, and Spirit in redemption.¹¹ Muslims may not have the same “bent” on their use of these passages as do other groups who also deny the Trinity, such as Jehovah’s Witnesses or the Way International, but asking basic questions about what *they* think the passage means can help expose their underlying assumptions and keep the conversation going in the right direction.

EXALTING THE WORD

When I rose to give my closing statements to the mixed Muslim and Christian audience, I asked the Lord to guide me in speaking His truth so as to communicate to the unbelievers there the truths He would have them to hear. I strongly emphasized the biblical teaching that Jesus Christ is our Creator (Col. 1:15–17) and that every breath we breathe, every beat of our heart, is a gift from His hand. If what the Bible says about Jesus Christ is true, then we need not only to obey that revelation but also to deal with Christ’s claims on our lives. Dismissing Him as a mere prophet would be to show Him great disrespect, and to die without knowing our Creator would be to die in our sins. I let the Word of God testify to the grandeur and majesty of Christ, and I did all I could to communicate as clearly as possible the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:1).

That is all any of us can do: speak the truth in love, and trust God to glorify Himself with the results. I pray this study has edified you in your knowledge of God’s triune nature and emboldened you to stand for that truth even in the face of Islamic apologetics.

NOTES

1. See my article “Loving the Trinity,” *Christian Research Journal* 21, 4 (1999): 21–25, 40–41.
2. For those who wish to engage Muslims on their own ground, a strong case can be made from the Qur’an *against* the idea of the corruption of the text of the Bible, despite the popularity of this belief among Muslims today. A number of articles at www.answering-islam.org address this issue. Sura 6:34 reflects a common theme in the Qur’an: “There is no changing the word of God: the news of (past) apostles has come to you already.” See also Sura 5:65–66. The fact that most American Islamic apologists choose to assume corruption of the text of the Bible is noteworthy.
3. Ahmed Ali, *Al-Qur’ân: A Contemporary Translation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). Unless otherwise noted, this is the version of the Qur’an used throughout this study.
4. Modalism denies the eternal existence of three divine persons. It reduces the three divine persons to three manifestations of a single person, or to three “modes” of being.
5. Muslim apologists cannot excuse this evidence by making reference to early Trinitarian controversies. When the Qur’an was written, the issue had been settled, and the Christians with whom Muhammad had contact would well have known the truth of the doctrine.
6. Amatul Rahman Omar and Abdul Mannan Omar, *The Holy Qur’ân: Arabic Text-English Translation* (Hockessin, DE: Noor Foundation International, 2000).
7. Two days after the debate noted in this article (against Hamza Abdul Malik), I debated a leading Oneness proponent (Robert Sabin) on the doctrine of the Trinity. It is ironic that while my Muslim opponent vociferously denied the deity of Christ and my Oneness opponent strongly affirmed it, they both used the same Unitarian arguments. In the second debate I presented three primary evidences for the eternal existence of the Son as a divine person in distinction from the Father: John 1:1, John 17:5, and Philippians 2:5–11. See these debates at www.aomin.org.
8. In fact, it is my experience that some Muslim apologists will use the Trinitarian discussion as a means of transitioning into their real goal, which is the demonstration of the alleged corruption of the text of the Bible.
9. My Muslim debate opponent handled those passages that identify Jesus as God by dismissing every single one of them as a later addition to the text of Scripture. When challenged to provide historical documentation in support of this allegation of massive textual corruption, he failed to do so. I pointed out that given his standards, we might as well conclude that the passages he was citing were all inserted as well! Most Muslim apologists will at least try to argue the common Unitarian interpretation of these passages rather than simply dismiss them as a wholesale example of corruption.
10. The Father was positionally greater than the Son when the Son voluntarily humbled Himself — hence the words of John 14:28; Jesus, being the God-man, as a perfect man, acknowledged the Father as His God.
11. These issues are addressed more fully in my book, *The Forgotten Trinity* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1998).