

Hi ...,

I want to thank you for stepping out in faith and sharing with me (by this book) your faith. I am a devoted Christian (Orthodox in Catholic theology) man who deeply cherishes my faith, so I can truly appreciate your action. Having said, that I'm not sure how much you know about the book that you lent me, but I would not trust it as valid source for truth about Christ and his teaching. I was not able to get past page 3 where, in the 5th paragraph down (2nd of "Really, Who was he?") from the top. The sentence that reads "Yet, his associates never believed that he was God." Is completely false. It goes on to say, "Jesus never claimed to be God, but he acknowledged that he was the promised Messiah, or Christ." This to, is absolutely contrary to sacred scripture and sacred tradition. I would like to address these two points, briefly, here for your benefit. Before I do, I want you to know that I am in no way trying to insult you or judge you, but rather I'm trying to share with you, in faith, the truths of Christ and his most holy Church.

1. Did the 12 disciples profess Christ (Jesus) as the Messiah and God?

- a. The short answer to this question is YES; absolutely the disciples did proclaim Jesus was God and worshiped him as such. Let me quote a verse from St. Paul in 1 Cor. 12:3 "3 Therefore, I tell you that nobody speaking by the spirit of God says, "Jesus be accursed." And no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit." In this verse we see how it is by the Holy Spirit that we proclaim Jesus is God. How do I know that? Well because of the word "Lord" in this verse. The Greek word here is Κυρίου which is koo'-ree-os (Strong's # 2962) and means God or Lord. So I think it is fitting, when discussing this topic, which the Bible tells us that it is by His Holy Spirit (the third person in the Trinity) that we call Jesus God. Not by our own doing but by God himself are we calling Jesus God. Therefore, every instance in scripture where we see the disciples claiming Jesus is God, or worshiping him as God, it is by the Holy Spirit alone and not by their own actions or that of the Devil.
- b. I would like to start with the disciple who is first among Saints, and a believer of Jesus as Christ... Mary his Mother. The same Greek word, mentioned above, is also used in Luke 1:43 where Elizabeth says to the Blessed Mother "43 And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord 14 should come to me?" It is this verse that shows how Mary IS the Mother of God (not in the sense that she created God, or is older than God, but because Jesus is God and man at the same, co-equal, time... Mary is the Mother of Jesus... she is therefore the Mother of God) as the Church stipulated in the Third Ecumenical Council: Ephesus (431AD). In St. Lukes' Gospel, Elizabeth calling Mary the Mother of God, which would have been blasphemous, yet Mary did not rebuke her and instead said "46 And Mary said: 16 "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; 47 my spirit rejoices in God my savior." This is an affirmation that Mary, knew God was in her womb, that she was therefore the Mother of God and that God had truly blessed her. Further more when Elizabeth called Mary the Mother of God she was moved by the Holy Spirit as it is written: "41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, 42 cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among

women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. 43 And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord 14 should come to me?" So we can see another link between this verse and St. Paul's verse in 1 Cor. 12:3 where he said that only by the Holy Spirit does one proclaim Jesus as Lord. If one is filled with the Holy Spirit and proclaims Jesus as Lord, God, then what is one filled with that proclaims Jesus is NOT Lord, God?

- c. How can we be sure that the use of the Greek word Kupíou, which is koo'-ree-os (Strong's # 2962), truly refers to God and not something less? Well, we can look through the Septuagint which is the Greek version of the Old Testament (written prior to the birth of Jesus) which was the version used by the Jews at the time of Christ. We can see many, many examples of God being referred to as Kupíou in the Greek OT however, I will give only one here. In Genesis 3:8 we see how the Lord walked in the garden in the cool of the day, well the Greek word used there was non other than Kupíou (http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr/bible/old_testament/index1.html) which was the same word used in Luke 1:43 and the same word used in 1 Cor. 12:3 as well as many other places.
- d. What about the 12 though? In the 16th Chapter of St. Mathews Gospel Jesus asked his disciples "13 who do people say that I am (some translations say who the Son of Man is)." In verse 14 the disciples replied, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." Jesus then wanted to know what those closest to him truly believed.... "15... But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God." To this Jesus responded "17... Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father." We can get two points from this exchange (as it relates to the topic we are discussing). First, that St. Peter truly believed that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the Living God and that it was God himself that gave this grace to St. Peter and no one else. Every time you see a reference of Son of God, Son of the living God, Son of Man etc... you need to ask yourself what that meant to the first century Jews (instead of 21st century Americans such as us). To a first century Jew, claiming to be the Son of Man, or the Son of God was to make yourself an equal to God (see John 5:17 & 18). This was, in fact, what Jesus was put to death for.... For making himself equal to God by claiming he was the Son of God thus God himself.
- e. In the upper room, before the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus began to become deeply distressed (St. Mathew 26:22 & 23) over which of his disciples would betray him. "22... they began to say to him one after another, Surely it is not I, Lord?" The Greek word for "Lord" used in this verse is koo'-ree-os (Strong 2962) which means God (as used in the Greek Septuagint). Here we can see all but one disciple calling Jesus God. This is off set by the one deciple who does not call him Lord... Judas. "25 Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply, Surely it is not I, Rabbi?" The Greek word used here is hrab-bee' (strong 4461) which means Rabbi and not Lord or God. You see Judas was not able, unlike the other 11 disciples, to call Jesus God but instead only teacher. Let's not forget what St. Paul

said in 1 Cor. 12:3 "3 Therefore, I tell you that nobody speaking by the spirit of God says, "Jesus be accursed." And no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit." It was by the Holy Spirit that the disciples proclaimed Jesus to be God.

- f. In St. Luke's Gospel, Ch 5 verse 8, St. Peter fell to the knees of Jesus and said "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." Here again the Greek word for "Lord" is koo'-ree-os (Strong 2962) which means God (as used in the Greek Septuagint). Jesus did not rebuke him for saying this... it would have been blasphemous to have allowed St. Peter to make such a claim.
- g. How about the "Doubting Thomas"? In St. John's Gospel Chapter 20 verse 24 through 29 we see the Apostle St. Thomas coming back to the upper room and to the account, of the other disciples, of Jesus' appearance after the resurrection. Then Jesus appears to St. Thomas and beckons him to put his hands into his wounds... then in verse 28 St. Thomas said to him "My Lord and my God!" If Jesus did not believe that he was God it would have been blasphemous to allow his disciples to call him God yet we can see, clearly, in Scripture how the disciples called Jesus God and Jesus did not rebuke them.
- h. What about St. Mathew's Gospel Chapter 28 verse 17 "When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted." Then in verse 18 "Then Jesus approached and said to them, All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit..." In this passage not only do we see how the disciples worshiped Jesus, an act reserved only for God and no other, but then, when they doubt, Jesus reassures them by telling them to go forth and baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit... this is the Trinity... the One True God with 3 distinct persons. This is the doctrine that all Christians must hold fast to in order to be Christians... denying this doctrine makes one a non-Christian.
- i. There are many other references (Such as St. John's opening prolog of his Gospel which say it very clearly That Jesus was God The Word incarnate.) that I could list but I think these are a good start.

2. Did Jesus claim to be God?

- a. Again, the short answer is Yes, absolutely with out a doubt. In fact, it is his claim of his oneness with God that got him crucified.
 - i. Here's an Article I gave to a JW friend of mine back in NH:
http://www.catholic.com/library/Distinctive_Beliefs_of_Jehovahs.asp
- b. Why was Jesus sentenced to die? Was it because he claimed to be the messiah? John 9:22 says that the Jews would merely cast the so

called Messiah and his followers out of the synagogue and not execute them. In fact there were many so called Messiah's in that time and not all of them were crucified as Jesus was. So, if the claim to be the Christ is not what got him killed what was it? Jesus was executed because he claimed to be God.

- c. Let's look at St. Marks' Gospel 14:61 – 64 "61 But he was silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him and said to him, "Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?" 62 Then Jesus answered, "I am; and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.'" 63 At that the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further need have we of witnesses? 64 You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as deserving to die". Pay close attention to Jesus' words in verse 62 "I AM". This is a crucial statement and one that the Jews recognized as the name of God given in Exodus 3:14 "God replied, "I am who am." Then he added, "This is what you shall tell the Israelites: I AM sent me to you." The Greek words used here are Ἐγώ εἰμι (eg-o' i-mee') which are the very same Greek words used in the Septuagint version of Exodus (which again was the common version used by Christ and the Apostles at that time).
- d. Jesus actually said eg-o' i-mee' several times in the Gospels to say that he is God. Let's look at John 8:58 where Jesus tells the Scribes and the Pharisees that he was older than Abraham and that he is God. "58 Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM." 59 So they picked up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid and went out of the temple area". Here again Jesus uses the Greek words eg-o' i-mee' and once he does what happens? The Pharisees pick up stones to kill him, why? Because he claimed to be God.
- e. To make an even more powerful point let's back up to verse 24 in John 8 "24 That is why I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I AM, 12 you will die in your sins." Here again Jesus used the Greek words eg-o' i-mee' to say that if you do not believe that he is God then you will die in your sins. WOW! That is very powerful and cutting. The JW's deny the divinity of Christ and yet here in the Gospel we are told that we must believe in the divinity of Christ if we are to have life.
- f. Further more Jesus says it once again in "28 So Jesus said (to them), "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I AM, and that I do nothing on my own, but I say only what the Father taught me. 29 The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what is pleasing to him." Jesus and the Father are one - St. John's Gospel Chapter 10:30 - and here Jesus uses the divine name, eg-o' i-mee', no less than three times to describe the Father? No! To describe himself. Jesus is God.
- g. The words eg-o' i-mee' are also used in the Garden in John 18:5 -8 "5 They answered him, "Jesus the Nazorean." 4 He said to them, "I AM." Judas his betrayer was also with them. 6 When he said to them, "I AM," they turned away and fell to the ground. 7 So he again

asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" They said, "Jesus the Nazorean." 8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." So we see Jesus claiming to be God and we see the effect of those standing around when he makes this claim.

- h. Jesus has claimed to be God and we saw how that was what earned him the death penalty and now in John 5:17 & 18 we see John himself saying (in his commentary) that Jesus made himself equal with God simply by saying that God was his Father. "17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is at work until now, so I am at work." 18 For this reason the Jews tried all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath but he also called God his own father, making himself equal to God." So now, if you see a passage that talks of Jesus referring to God as Father, based on John 5:18, you can see how this relationship Father/Son, makes him equal and not subordinate. Here again, because Jesus made himself equal to God the Jews sought all the more to kill him. There is no other way to interpret scripture on this subject but to say that Jesus is God.

3. What about the early Church past the time of the Apostles... what did they believe?

- a. This is not the first time the Church has dealt with such a heresy as this. In the early 4th century there arose a heresy called Arianism, named after a priest by the name of Arian. Arian was teaching that Christ was not God but merely a super natural human. A large controversy arose in the Church and much debate among the magisterium. The Emperor of Rome, in an effort to avoid any religious turmoil in the empire, commanded that the Church hold a general council and decide the issue once and for all. The Church conducted the council in 325 in Nicea and overwhelmingly refuted the Arian position and adopted the Nicene Creed. The Pope ratified the council and it became binding on all Christians.
- b. Here is a link to a document in regards to the Council of Nicea where the Nicene creed was written and established in 325 AD.
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11044a.htm>
- c. Here is the creed itself "We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance [ek tes ousias] of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of the same substance with the Father [homoousion to patri], through whom all things were made both in heaven and on earth; who for us men and our salvation descended, was incarnate, and was made man, suffered and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven and cometh to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost. Those who say: There was a time when He was not, and He was not before He was begotten; and that He was made out of nothing (ex ouk onton); or who maintain that He is of another hypostasis or another substance [than the Father], or

that the Son of God is created, or mutable, or subject to change, [them] the Catholic Church anathematizes.”

- d. This creed is very clear about the true nature of Christ and is still recited at every Mass around the world. The creed even goes to the extra step of anathematizes all those who do not hold this position. The church holds this authority because Jesus gave it to them (Matthew 18:15 – 18, Matthew 16:18&19, John 19: 22 & 23, 1 Tim 3:15) therefore what ever the Church binds on earth will be bound in heaven... i.e. all Christians are bound to obey the Churches decisions. St. Athanasius was a Bishop in Alexandra at the time of the Arian heresy and fought vigorously to correct this antichristian teaching.

Well I could go on and on, as I truly love to study my faith, Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition so this was a blessing... allowing me to once again study the truths of God and to share them with a blessed soul such as yourself. I hope that you do not mistake my excitement, and zeal, for Scripture as a personal attack against you... I would not do that. However, I did feel that it was important that I point out that the book you shared does not appear to be what it presents itself as. If you want to discuss anything in greater detail I would be more than happy to discuss it. I do pray that God enlighten our minds, open our hearts and guides us to his love and truth.

Thanks and God Bless

Joe

Response from The JW:

Hi Joe,

I also love discussing scripture with those who do as well. First and foremost I have to state that I do not personally believe in the Trinity which is why I am a Jehovah's Witness. My parents were Jehovah's Witnesses but as I grew up I did analyze other religions and it was through looking at other religions that I decided to become a baptized member of Jehovah's Witnesses.

I truly don't believe Jesus is the Only True God but that he is a god in a sense that he is superior to humans and worthy of praise; however, according to John 5:19, 14:28, and Hebrews 5:8 he is obedient to the Father, Jehovah. How can all three parts be equal if one is submissive to another part. Being submissive requires a yielding of your own personal wants, desires, and choices to be made irrelevant according to the wants, desires, and choices of another. It means to be unresistingly or humbly obedient as a son would be to a father. The Bible speaks about the creation of Jesus whereas Jehovah has no beginning. Just as you

would speak about the birth of your child but they couldn't speak honestly (only through hearsay) of your birth.

1 Cor. 11:3, John 20:17, Rev. 1:6 all speak about Jesus having a head God the Father. Which if the Trinity is to be believed, these scriptures would have to be false because all in the Trinity are one and equal. This is the main reason why I chose to be baptized as a Jehovah's Witness and have remained strong in my decision. I don't believe that the Bible should be changed to match our beliefs, however, we should change our beliefs to match the Bible. The Catholic Church has endured much criticism for suppressing the Bible from the common person as well as "adjusting" scripture to conform to the ways of the Holy Church. (The article I read actually stated according to the ways, thoughts, and beliefs of the Holy See I think but I can't remember 100% for sure. Neither do I have a link for it.)

I have read much on the Council of Nicea and seen many documentaries on it as well and truly believe this was council for men, by men, with men. The most powerful and respected religious leaders at that time did not attend the council and the political ruler in charge of it made sure things were stated to his liking. This automatically negates the true will of God and makes this council a true representation of the political needs at that time.

Basically, I don't believe the Trinity is either logical or beneficial and that's where we split. The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived is a verse by verse account of Jesus' life while he was on earth and that is what the book claims to be and is. However, it does not support the Trinity, this point is true.

Jesus is the key to salvation, and without faith in his shed blood there can be no means for eternal life as promised in the Bible. Now, as a reward for his sacrifice of becoming human and dying for mankind as a perfect man Jehovah has blessed him with kingship until such time as Jehovah will retake the reigns as it were and resume full kingship over the earth as he originally intended.

I hope you do read the book because although the Trinity is not promoted within it, the explanations of the Bible verses and the verse by verse retelling of the accounts of Jesus' life in chronological order is greatly beneficial.

With much respect,

....

My response to the JW:

Hi ... ,

Well I respect you, and your journey in life, so I would like to reiterate that I am not your judge. Let me just address a few points, that you mention below, that I might not have been clear enough in my initial letter.

1. I think it's important to point out a few things about the proper exegesis of Sacred Scripture. As we read the Bible, can not read one verse apart from another. We need to take a verse in its context. As I have heard it said, "a text taken out of context is a pretext." We need to read each verse in light of the entire chapter, in light of the entire book, in light of the entire testament, and in light of the entire Bible. The Bible can not contradict itself, as it is holy and inspired (a fundamental Christian doctrine). Therefore when we see what might appear to be an APPARENT contradiction we must dig deeper to find its true contextual meaning not just what it appears to mean on the surface. Again, one of the greatest errors people make when interpreting scripture is taking the verse out of context. People often will point to a proof text and say "See this is what it means because this is what it says". The problem with this is that they are ripping it out of context and making it say something other than what it truly is saying. I like to say we need to stop reading the Bible like 21st century Americans and start reading it like 1st century Jews (as Jesus and his apostles were). In other words we need to understand the context of what is said by walking in their shoes and not ours. We can not go with out remembering that the Bible was not written in English so often we have to study the translations to understand the context of what is being said.
2. You said, in your second paragraph, that you don't believe in the Trinity because of the verses that speak of Jesus being submissive to God the Father (or humble, or how God the Father is greater). You provided some quotations (which I would like to talk about in a minute) to show how Jesus was submissive. Well my question to you is... am I supposed to ignore the verses that speak of Jesus being equal to God, the verses where Jesus out and out claims to be God, the verses where other call him God and worship him.... Just because there are other verses that talk of Jesus being humble and submissive to God the Father? Does that make sense? Is it good, Biblical, practice to ignore some verses over other verses? I would imagine that we would both agree that would be a bad practice.
 - a. So in the case where we see this apparent contradiction in Scripture we are supposed to dig deeper to find out what's going on. As I said above, Christians hold fast to Holy Scripture being divinely inspired and with out error.... So the bottom line is there is no real contradiction in Scripture only opportunities for us to roll up our sleeves and do our home work.
 - b. You mentioned St. John's Gospel Chapter 5 verse 19 which says: "Jesus answered and said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, a son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing; for what he does, his son will do also."

If this one verse was all that I read then yes... it would sound convincing... it sure sounds like a simple thing for a son to submit to his father. In order to understand the context of this one verse we should read the entire chapter... the entire book even... St. John has very consistent themes through out his Gospel, as well as his other letters and the book of revelation. In fact that is why most scholars reference all of his writings when trying to understand parts of Revelation, for example, to see what St. John was thinking. So let look at the entire 5th chapter of Johns Gospel to see what was going on:

I won't quote the entire chapter (as you can easily look it up) but I would like to point a few things out. The chapter starts out with Jesus, and his disciples, going to Jerusalem for a feast. Jesus goes to the sheep gate where there is the pool of Bethzatha where the invalids would come to dip themselves in the water (the tradition was an Angel would stir the

water so the invalids would get into the water and be healed) to be healed. Jesus asks one man if he wants to be healed. The man says yes, and Jesus heals him, tells him to take up his pallet and walk. When the Jews saw the man carrying his pallet, on the Sabbath, they wanted to know why, who etc. When they discovered it was Jesus the Gospel says” 16 And this was why the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did this on the Sabbath.” Why is it critical that Jesus heals on the Sabbath? Why did this upset the Jews? What was Jesus’ response to their anger? **“17 But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working still, and I am working. 18 This is why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God.”** (emphasis added)

This verse is very clear... The Jews sought to kill Jesus because Jesus, out of his own mouth, made himself equal with God. Well I am an obedient son... humble to my father but I am certainly not his equal. So how does this verse square with the next couple of verses (of which 19 is one of them) where Jesus speaks of his submission and humility to God the Father? The key to this is to understand the fundamental Christian teaching that Jesus is both fully God and Fully man... not two separate individuals... one individual that is both 100% God and 100% man (all things are possible with God). As a human he of course is submissive to God the father... why? Because Jesus came to show us the way to God... it is his example that we are to follow... Jesus knew that, that is why he shows us submissiveness and humility because he wants us to, like him, be submissive to God and humble before God. I’ll give you an example of what I mean:

A Good example of this principle is when Jesus was at the tomb of Lazarus and he stopped to pray to the Father, before raising Lazarus, and said in John 11:41 & 42 “41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. 42 **I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me.**" (Emphases added) Jesus is showing us the way to the Father by relating to us on our human terms. He is God and therefore he does not need to state the obvious but for our sake he does, so we may know the truth about God. Another good example of this principle is John 3:12 where Jesus says to Nicodemus “12 If I tell you about earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?” Jesus clearly is saying he knows ALL things but our limited mental capacity is not up to comprehending ALL things therefore he has to speak on our level, not unlike how we adults would speak to an infant or a small child. Surly that is what we are in the eyes of God.

So, back to John 5... verses 19 and following we not only see Christ’s’ humanity, by his submitting his human will (which was a fully human will) to God the Father but he also tells us just how much that he and the Father are one (John 10:30). Jesus says over and over that he is ultimately inseparable from God... they have a single will... a single

outlook on his mission... Jesus even tells us, in verse 37, "...His voice you have not never heard, his form you have never seen." Yet, in Chapter 14, of this same Gospel, St. Thomas asks how they are to know the way to where Jesus is going, and Jesus says back to them "6... I am the way, the truth and the life: no one comes to the Father, but by me.

7If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him". (emphasis added) Jesus goes on... in the next verses St. Philip said "8 Lord, show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied. Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? **He who has seen me has seen the Father?"** (emphasis added) Read this entire chapter and you see that Jesus is teaching that he and the Father are ONE (John 10:30).

So if I were to take the JW position, that Jesus is not God and there is no Trinity I would have to ignore... no rip out and throw away all these verses and chapters that so clearly say otherwise. As I pointed out yesterday, We can see from the Greek words used that both Jesus claimed to be God, and his followers referred to him as God. If I take the Christian position, that Jesus is fully God and Fully man, then the APPARENT contradiction in the verses that speak of the Trinity, such as Mathew 28:19, Jesus' divinity, such as when Jesus uses the Term "I AM" in John 8 (used several times as I outlined below), with the verses that speak of Jesus' humility, submission and so on, such as you referenced in John 5:19 and in John 14:28, ... are resolved right away. We see, from the above referenced scripture verses, that Jesus came to teach us, lead us, and to redeem us. We are called to be like Christ as St. Paul tells us... Christ teaches us by his example.

So, even if I were to go line by line in every passage in the Bible the result is the same.... The Bible can not contradict it self... the Christian position is the only one that takes into account the apparent contradictions. There are simply too many clear references to his divinity for me to ignore simply because Jesus was showing us humility... don't forget his words to Nicodemus... how can I speak to you of heavenly things when you simply won't/can't get it... St. Paul puts it this way... we have to be fed with milk because we are babes in Christ... not mature enough for meat.

c. As far as the Catholic Church suppressing the Bible... I would ask that you provide references for that argument as I can prove that this is simple not the case. This is an old argument, brought up by protestants mostly, and is filled with hearsay, and simply inaccurate statements. For example I hear it said a lot that Martin Luther was trying to get the Bible into the hands of the German people... since the Bible was supposedly not available in German at the time? Well truth be told there were many versions of the Bible in German at the time. As everyone is familiar with... what was the first thing printed on the Guttenberg press? The Bible of course... The Church never changed its teaching... never kept the Sacred Scriptures from people. Did it fight to ensure that not every Tom, Dick, and Harry could just put out their own versions with their own translations that were chalked with errors? Yes, absolutely... The church understands herself to be the guardian of this truth (as instated by Christ as in Mathew 16) and therefore did not want to see innocent people led astray by false, corrupted versions of the Bible. At any rate... if you want to provide specific examples I would be glad to look into it. You will notice that I am not afraid to put it all on the line... the Church makes big claims... they are either true or they are false... so if there is a single case where the Church changes the teaching, as it was given by Christ and then handed down by the Bishops, then that would be a very big deal. But when you start diving in the particulars of each case it becomes clearer that the Church holds up the truth instead of breaking it down. 1 Timothy 15:3 -

i. **“15 But if I should be delayed, you should know how to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth.”**

d. In regards to the Council of Nicea, who were the most powerful and respected leaders who did not attend? This was a fully ratified council, as I stated below, that had far reaching implications. The Arian heresy was a large heresy to be sure and the Roman emperor, who professed Christ to be God, truly cared more about having peace in his empire than about deciding such complicated matters. If you read the writing of St. Athanasius he will shed great light on what was going on at this time and the struggle he, personally, endured over it. Can we negate the will of God when we are being selfish? Can I put a stop to the will of God when I want to do things my way? No... there is nothing I can do to negate the will of God... that doesn't mean there are not repercussions to the choices I make... there are for sure. But, God is an all powerful God who is not going to be stumbled by a Roman emperor or by Bishops who are being selfish and sinful. Jesus said it very clearly in St. Mathew's Gospel, chapter 16, "Simon Peter said in reply, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus said to him in reply, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. 18 And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, **13 and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.** 19 I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. **14 Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose**

on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (emphasis added)

I can trust the results of this council simple because God said so... he said so in St. Mathews Gospel... so I take him for his word.

- e. I know the Trinity may tough to wrap our minds around... but again... God did not limit his truth to what we humans can understand. There are deep theological foundations to be found in the Father, the Son and the Holy spirit? Am I to simply ignore the scriptures that speak of this simply because it does not seem logical to me... a mere human? Not at all... there is truth... Truth is a person.. Jesus said I am the way the Truth and the Life in John 14 and to Pontius Pilate he said all who seek truth hear his voice. Truth... logic has nothing to do with it. It is true because God said so. A loving, submissive, humble son accepts it because his Father has said so. As far as benefits go they are as numerous as the stars in the sky. For instance, in the Holy trinity, there is Father hood, son ship, and Love who is the Holy Spirit... what more perfect example do we humans have of a perfect family (see Eph 3:14 –Every family on earth takes its name from God)? My father was not a good father, for many years anyway, but I do not discount Fatherhood because of his actions because I see how Fatherhood aught to be. Now that it is my turn to be a Father, I have a wonderful model to follow. I also see, in the Son ship of Christ, that I am called to Holiness, submissiveness and humility to my Father, and my mother, and my whole family. I came to serve, not be served, Jesus said. In the Holy Spirit there is Love... and I am called to Love my God and my neighbor as myself. St. Paul tells us in 1 Cor 13 that with out Love we have nothing.... Love is the key to true Christian virtue and charity. The Church teaches that we can understand the truth to a true marriage by looking to God in the Holy Trinity (Eph 5:21 and following). The Trinity is extremely beneficial... if only more earthly Fathers loved there families like God our Father.... Wouldn't this be a better place? If only more of earthly men served our families like Christ served the Father... wouldn't this be a better place? If only more earthly men (humans) loved God and our neighbors like the Holy Spirit... wouldn't this be a better place? Jesus told his disciples to go forth and make all nations disciples by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit... why would he do that if the Trinity was not real? That would have been blasphemous... if it had not been true.

As I'm sure the book you read has many good things about it, but that pales in comparison to the Truth, which is Jesus, which is found in his Gospels. If that book denies the divinity of Jesus then it is automatically not sticking to what the scriptures teach. I don't say this to be mean... just want to be straight forward. If that book is wrong, on such a crucial topic as the divinity of Jesus, then what else could it be wrong about? I would not want to take that chance. We are to be imitators of Christ (Eph 5:1), as St. Paul tells us, and to gird ourselves with Truth (Eph 6:14) so that we can stand firm against falsehoods.

I do appreciate your thoughtfulness in sharing your faith with me. I'm happy to discuss anything you like or be more detailed about something I may have not explained very well. If you did not read through my first email I would encourage you to do so as it was discovering these subtle

nuances, in the Greek and such, that really helped me to understand my own short coming to scripture study.

God Bless
Joe