

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for writing us once again at Christian Questions Radio. You asked how Jesus could be in the form of God as well as be the exact image of God as the Apostle Paul said and not be deity. You cited Philippians 2:8, “who was in the form of God emptied himself,” Psalm 33:6, “the breath of God” and John 16:27, “came out of God” as scriptural reasoning for your viewpoint.

Philippians 2:5-11 (ASV) says. “Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in **the form of God**, counted **not the being on an equality with God** a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, **taking the form of a servant**, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

The word “form” used in the above scriptures is Strong’s #3444 and means shape or nature. Just as Jesus had a celestial form when he was in heaven, he took on the human form when he came to earth. This text does not describe the mixing of two natures. Contrarily, it describes Jesus as fully in the “form” of a servant as he had been in the “form” of God.

Philippians 2:5-11 gives us powerful evidence to challenge the idea of the trinity. It tells us that God exalted Jesus – meaning that Jesus had not been exalted prior to this time. God also rewarded him with a name that was above every other name and declared that at the name of Jesus, every knee should now bow – meaning that such a reverence had not existed before. God made Jesus Lord to (“unto” – Rotherham) the glory of God – a full reward for his faithfulness. Jesus now had, as he testified, all power given unto him by God. Jesus also acquired divine status. However, this power and divine status in no way indicate that Jesus acquired equality with God. “For he put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him.” (1 Corinthians 15:27 RVIC) God himself is superior and is arranging all of these things for his beloved Son. Had Jesus been part of the Godhead, he would always have possessed divinity and would never have needed to receive it as a reward for his faithfulness and willing sacrifice on the cross.

Psalm 33:6 states, “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.”

The Word of the LORD is Jesus, God’s first creation. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; the Word also was a god [a mighty one].” (John 1:1 RVIC) Jesus is often called the Word because God reveals his word, plan or purpose through him. All the rest of the creation (angels, universes, the earth and humankind) was done by God through Jesus. “All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.” (John 1:3RVIC) God was the architect, but Jesus was the builder.

John 16:27-28 (NIV) reads, “No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed **that I came from God** [not out of God]. I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

The above translation and other modern translations give a much more correct rendering of John 16:27-28 than the King James Version that you alluded to, does. In the above scriptures Jesus is preparing his disciples for his death and subsequent return to his Father in heaven. He continues to prepare them by praying for them in John 17. He says in verse 11, “And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that **they may be one, even as we are one.**” Jesus continues praying for future disciples. “Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; **that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us:** that the world may believe that thou didst send me. And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; **that they may be one, even as we are one.** (John 17:20-22)

The oneness that Jesus is speaking of is a oneness in spirit. Jesus prays that his followers will also have this unity and spiritual oneness with God that he possessed so that they will be able to achieve their heavenly reward of immortality and be with him and his Father in heaven. We believe that these scriptures are clear and do not support the concept of the trinity.

On July 9, 2006, we did a comprehensive program entitled, “Was Jesus God on Earth?” (#408) in which we dealt one at a time with scriptures used in support of the trinity. We would like you to listen to the program and tell us what you think. We welcome your comments, pro or con.

Thank you again for your input. We truly appreciate your thoughts and your attitude as you continue to seek clarity in understanding God’s truth!

Sincerely,
Christian Questions Radio