

GODHEAD COURSE

DISCOVER THE IDENTITY OF THE GOD OF THE BIBLE AND HOW TO PRESENT IT



STUDY, BELIEVE AND TEACH

by
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Godhead Course Handbook

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank my heavenly Father and His Son Jesus who planted the seed of an idea and watered it as it grew into the book you hold in your hand. “You have been my support from the day of my birth; you took me out of my mother’s body; my praise will be ever of you” (Psalm 71:6 Bible in Basic English).

With that said, I dedicate this book to you, reader. You have grappled with this topic, honestly desiring to know the truth. You have been curious, have thirsted for knowledge, and are willing to explore. May the words within these pages inspire you to question, to learn, and to grow. I pray this book will be a blessing to you.

Thank you for reading, and I hope that our paths will cross again someday.

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PREFACE

I am excited to offer you this handbook to my free online Godhead Course!

As you may already know, the identity of the God of the Bible has been for years enshrouded in human tradition and philosophy. That which Jesus and the apostles made very clear has been classed as a mystery that no human mind can comprehend.

As a result, most Christians are confused in regard to who their God is. Many are holding onto a belief they do not understand nor can defend.

So, who is our God? Who is the God of the Bible? Who is the Source of all things? Is there one God or three gods? And if there is only one God, is He a triune monotheistic God?

And who is Jesus? What does it mean to be begotten?

How many times was He begotten? Is He God or is He the

Son of God? Is He equal with God?

And what about the Holy Spirit? Is He God the Holy Spirit, a third person like the Father and the Son? Is He a person? Does he have a priesthood?

And who is it who dwells in us? What does the Bible mean when it says, Christ in you the hope of glory?

In this book, I will answer these questions and many more.

Now, I am aware there is much material available on this topic. So, why this book?

It is one thing to know the truth; it is something else to teach the truth. It is one thing to know the conclusion; it is something else to know how you arrived at the conclusion.

My aim with this book is to make as much information on the topic available as possible in one place. That way, when you finish the book, you will know not only what the Bible teaches about who the God of the Bible is, but you will also be able to teach it—to explain the why behind the what. You will be able to give an answer for your faith.

Jesus said that the harvest is plenty but the workers are few. I am hoping and praying that as a result of this book, God will raise many more able workers to continue spreading this foundational message.

CHAPTER 1

IS THE GODHEAD ISSUE IMPORTANT?

What is “Christianity”? Many people do not understand the concept of Christianity.

Some people think Christianity is a philosophy such as communism or capitalism whereby they live. Others see it as a set of morals promoting a good standard of life. Still others look at Christianity as a business transaction with God in which they must follow His rules, appease Him, and earn eternal life.

Christianity is none of that! Christianity is the way to eternal life. Jesus said:

This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).

Christianity is all about knowing God and His Son. When you become a Christian, you move from an intellectual knowledge about God to knowing Him personally and intimately.

James said that the devils believe there is one God and tremble. See James 2:19. Intellectual knowledge qualifies you to be a devil. In John 17:3, Jesus was talking about *relational, experiential* knowledge.

However, it is important to understand that relational and experiential knowledge is directly linked with the intellectual.

How could you have a relationship with a stranger? How could you experience God's love if you have a misconception of His love for you? How could you experience God's forgiveness with a misconception of His forgiveness?

Knowledge brings light. Light received into the heart brings salvation.

Jesus said:

*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make
you free (John 8:32).*

The bed-rock of Christianity is a relational knowledge of God—an experience with Him.

If, according to Jesus, eternal life is based on knowing the Father and His Son, why would any Christian refuse to seek to know who They really are? Wouldn't it be inconsistent to claim to be a Christian while regarding God's identity as unimportant?

From discussions over the years, I've found that many

people even refuse to study this topic! Why?

Tradition and fear of the unknown

Doing what we've always done is easy, especially when "everyone else is doing it." The same goes with belief. Believing what we've always believed is comforting.

For centuries, the trinity doctrine has dominated Christianity. It has been the norm so completely and consistently that if a group does not believe in the trinity, it is regarded as a cult.

Yet very few believers will stop to objectively examine the origin of the trinity doctrine.

The Pharisees challenged Jesus about His disciples eating with unwashed hands. You see, the Jewish leaders had come up with a requirement that every Jew had to wash his hands in a certain way—even if water was not available. Jews were expected to go through a ritualistic motion to fulfill a man-made tradition.

Jesus responded to their challenge:

Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Mark 7:6, 7).

He went on to say:

Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye (Mark 7:13).

When God's people replace His teachings with man-made teachings, their worship becomes meaningless, worthless,

purposeless, useless. This is because they are honouring Him with their lips while their heart is far from Him.

This was the condition of the ancient Jew who outwardly professed God but inwardly refused to let go of man-made traditions and accept Jesus for who He is. The same is true for the modern Christian.

Jesus's response urges us to let go of man's traditions and seek the Word of God, His teachings, otherwise our worship of God will be worthless. By holding onto tradition, we make "the word of God of none effect" by refusing to objectively examine it and submit to its authority.

Just because the majority believed it for a very long time does not make it right. Doctrinal truth is based on the word of God. Our faith is based on what the word of God says.

A true follower of Jesus must be willing to submit to the word of God and accept it as truth and authoritative, irrespective of any man's opinion and interpretation. You follow either man's tradition as the Pharisees did, and end up condemning the guiltless (see Matthew 12:7), or you follow Jesus's teaching and eat the food He provided.

You cannot have it both ways. Lip service is not enough. Here is the acid test: Are you willing to follow the biblical evidence wherever it leads, or have you already determined what truth is because "everyone believed it for a long time, irrespective of the evidence?"

Whether you like it or not, you will make a choice. By refusing to examine the evidence, you are making a choice to side with the "known."

Not understanding its importance

The second reason many people refuse to examine the Godhead issue is that they do not understand its importance.

They may try to justify their refusal by claiming it's a mystery that we're not meant to understand. Or their refusal might come under the guise of wanting to maintain peace and not cause division in the church. Yet these same people are more than willing to cause division and go to court if someone robs them of a precious possession.

Why is that?

It is because the precious possession is important to them. And rightly so. If you work hard to buy an expensive house or car, you should fight to keep it, so long as it belongs to you legally and morally.

So, the deciding factor that moves one to fight or not to fight is how important the topic is to him. So many refuse to examine the topic of who God is because they do not understand its importance to their spiritual life.

Is the Godhead issue important/salvational?

Many ask, Why agitate things? Why not leave the topic alone? After all, the issue in the last days is the Sabbath and the law of God, not the Godhead.

Again and again the same question is asked using different words: Is the Godhead issue important? Is it a salvation issue?

It leads us to either accept or reject Jesus

Throughout the Old Testament, the Jews regarded the

Sabbath and the temple of great importance.

When Jesus came to His own, they wanted to kill Him because they thought He had profaned the Sabbath (John 5:18) and wanted to destroy the temple (Matthew 26:61).

But Jesus said to them:

*In this place is one greater than the temple
(Matthew 12:6).*

They killed the Anointed One and lost their position as the chosen ones because they failed to recognise the importance of Jesus's identity, choosing instead to hold onto their traditions. They rejected Him and He told them, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:38). Their Sabbath-keeping and their temple had become worthless to them.

Solomon said there is nothing new under the sun. See Ecclesiastes 1:9. We have done the same thing today. We have replaced the scriptural identity of our God and Savior with unscriptural, unreasonable, illogical, philosophical, man-made ideas.

We have replaced the Son of God (Matthew 3:17; 16:16; 17:5; 27:54; Mark 14:62; Luke 8:28; John 3:16; 5:18; 10:36; Acts 9:20, etc., etc.), in whom is salvation, redemption, and eternal life—with "God the Son" (no scripture references).

We have replaced the Spirit of God (Matthew 3:16; 1 Corinthians 2:11; 3:16, etc., etc.) with "God the Spirit" (no scripture references).

We have replaced the indwelling Christ (2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 2:20; 4:6; Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:26, 27) with "God the Holy Spirit" (no scripture references).

Is the Godhead Issue Important?

In light of this predicament, it is alarming that when Christ knocks on the hearts of His people today (Revelation 3:20), wanting to reveal His true identity to them, He is pushed away because of “not important” and “not salvational.”

Many choose to continue holding onto their traditions, thinking that their Sabbath-keeping and their temple (denomination) is more important than the Lord of the Sabbath and the One they should be worshiping in the temple.

God wants us to know Him. He is not pleased when we hide behind man-made traditions, refusing to honestly study the Scriptures in search of an answer to who He is. After all, the Scriptures are God’s revelation about Himself and His character.

It leads us into a relationship with the Father

To the Israelites of old God said:

Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land (Hosea 4:1).

A few verses later God said:

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children (Hosea 4:6).

God wants us to know Him because He wants a relationship with us. The more we know God, the closer our relationship will be. That is why, like Hosea, we ought to desire “the

knowledge of God” more than anything else (Hosea 6:6).

It leads us to embrace and fulfill Jesus’s mission to reveal the Father

John described Jesus’s purpose in coming to earth:

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:18).

Jesus has made the Father known to humanity. In His prayer to His Father, Jesus said:

I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them (John 17:26 ESV).

Jesus came to do the Father’s will. And it was the Father’s will that we know Him and His character.

John said:

We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

Jesus, the Son of God, has given us an understanding that we may know God. We are left with no excuse. God has revealed Himself to us through His Son Jesus. To hold onto tradition and man-made teachings on this topic instead of studying the Scriptures in search of the answer to this topic, is tantamount to honouring God with our lips but denying Him in our hearts.

Is the Godhead Issue Important?

It leads us to experience God's grace and peace

Peter said:

*Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the
knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord
(2 Peter 1:2).*

Is knowing God important? It all depends on how much importance you place on God's grace and peace.

It leads us to embrace and share the first angel's message

In these last days, God has sent a message. The Bible refers to it as the first angel's message, and it goes like this:

*Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his
judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven,
and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters
(Revelation 14:7).*

Do not be so naïve to think that you are immune from deception. Satan is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. See 1 Peter 5:8. The book of Revelation tells us that in the last days, Satan will deceive the whole world and lead them to worship him (Revelation 12:9 and 13:3). Because of this overwhelming deception, God sent a message calling people back to worshiping Him, the Creator of heaven and earth.

Man-made tradition has introduced to Christianity another God, another Jesus, and another Holy Spirit. Make no mistake—the Bible talks about the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but it does not talk about “God the Son” or “God the Holy Spirit.”

If we believe we are living in the last days, it is crucial to

understand who our God is.

Is the Godhead issue important? Is it salvational?

What happened to the Jews when they got the identity of their Messiah wrong? What happened to them when they refused to accept this Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, the Son of God?

The identity of the God one worships is salvational!

Jesus said:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).

Like it or not, one has to make a choice whom he worships. Truth does not fear investigation. Heed biblical counsel and study to show yourself approved unto God. See 2 Timothy 2:15. Examine all things and hold fast to that which is good. See 1 Thessalonians 5:21.

Now let's answer a very important question about our God...

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 1

IS THE GODHEAD ISSUE IMPORTANT?

1. What is Christianity? See John 17:3.
2. Is relational, experiential knowledge of God and Jesus possible without being able to identify Them? Why or why not?
3. Why do some people refuse to even study this topic?
4. What happens when God's people replace His teachings with man-made teachings?
5. Give three reasons why the Godhead issue is important/salvational.

CHAPTER 2

IS GOD A MYSTERY?

When discussing the Godhead, the opinion of many is: It is a mystery and you can't know it. It only creates confusion and division in the church over a mystery that can't possibly be understood. One cannot explain creation let alone the Godhead.

That is a faulty foundation on which to base a discussion.

Nowhere in Scripture are we told that the identity of the God we worship is a mystery. This is a false assumption that many Christians accept. The Bible talks about mysteries, but never in relation to the identity of God.

Jesus came to declare the Father

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:18).

Do not miss this point. Jesus was clearly stating that out of all humanity, He is the only One who has seen and known the Father. This makes Him the only being capable of declaring, or revealing, God to man.

John wrote his Gospel many years after the cross, after Jesus's work on earth was completed. He was writing from an informed point of view, from his personal experience with Jesus.

If John had lived in an era during which believers did not know who God is, or if he believed God to be a mystery, he could not have penned those words; he could not have written that Jesus had declared, revealed, made known the Father to us.

Notice what he wrote in his first letter:

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

John included himself in this group of people: "We know." What did John know?

He knew that Jesus, the Messiah who came, is the Son of God.

He knew that Jesus has given us an understanding, or a revelation, in order that we may know Him who is true.

Who was John discussing? Reading on in the verse, it is clear. "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." The "him who is true" is the Father of Jesus Christ!

In his second letter John wrote:

Is God a Mystery?

Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love (2 John 1:3).

John was saying, Jesus has given me and all the believers an understanding that we might know God, the Father of Jesus Christ. That we might know who God is and what God is like. That we might have a relationship with God.

Looking at this verse again:

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:18).

Having walked with Jesus for three and half years, hearing all that Jesus taught and having experienced it himself, John confidently said that Jesus has declared, revealed, made God known to us.

When Christians say we cannot know who God is and that the identity of God is a mystery, they are saying that Jesus failed in His mission to reveal God to them.

One cannot study the writings of John and arrive at an opposite understanding than he had. One cannot read his statements that Jesus declared God to us (John 1:18) and that Jesus has given us an understanding that we might know God (1 John 5:20), and conclude that God is a mystery and cannot know who He is. Either John was deluded, or we have failed to study Scripture properly.

It was John who penned the prayer of Jesus in John 17.

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).

According to Jesus, eternal life is based on knowing two Beings: the only true God and His Son Jesus Christ. Of course, to know God means much more than to intellectually know His identity. It means having a relationship with Him—but identifying Him is part of that process.

How can eternal life be based on knowing and having a relationship with a mystery? This does not make sense at all.

God's identity, not His nature

These studies are not an attempt to explain the nature of God. His nature is beyond our comprehension.

How can a finite being understand and explain the nature of his Creator? The Bible does not reveal it.

But the Bible does reveal the identity of our God. God's identity is not a mystery. And this book is dealing purely with God's identity, not His nature.

Did Paul teach that God is a mystery?

Back in the days of the apostles, when pagans and idol worshipers received the gospel, they received the knowledge of who the true God is, and worshiped the true God. They were never taught that God is a mystery.

In one of his letters, Paul commended the Thessalonians for reports he and other apostles had heard about them. He wrote:

For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the

*dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath
to come (1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10).*

When the heathen decided to worship God as a result of Paul's preaching, they understood who the God of the Bible is. They knew the living and true God of the Bible, they knew He had a Son called Jesus, and they were waiting for His Son. Hence, they understood that the God of the Bible is God the Father.

In the previous verse, Paul said the believers in Thessalonica were preaching the word to others in many places (1 Thessalonians 1:8). The Thessalonians had heard the gospel from Paul and had shared what they heard with many others. The news found its way back to Paul, and he wrote this first letter to the Thessalonian believers based on these reports. In other words, those who heard what the Thessalonians taught, understood that the God they needed to turn to and worship was God the Father and that Jesus is the Son of God.

This message was delivered from Jesus to Paul (Galatians 1:12), from Paul to the Thessalonians, from the Thessalonians to Macedonia, Achaia, and everywhere. All along, the message maintained its precision and uniqueness. The identity of God was a crucial part of this message. After all, that is what Paul highlighted in regard to the reports he had heard. Here it is again:

*How ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and
true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom
he raised from the dead, even Jesus
(1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10).*

Paul, everyone he taught, and everyone his students taught, knew the identity of the God of the Bible. They were not confused; they did not worship a mystery.

The trinity is a mystery

The identity of the God of the Bible is not a mystery. It is clearly revealed in the Bible.

However, the God most of Christianity worships today is a mystery. The trinity is a mystery. In almost all the theological explanations of the trinity, regardless of which denomination it is coming from, the word “mystery” is included.

When people object, The Godhead is a mystery and we cannot know it, they are right in a way. Their god, the trinity, is a mystery. But not the God of the Bible.

God’s Son Jesus Christ has revealed His Father, the God of the Bible, so the God of the Bible cannot be a mystery.

The book of Revelation presents two women, one pure (Revelation 12) and the other corrupt (Revelation 17). Of course, the pure woman represents God’s faithful people, while the corrupt one represents the apostate people, or corrupt Christians.

God’s faithful people are represented as the 144,000 in Revelation 7 and 14. Chapter 14 reports:

*And I saw, and behold, the Lamb standing on the
mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty and
four thousand, having his name, and the name of his
Father, written on their foreheads
(Revelation 14:1 ASV).*

The forehead is where the frontal lobe is. The frontal lobe is the part of the brain with which you think and make decisions, including decisions relating to God and worship. In the last days God’s people will have the Father’s name written on their forehead, symbolising their belief in and

worship of the God of the Bible. They will know in Whom they have believed and Whom they worship.

On the other hand, consider what is written on the corrupt woman's forehead:

*And upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY,
BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE
HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF
THE EARTH" (Revelation 17:5 ASV).*

This woman, symbolising apostate Christians, believes in and worships a mystery. The word "Mystery" is written in her mind instead of the name of the Father.

Paul and all who heard his message knew who their God is. They believed in God and waited for His Son from heaven. Today's Christians are confused about whom they worship. The god they worship is enshrouded in mystery that no man can understand.

If you believe we are living in the last days, as we surely are, then these things ought to concern you. God revealed this issue to us in the book of Revelation for a reason. He is not willing that any should perish. See 2 Peter 3:9. He wants to have a genuine and close relationship with you. He knows you and wants you to know Him, hence His Son's revealing of Him in Scripture.

Remember, this is not about the *nature* of God but His *identity*. The aim of this book is to answer the question, "Who is God?" not, "What is God?"

To believe God is a mystery, we must believe that Jesus, who came to reveal the only true God, failed in His mission. As believers in Jesus, how could we do that?

Confusion of worship in the last days

In the last days there will be two groups of people, one knowing who their God is and the other worshipping a mystery. This thought ought to make you stop and think, Who do I worship? Do I worship a mystery? Or do I worship the God Whom Jesus and the apostles worshiped?

God predicted this confusion of worship in the last days, and the Bible tells us that He will send a message, called the first angel's message, calling people back to worshipping the true God. Consider:

*And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven,
having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that
dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred,
and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear
God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his
judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven,
and earth, and the sea, and the fountains
of waters (Revelation 14:6, 7).*

God sends a message calling people to worship Him. In this verse who is mentioned and who is the God we are to worship?

To witness this confusion, attend any church and ask, "Whom is Revelation 14:7 talking about? Whom is the God we are to worship?" You will get varied answers, such as: the Father, Jesus, God in heaven, the trinity. And some will say, Why are you causing problems by asking this question? It's not important to answer it correctly.

God has sent a message in these last days to reveal Satan's confusion in the church and to turn us back to the worship of the one true God. Many have rejected this because they are content with a mystery they do not understand.

Is God a Mystery?

Through Hosea God said to His people:

*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:
because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject
thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast
forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy
children (Hosea 4:6).*

Today's Christians are making the same mistake by refusing to study the scriptures in order to know who their God is. The identity of the God of the Bible is not a mystery; you can know who He is, and you can know Him. Jesus came to reveal God to us, and He did not fail in His mission.

The idea that God is a mystery as taught by the harlot of Revelation 17 has no place among God's people. Any religious system that adopts a mystery god, has been influenced and corrupted by this harlot.

Do not be afraid to look into this topic. If you have the truth, you have nothing to fear.

Compare this book with the Bible. God will give you the wisdom and courage to believe and live this truth.

Let's take a look at the gods many Christians are worshipping today...

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 2

IS GOD A MYSTERY?

1. What did Jesus come to earth to do? See John 1:18.
2. What is the difference between God's identity and His nature?
3. How do we know that Paul did not teach that God is a mystery?
4. Will the 144,000 be confused about who their God is? Why or why not?
5. In Revelation 17:3–5, is mystery associated with the faithful or apostate church?

CHAPTER 3

THE GODS OF CHRISTIANITY

In the first two chapters, we established from the Bible that we can know who God is and that it is an important and salvational topic. We have learned that the god of the corrupt woman of Revelation 17 is a mystery, and conversely, that the God of the pure woman is not a mystery.

Before we discover the identity of the true God of heaven, it is beneficial to have a basic understanding of the gods most Christians worship.

Years ago, I believed in the trinity. When I was challenged on this topic, I did not fully comprehend what was being shared with me until I understood what the trinity is. Only then was I able to see the difference between what I believed and what the Bible says.

There are three main teachings about the Godhead: trinity, tritheism, and oneness/Jesus only/modalism.

In any discussion, it is important to define the terminology being used. For example, both the trinity and the oneness/Jesus only/modalism theologies are monotheistic beliefs that teach God is one. In this book, we will also discover that God is one. However, we all differ on what we mean by “one God.” It is the same with the terminologies “Son of God” and “Spirit of God.”

Trinity

The trinity doctrine states that the one God of the Bible is made up of three divine persons, as expressed in the Athanasian Creed:

But this is the catholic [universal] faith: That we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father: another of the Son: another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father is uncreated: the Son is uncreated: the Holy Ghost is uncreated. The Father is immeasurable: the Son is immeasurable: the Holy Ghost is immeasurable. The Father is eternal: the Son eternal: the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternal; but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated: nor three immeasurable: but one uncreated, and one immeasurable. So likewise the Father is almighty: the Son almighty: and the Holy Ghost almighty. And yet they are not three almighties: but one almighty. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three Gods; but one God. So the Father is Lord: the Son Lord: and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not

three Lords; but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord, so are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, there are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created; nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone: not made; nor created; but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son: not made; neither created; nor begotten; but proceeding. Thus there is one Father, not three Fathers: one Son, not three Sons: one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is before or after another: none is greater or less than another. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity (Quoted in Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church & Ecclesiastical History*, The Complete 8 Volume Edition, Section 132, 690–693).

This creed does contain some biblical truth. For example:

“The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.”

However, the little unscriptural phrases are enough to poison the whole thing. For example:

“For there is one person of the Father: another of the Son: another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.”

This statement declares that three persons make up the

Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It also states that the Holy Spirit is not the Father and not the Son but is a different person all together.

“So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet there are not three Gods; but one God.”

“And in this Trinity none is before or after another: none is greater or less than another. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.”

This is saying that the Father is not before the Son, that the three persons are all coeternal. If this is so, then the Son could not have been begotten of the Father.

“The Son is of the Father alone; not made; nor created, but begotten.”

Eternally begotten?

Here it becomes a little more complicated and mysterious. Earlier we read, “None is before or after another . . . coeternal together.” Yet in the same creed, we read that Jesus is “begotten.” This sounds contradictory. The Creed attempts to harmonise this by stating that Jesus is eternally begotten:

“The only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father” (Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed as quoted in Catechism of the Catholic Church (Burns & Oates), 57).

The “eternally begotten” teaching is at times called the “eternal generation of the Son.” Here is how the theologian Louis Berkhof explains it:

“It is that eternal and necessary act of the first person in the Trinity, whereby He, within the divine Being, is the ground

of a second personal subsistence like His own, and puts this second person in possession of the whole divine essence, without any division, alienation, or change” (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 94).

Eternal generation of the Son means that the first person of the trinity, the Father, is eternally and continually (from all eternity and never ceasing) begetting the second person of the trinity, the Son of God, yet without producing two gods. The term “eternal” removes this relationship of Father-Son from the limitations of time and space, suggesting there is no beginning or end of the generation, or begetting, of the Son by the Father. We are told we cannot fully understand it because it is a mystery to the human mind.

The end result is a philosophical and mysterious argument maintaining that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are coeternal. Without them being coeternal, there is no trinity doctrine.

The idea of eternal generation was created to attempt to harmonise the trinity philosophy and Christ’s Sonship. It permits the biblical teaching that Jesus was begotten of the Father in the “days of eternity” and also supports a doctrine that denies the literal relationship of the Father and the Son.

Admittedly, the mysterious and incomprehensible idea of eternal generation aligns itself to the biblical truth that Christ is begotten of the Father. The argument does use some correct terminology, but the theology behind the terminology is faulty and destructive. Not all trinitarians adhere to this teaching. Seeing its lack of logic and scriptural evidence, some—especially Protestants—have adopted other beliefs.

Became the Son of God?

Some believe that the second person of the trinity became the Son of God at the incarnation, that He was not the Son of God prior to the incarnation. Being born of God through Mary qualified Him to have the title “Son of God,” limiting Christ’s Sonship to His human birth.

In its comment under Acts 13:33, Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible strongly rejects the doctrine of eternal Sonship by stating:

“As God, the person we now know of as Jesus Christ had no beginning, was not begotten, was not a Son, and did not come into being . . . but as man and as God’s Son He was not eternal, He did have a beginning, He was begotten, this being the same time Mary had a Son. Therefore, the doctrine of eternal sonship of Jesus Christ is irreconcilable to reason, is unscriptural, and is contradictory to itself” (As quoted in George W. Zeller and Renald E. Showers, *The Eternal Sonship of Christ: A Timely Defense of of this Vital Biblical Doctrine*), 31.

Dr. Walter Martin, a well-known theologian and author of a classic book on the cults, has also rejected the doctrine of eternal Sonship:

“Scripture nowhere calls Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God, and he is never called Son at all prior to the incarnation, except in prophetic passages in the Old Testament. The term Son itself is a functional term, as is the term Father and has no meaning apart from time. . . . Many heresies have seized upon the confusion created by the illogical “eternal Sonship” or “eternal generation” theory of Roman Catholicism, unfortunately carried over to some aspects of Protestant theology. Finally, there cannot be any such thing as eternal

Sonship. . . . The word Son in a temporal sense definitely suggests inferiority” (Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults: The Definitive Work on the Subject*, 117, 118).

The above authors, and many others, have not only rejected the “eternal generation” theory but have gone the extra step of denying the Sonship of Jesus prior to the incarnation.

A metaphor?

Others believe the second person of the trinity has been the Son of God from all eternity, but they add that the Father-Son relationship should be taken in a metaphorical sense, not in a literal sense. In other words, “Father” and “Son” are not real, not literal, but are mere titles reflecting the roles the members of the trinity took to save humanity. According to this theory, the Sonship of Christ is a metaphor, not a reality.

Fourth, a human child comes from its parents through natural birth. In the case of the Godhead, however, the Son proceeded from the Father, not as a divine emanation or through natural birth, but to perform a work of creation and redemption (John 8:42; 16:28). There is no biblical support for the eternal generation of the Son from the Father. The Son came from God but was not generated by Him. Fifth, the father-son image cannot be literally applied to the divine Father-Son relationship within the Godhead. The Son is not the natural, literal Son of the Father. A natural child has a beginning, while within the Godhead the Son is eternal. The term “Son” is used metaphorically when applied to the Godhead. It conveys the ideas of distinction of persons within the Godhead and the equality of nature in the context of an eternal, loving relationship (“A Question of Sonship,” *Bible Questions Answered*, Adventist World, 2015,

https://issuu.com/adventistworldmagazine/docs/november_2015_nad).

“The Father-Son relationship in the Godhead should be understood in a metaphorical sense, not in a literal sense” (Max Hatton, *Understanding the Trinity*, 97).

The one thing in common between all these variations of the trinity doctrine is the consistent denial of the real Father-Son relationship.

One God in three?

To simplify this, the term “trinity” refers to one God in three persons. Pope John Paul II defined it:

“The one God whom we worship is a unity of Three Divine Persons, ‘equal in majesty, undivided in splendor, yet one Lord, one God, ever to be adored’” (Address of His Holiness John Paul II, New Orleans, Saturday, 12 September 1987).

Pope Francis said:

“On this feast day in which we celebrate God: the mystery of the one God. And this God is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Three persons, but God is one! The Father is God; the Son is God; the Spirit is God. But they are not three gods: it is one God in three Persons. It is a mystery that Jesus Christ revealed to us: the Holy Trinity” (Angelus, Saint Peter’s Square, Trinity Sunday, 30 May 2021).

This definition has spread everywhere within Christendom. Catholics and the majority of Protestants adhere to it. Here are some examples from Protestant churches:

Anglican Church

“There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without

body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost” (“The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion,” Anglican Compass, <https://anglicancompass.com/the-thirty-nine-articles-of-religion/>).

Methodist Church

“There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost” (“The Articles of Religion in the Methodist Church, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church—2016, <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/the-articles-of-religion-of-the-methodist-church>).

Presbyterian Church

“In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.” (“Through the Westminster Confession,” Reformation 21, Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals).

Seventh-day Adventist Church

“Seventh-day Adventist Christians believe there is one God. And that this one God is three co-eternal Persons who work

together in unity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have always been, and always will be” (“What Adventists Believe About the Trinity,” Seventh-day Adventist Church, <https://www.adventist.org/trinity/>).

“We do not believe in three Gods but one God in three persons. In other words, God has revealed his nature as Trinity, that is, three coeternal persons, who, though distinct, constitute the one divine Trinitarian being” (“Reflections,” Biblical Research Institute, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, July 2008).

Not all members of these denominations subscribe to the trinity doctrine. Some within these churches reject the trinity and believe in tritheism.

Person or being?

It is also important to understand that in the trinitarian teaching, the word “person” does not mean a “being.” Three persons do not equal three beings; that is why they believe there is only one God, not three. Most theologians prefer the term “hypostasis” rather than “person” because it is a word that refers to the theological concept of a person that is halfway between mere personality and an individual being. This concept is explained in the following way:

The doctrine of a subsistence in the substance of the Godhead brings to view a species of existence that is so anomalous and unique, that the human mind derives little or no aid from those analogies which assist it in all other cases. The hypostasis is a real subsistence—a solid essential form of existence, and not a mere emanation, or energy, or manifestation— but it is intermediate between substance and attributes. It is not identical with the substance, for there are not three substances [or beings].

It is not identical with attributes, for the three Persons each and equally possess all the divine attributes. . . . Hence the human mind is called upon to grasp the notion of a species of existence that is totally *sui generis*, and not capable of illustration by any of the ordinary comparisons and analogies (Dr. Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine*, Volume 1, 365, as quoted in Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 130, 676, 677).

Augustine could not define it

This strange idea of God is so difficult to understand that even Augustine did not understand it. Augustine was the most influential church writer to define the trinity and is widely respected as an authority among trinitarians. Of him, Philip Schaff wrote:

“Of all the fathers, next to Athanasius, Augustine performed the greatest service for this dogma [the trinity]” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 131, 684).

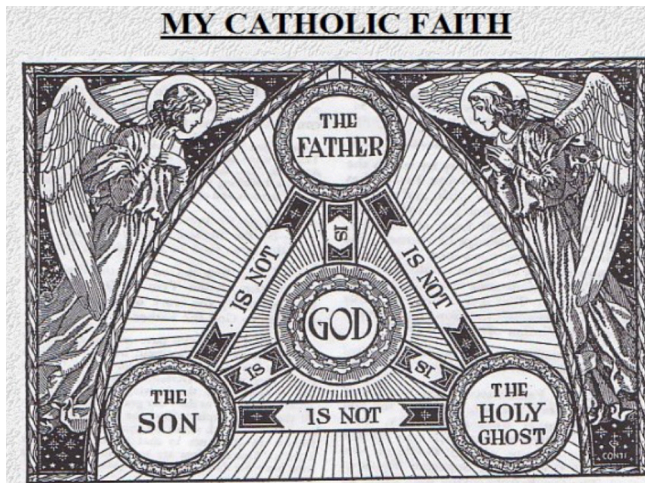
Augustine said, “If we be asked to define the Trinity, we can only say, it is not this or that” (As quoted in Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 130, 672).

Athanasius, one of the earliest and very influential propagators of the trinity, “has candidly confessed that, whenever he forced his understanding to meditate upon the divinity of the Logos, his toilsome and unavailing efforts recoiled on themselves; that the more he thought, the less he comprehended; and the more he wrote, the less capable was he of expressing his thoughts” (Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Volume 3, 50).

Athanasius and Augustine, the two men who did more to formulate the doctrine of the trinity than any other, both admit that they did not understand it and could not define it. This concept of God, as confusing and mysterious as it is, is the most commonly accepted view among Christians.

Trinity illustrated

Here is how the trinity is illustrated by various churches:



In this illustration, the Holy Spirit is not the Father and is not the Son, and each of them is individually God yet together make up the one God of the Bible.

Tritheism

Tritheism is the concept that the one Godhead of the Bible is composed of three separate beings/gods who are one in their nature, goals, plans, and purposes. This concept does not teach one God, rather it teaches one Godhead, which is made up of three gods.

Remember, the Athanasian Creed says, “Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance.” The term, “nor dividing the substance” refers directly to tritheism. According to orthodox trinitarians, tritheism divides the substance of God into three separate beings, which would be three gods, hence tritheism. Notice the following definition of the “orthodox trinity” in which the definition of Tritheism is brought out:

The term person [hypostasis] must not be taken here in the sense current among men, as if the three persons were three different individuals, or three self-conscious and separately acting beings. The trinitarian idea of personality lies midway between that of a mere form of manifestation, or a personation, which would lead to Sabellianism [also called modalism], and the idea of an independent, limited human personality, which would result in tritheism. In other words, it avoids the . . . unitarian trinity of a threefold conception and aspect of one and the same being, and the . . . tritheistic trinity of three distinct and separate beings (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 130, pages 676, 677).

Tritheism teaches one godhead made up of three separate beings or gods, which is a polytheistic theology (multiple gods).

Of course, within tritheism, none is before or after the other. None was begotten of the other. Hence, the Father/Son relationship is not real. It is a metaphor.

And in tritheism, the Holy Spirit is not the Father, neither is it the Son. It is a third separate god.

Oneness/Jesus only/modalism

Another view that is not as widely accepted is “Jesus only” or modalism. This belief teaches that there is one god, a singular divine spirit or being, who manifests himself as three modes/manifestations: father, son, and holy spirit.

The core of this doctrine is that Jesus is the father, and Jesus is the spirit. One god reveals himself in different “modes.” There are no three persons/beings, only one person/being with three manifestations.

Hence, there is no literal Father or Son because there are no two separate persons or beings. It is the same being appearing in three different forms.

The trinity teaches one God made up of three persons, a monotheistic theology. Tritheism teaches one godhead made up of three beings or gods, a polytheistic theology. Modalism teaches one being manifesting himself in three different forms, a monotheistic theology.

These three beliefs are not the only way to define God within Christendom, but they are the most widely known and taught.

So, how many Gods are there?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 3

THE GODS OF CHRISTIANITY

1. What are the three main beliefs about God within Christianity?
2. What does the trinity teach?
3. What does tritheism teach?
4. What does oneness/Jesus only/modalism teach?

CHAPTER 4

HOW MANY GODS ARE THERE?

To come to the correct understanding of Who God is, one must consult the Bible, not tradition or man's philosophical ideas. In this topic, the first and most basic fact that needs to be established is that there is one God.

The monotheistic (one God) teaching is a widespread belief not only within Christendom, but also in other religions, such as Islam and Judaism. However, not all monotheistic believers worship the same God.

Our focus in this book is the God of Christianity. Almost all Christians agree there is “one” God, and monotheism—the oneness of God—is clearly the biblical truth.

However, simply believing in the oneness of God does not mean one believes biblical truth. As we've seen, many believe in a triune monotheistic god—the trinity; others believe in three gods in one—tritheism; and still others believe in a numerically one monotheistic god—modalism.

How many Gods, according to the Bible?

The Bible clearly teaches there is one God. Both the Old and New Testaments testify of this. Consider these monotheistic statements:

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD”
(Deuteronomy 6:4).*

*Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the
circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision
through faith (Romans 3:30).*

*As concerning therefore the eating of those things that
are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol
is nothing in the world, and that there is none other
God but one (1 Corinthians 8:4).*

*Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God
is one (Galatians 3:20).*

*One God and Father of all, who is above all, and
through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:6).*

*Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well:
the devils also believe, and tremble (James 2:19).*

*For there is one God, and one mediator between God
and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).*

Clearly, the God of Christianity is one God. The Bible is a monotheistic book. It does not present one godhead or three gods but one God.

Elohim and theos

The Hebrew word for God is *elohim*, and it is a plural word. Hence, a tritheist might use this line of reasoning to try to

prove a plurality of God. A trinitarian would use a different variation of the same argument.

Please note that the New Testament was not written in Hebrew but in Greek. The Greek word translated “God” in the verses above is *theos*, which is the singular form for God.

The Greek plural form of the word *theos* is *theoi*. The plural form is used five times in the New Testament. See John 10:34; Acts 14:11; 19:26; 1 Corinthians 8:5.

Notice how Jesus used the plural form:

Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? [theoi] (John 10:34).

John, the writer of this Gospel, deliberately used the plural form of the word.

Jesus was quoting from Psalm 82:6:

“I have said, Ye are gods [elohim]; and all of you are children of the Most High.”

When John recorded the words of Jesus, he interpreted the plural Hebrew word *elohim* as *theoi* (plural in Greek). He understood that the word *elohim* was not referring to the God of heaven but to the believers.

In contrast, when talking about the true God, Jesus used the singular form of the Greek word:

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God [theos] is one Lord (Mark 12:29).

Jesus was quoting the verse we read earlier:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God [elohim] is one LORD (Deuteronomy 6:4).

The Hebrew word for “God” in this verse is *elohim*, the same word used in Psalm 82:6 referring to the believers. It is revealing that when referring to God, Jesus translated this plural Hebrew word as *theos* (singular), not *theoi* (plural).

This indicates that the God of the Bible is a singular, monotheistic God. When referring to the true God, Jesus and the disciples did not understand the word *elohim* to mean a plurality of gods (polytheism).

The concept of three gods (tritheism) contradicts Scripture. If tritheism is correct, the New Testament writers would have always used the plural Greek word *theoi* instead of the singular *theos* when referring to God.

Paul confirmed this:

*For though there be that are called gods [plural theoi],
whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many,
and lords many), but to us there is but one God
[singular theos], the Father, of whom are all things,
and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are
all things, and we by him
(1 Corinthians 8:5, 6).*

The verses stating that God is one, and the New Testament authors’ intentional use of the singular Greek word when referring to God, is sufficient evidence to rule out tritheism—three gods. Jesus, the disciples, and all the New Testament writers believed and taught monotheism.

The problem is that trinitarian theology, oneness/Jesus only/modalism theology, and one true God theology, all agree there is one God. Hence, simply stating there is “one God” does not clearly define where one stands.

A trinitarian can say amen to the above verses and still hold

to his trinitarian belief, because according to the trinity, there is “one” god, although made up of three persons. A oneness theology believer could also agree with these verses. These theologies are monotheistic, but they are not biblical. Therefore, one must study the Bible to discover the truth.

Both Father and Son referred to as “God”

Jesus was called God more than once in the New Testament. Thomas called Him “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28). God the Father also referred to Jesus as God in Hebrews 1:8. And though Jesus testified that He is the Son of God, and never directly claimed to be God, the New Testament presents Him as:

- Equal with God – Philippians 2:6
- Divine – John 1:1
- Using the name of God – John 8:58
- Receiving worship – Matthew 14:33

The Old Testament testifies to this as well:

*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD [Jehovah], make straight in the desert a highway for our God [elohim]
(Isaiah 40:3).*

Matthew quoted this verse:

For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight (Matthew 3:3).

This prophecy speaks about John the Baptist, who would

prepare the way for the Messiah. Interestingly, Isaiah called the Messiah Lord (Jehovah) and our God (*elohim*).

Thomas was doing the same thing when he referred to Jesus as “my Lord and my God.” As a Jew, he no doubt knew these prophecies and was waiting for the promised Messiah, as were the other Jews. By his words “my Lord and my God,” he was proclaiming to Jesus, “You are the One Isaiah prophesied—the promised Messiah to whom the prophecies pointed!”

Here is another verse in Isaiah declaring Jesus to be God:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God [elohim] (Isaiah 9:6).

We find another example by comparing a prophecy in Joel with Peter’s and Paul’s applications of it:

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD [Jehovah] shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call (Joel 2:32).

Peter quoted this verse in reference to Jesus:

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:21).

Peter was referring to Jesus in his discourse on the day of Pentecost. If you keep reading, you will come to verse 36, where he said:

How Many Gods Are There?

*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly,
that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have
crucified, both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36).*

Here is Peter's message: Jesus is the Lord and the Christ. He is divine. He is the One who was prophesied in the scriptures. Peter took a prophecy that speaks of Jehovah and applied it to Jesus. It shows his conviction of Christ's deity.

Paul did the same thing:

*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord
shall be saved (Romans 10:13).*

So, is Jesus God? Yes! Most *unequivocally*—Jesus is God.

This presents a problem in some people's understanding:

If the Father is God, and Jesus is God, yet there aren't two or three Gods but only one God, then doesn't this mean the trinity is the most logical answer to this conundrum?

Some have resorted to believing in the trinity while others deny that Jesus is God—either by denying His deity altogether or by describing Him as a lesser God than the Father. Both positions are extreme and miss the Bible's intended meaning.

To arrive at a harmonious and biblical understanding, we need to answer few questions:

- What does the Bible mean by one God?
- Who is it referring to?
- Why is Jesus called God?

Five stages

We will address these questions in future chapters as we examine Scripture in relation to these five stages:

The Old Testament

Whom did the Jews worship? What did monotheism mean to them? Was their monotheistic God a trinity or was He one, individual, divine Person?

John the Baptist

What did this divinely chosen man who announced the coming of the Messiah understand about God?

The Gospels

During His incarnation, what did Jesus teach about God? What version of monotheism did He advocate? And what did the Jews in His day believe?

The apostles' writings from Pentecost onward

What version of monotheism did they advocate?

The Revelation

In this book that gives us insight into the future and what goes on in heaven, what version of monotheism do we find there?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 4

HOW MANY GODS ARE THERE?

1. How many Gods does the Bible say there are? List five Bible passages to support your answer.
2. Why does *elohim*, a plural Hebrew word, not point to a plural God?
3. When referring to God, did Jesus use a plural or singular word?
4. Does the Bible refer to Jesus as God?
5. In what ways does the Bible call Jesus God?

CHAPTER 5

WHO IS THE GOD OF THE BIBLE?

In the previous chapter, we established from the Bible that there is one God. The Bible is a monotheistic book. We also saw that there are different monotheistic concepts.

Is the God of the Bible a triune monotheistic God, or is He a one individual monotheistic God?

This chapter will be a very short and direct answer to these questions. Chapters 6 through 10 will be a more detailed answer in which we will examine more biblical evidence that runs harmoniously throughout the whole Bible.

The only Source

Our first verse is from the lips of Jesus:

*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent
(John 17:3).*

According to Jesus, the only true God is God the Father—the One who sent Him to this earth. Jesus was being very specific and exclusive when He said “the only true God” by using the word “only”—meaning no one else is God.

Was Jesus saying that He Himself is not a divine being? That cannot be. The Bible clearly tells us that Jesus is divine.

Jesus was saying that the Father is the only Source of Godship, or divinity.

Consider these verses:

Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen (1 Timothy 6:15, 16).

“Whom no man hath seen nor can see” clearly refers to God the Father, as Jesus was seen by many when He was on this earth.

If “who only hath immortality” points to God the Father, what about angels? Enoch? Moses? Elijah? What about the “firstfruits” resurrected at Jesus’s crucifixion who were created, translated, and resurrected—don’t they all have immortality? What about Adam and Eve before the fall, and what about the redeemed at the end of time?

Paul answered in his words about the redeemed:

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this

Who Is the God of the Bible?

*mortal must put on immortality
(1 Corinthians 15:52, 53).*

Clearly, the dead in Christ will have immortality, although it is conditional.

So, how can only God the Father have immortality? The answer is that God the Father is the only Source of immortality.

This understanding honours the exclusivity brought out in the text, “who only hath immortality,” and harmonises it with the rest of the Bible, which states that other beings have immortality.

The same principle applies with the phrase “the only true God.”

Consider these verses:

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him (1 Corinthians 8:4–6).

After stating that there is no other God but one, Paul identified this one God. Writing to the believers in Jesus, he said, “There is but one God, the Father.” This verse clearly states that the one God of the Bible is not a committee of three but God the Father. Then Paul explained why the Father is the one God by saying, “Of whom are all things.” God the Father, the one God of the Bible, is the Source of all things.

The term “one God” refers to the one Source of all things, not the only one being with a divine or God nature.

This is in perfect harmony with what Jesus said, that the Father is the “only true God,” meaning, the only Source of divinity and Godship.

God the Father is the one God of the Bible. He is the monotheistic God since He is the Source of all things.

Notice what Jesus said:

For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself (John 5:26).

The life mentioned in this verse is an eternal and immortal life. The Father “hath life in himself,” meaning it is an unborrowed and underived life. The Father is not dependent on anyone else for this life; He is the Source of life.

Giving life to the Son

Jesus went on to say that as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in Himself.

There are two important facts in this verse:

The Father gave the life He has in Himself to His Son.

As a result, Jesus has the same life in Himself as the Father has in Himself.

This means Jesus has this immortal, divine, original and unborrowed life in Himself. Why? Because the Father gave it to Him. This emphasises that the Father is the Source of all things, including the life of His Son.

Here is another verse that clearly states who the God of the Bible is:

*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called
in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one
baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all,
and through all, and in you all
(Ephesians 4:4–6).*

Although Paul mentioned one Spirit and one Lord, he still emphasised only one God. He also specified who this one God is. It is not the Spirit, neither is it the Lord, neither is it a combination of all three. It is the Father. Why? Because He is “above all, and through all, and in you all.”

The Father is the Source of all things. He is the origin of everything and everyone.

Just a side note here. In order to prove a triune monotheistic God, many Christians look for verses that mention Father, Son, and Spirit and think that is evidence of a triune God. They assume that since all three are mentioned, then all three must make up the one God of the Bible.

That is incorrect thinking. It’s important to understand what the author meant by the verse. This passage from Ephesians is a perfect example of misusing scriptures.

Three = a trinity?

Paul did mention one Lord, one Spirit, and one God, but that does not mean a trinity. A simple reading of the text reveals who the one God is. It is God the Father, not a trinity.

Here is another text used to prove a trinity simply because it mentions the three:

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the
Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19).*

Looking at the context of this verse, we discover that Jesus was not talking about who God is. He was not identifying the God of the Bible. The word “God” is not even mentioned in the whole chapter!

Jesus was instructing the disciples about baptism. He said there is a Father, a Son, and a Spirit but did not speak to the relationship between them. To examine what the Bible says about that, we must look to other Bible passages, such as 1 John 5:7. You can explore these passages in the Objections section of my online Godhead Course. Scan the barcode on the back cover of this book to go there.

To this point, Scripture has shown that the one God of the Bible is God the Father, and that He is the Source of all things.

Consider this verse:

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all
(1 Corinthians 15:28).

Why will Jesus be subject unto the Father?

“That God [the Father] may be all in all.”

Why? Because the Father is the Source of all things, including the life of His Son.

It is very important to have a good understanding regarding the monotheistic nature of God, that He is God the Father. This is the foundation of identifying who God is.

The Bible does not teach a triune monotheistic God. It tells us very clearly that the one God of the Bible is God the Father. He, the Father, is the Source of all things, including the life of His Son.

There are many more verses to prove this conclusion. This study was just a brief look into this topic.

Let's dig deeper into what the Bible says about the monotheistic God...

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 5

WHO IS THE GOD OF THE BIBLE?

1. According to Jesus, who is the only true God?
2. How can only God the Father have immortality?
3. Why is the Father the monotheistic God of the Bible?
4. Why does Jesus have immortal, divine, original, unborrowed life in Himself?
5. Does Matthew 28:19 present God as a trinity? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 6

MONOTHEISM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Having established the fact that the God of the Bible is monotheistic (one God) and not tritheistic indicates that the teaching of three gods is not in harmony with Scripture. However, there are two other options to consider:

First, the trinity. Did the Old Testament Jews worship a triune monotheistic god?

Second, oneness/Jesus only/modalism. Or did they worship a one individual monotheistic God?

The Jews of that era were of course limited to Old Testament Scripture in understanding who they worshiped. With New Testament Scripture, a greater knowledge of God is afforded to the Christian. However, the Old Testament shows us four key facts that shaped those Jews' identification of God:

1. God is one.
2. The word *elohim*, translated as “God,” is a plural Hebrew noun.
3. Though there is only one God, there is evidence of two divine Beings.
4. There is an entity called the Spirit of God—the Holy Spirit.

God is one

*Thou shalt have no other gods before me
(Exodus 20:3).*

*Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that
the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him
(Deuteronomy 4:35).*

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD
(Deuteronomy 6:4).*

Clearly, the Jews of the Old Testament believed that God is one.

Does this prove that the ancient Jews believed their monotheistic God was a plurality?

***Elohim* = God a trinity?**

The word *elohim* is the plural form of the word *el*. However, it does not automatically imply that God is a trinity:

The plural form of the word *elohim* can be used for a singular person:

And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god [elohim] to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet (Exodus 7:1).

And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people (Exodus 11:3).

Although *elohim* is a plural noun, it is used in reference to Moses, a singular person, to indicate greatness and majesty. This means that even though it is a plural word, it does not automatically prove a plurality of persons.

Likewise, the use of *elohim* in reference to God can be understood to indicate greatness and majesty, instead of plurality of persons.

When kings or queens use the pronouns “we” or “our,” they are only referring to themselves as (one singular person). This is called the “plural of majesty” and is the reason why God used this plural noun to describe how He would make Moses mighty and powerful in Pharaoh’s eyes.

The use of *elohim* is an indication of greatness and majesty, not a trinity.

Elohim is not the only Hebrew word that is grammatically plural but used singularly:

And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur (Genesis 16:7).

The word “water” comes from the plural Hebrew noun *mayim*.

And he [Joseph] washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread (Genesis 43:31).

The word “face” comes from the plural Hebrew noun *panim*. Joseph didn’t have more than one face. Again, a plural Hebrew word is used in a singular way. This is unique to the Hebrew language.

Although *elohim* is a plural word, it does not mean that God is a plurality of persons. We must rightly divide the Word of God.

If Jesus and the apostles understood the word *elohim* as plural, they would have translated it into the plural in Greek. But they translated it into the singular, shedding light on how they understood the word *elohim*:

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God [theos] is one Lord (Mark 12:29).

The Jews did not read triunity into the plural word *elohim*. Hence, it is not a decisive argument to use the plural form of *el* as proof of a trinity.

The plural word *elohim* can be used in its singular meaning to describe a singular Being using the plural of majesty, or to describe a triune being, as when the word *elohim* is used in reference to idols. Interpretation is not an argument that can stand alone. One must consider the full weight of biblical evidence, and then allow the Bible to determine how to interpret the word.

Two divine Beings

Sodom and Gomorrah

Then the LORD [Jehovah] rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD [Jehovah] out of heaven (Genesis 19:24).

This verse speaks of two beings referred to as Jehovah. In the previous chapter one finds the conversation between Abraham and the being who appeared to him. In that conversation, the One who appeared and spoke with Abraham was called Jehovah.

Consider:

And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD [Jehovah]. And the LORD [Jehovah] said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes (Genesis 18:22, 26).

So, Jehovah, who appeared to Abraham with the two angels, rained down fire and brimstone from up in heaven. This is evidence of two divine Beings referred to as Jehovah in the Old Testament.

Joshua and the heavenly being

And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? (Joshua 5:13).

The heavenly being replied:

Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? (Joshua 5:14).

Joshua worshiped the Captain of the host of the LORD.

Two Beings are mentioned in this verse: the captain of the host (angels), and Jehovah, to whom the heavenly host belong.

The Captain cannot be simply a high-ranking angel, because angels reject any worship from men. We see this demonstrated when an angel appeared to John:

And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God (Revelation 22:8, 9).

The angel who appeared to John rejected John's worship, but the Being who appeared to Joshua, and identified Himself as the "captain of the host of the LORD" did not reject Joshua's worship, indicating that this Being is divine and worthy of worship.

Joshua and the heavenly Being give evidence of two divine beings worthy of worship: the Captain of the angels, and Jehovah, to whom the angels belong.

These two examples disprove the oneness/Jesus only/modalism theology. The fact that there are two divine beings disprove the idea of only one divine being manifesting in three different forms.

If the oneness theology is correct, then there cannot be more

than one divine being; however, the scriptures clearly disprove this notion.

So far, tritheism (three gods) and the oneness (Jesus only/modalism) theology have been ruled out.

Evidence of the Spirit of God—the Holy Spirit

Below are key Old Testament references regarding the Holy Spirit:

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
And the earth was without form, and void; and
darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit
of God moved upon the face of the waters
(Genesis 1:1, 2).*

Note the possessive terminology used in this verse: “the Spirit of God.”

It does not say: “God the Spirit.” Big difference!

It is clear there are two Beings referred to as *elohim* in the Old Testament. There is no mention of a third being called *elohim* the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is referred to only as the Spirit of *elohim*.

*By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and
all the host of them by the breath of his mouth
(Psalm 33:6).*

The Hebrew word for “breath” is *ruah*, which is the same word translated as “Spirit” in Genesis 1:2, where the Bible says, “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2).

Psalm 33:6 and Genesis 1:2 demonstrate that “the Spirit of God” is “the breath of God.”

Jesus confirmed this in His interaction with His disciples:

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost (John 20:22).

Jesus breathed His own breath, or Spirit, upon them.

“Spirit of God” and “breath of God” are associated in other places in the Bible as well:

The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life (Job 33:4).

The Spirit of God is the breath (life) of God. That is the definition of *ruah*.

Therefore, Genesis 1:2 tells us that when God created the world, His Spirit, or His breath, moved upon the face of the waters. When you speak, your breath comes out with your words. The Bible tells us, “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made” (Psalm 33:6), and, “He spake and it was” (verse 9).

Thus, the creative words:

Let there be light: and there was light (Genesis 1:3).

When the Bible says, “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,” it is not referring to a third divine being or person called “God the Holy Spirit.” We must conclude that “the Spirit of God” refers to the breath of God, the word of God, and the life of God:

The Spirit of the LORD [Jehovah] spake by me, and his word was in my tongue (2 Samuel 23:2).

Jehovah, by His Spirit, spoke through David. “His word”—Jehovah’s word—was in David’s tongue. The “his” refers to

Jehovah, not to another entity called God the Spirit. It is a possessive pronoun. The word belongs to Jehovah, just as the Spirit belongs to Jehovah. The following verse sheds light on this as well:

*Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy
holy spirit from me (Psalm 51:11).*

This verse equates the Holy Spirit with the presence of God. God can be everywhere present through His Spirit. It is His very own life, breath, and energising presence with which He anointed His prophets:

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the
LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto
the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the
brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and
the opening of the prison to them that are bound
(Isaiah 61:1).*

Just as God anointed His prophets in the Old Testament, Jesus would also be anointed with the Spirit, or life, of God. This is revealed in Isaiah's prophecies of Jesus and in the account of Jesus's baptism:

*And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the
spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of
counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the
fear of the LORD (Isaiah 11:2).*

*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in
whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon
him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles
(Isaiah 42:1).*

*And Jesus, when he was baptised, went up
straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were*

*opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God
descending like a dove, and lighting upon him
(Matthew 3:16).*

These verses say nothing about “God the Holy Spirit” but speak of the Spirit of a holy God. And because the Spirit of God is the life and presence of God, God the Father Himself was in Jesus Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, as we read in the following verses:

*To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world
unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;
and hath committed unto us the word
of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:19).*

*Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the
Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak
not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he
doeth the works (John 14:10).*

Now, let us turn to a mistranslated and misunderstood verse:

*Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken
in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was,
there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath
sent me (Isaiah 48:16).*

Here is the same verse in a few other translations:

*And now the Lord God has sent me, and given me
his spirit (BBE).*

*And now the Lord GOD has sent me and
his Spirit (RSV).*

*And now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me, and
His Spirit (YLT).*

According to the context, the speaker appears to be Christ. It was God the Father who sent Jesus on His mission to earth. See John 3:16.

When Jesus came into the world as the Messiah, God sent His Holy Spirit to rest upon Him, as mentioned repeatedly in the Bible (Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1–3; Matthew 3:16; Luke 4:18; John 1:32, 33; Acts 10:38).

In Isaiah 48:16, Christ was simply stating that God the Father sent Him and anointed Him with the Father's Spirit. There was only one sender, the Father, not two. Jesus expressed this in the New Testament many times (John 5:30, 36, 37; 6:39, 44, 57; 8:16, 18, 29, 42; 12:49; 14:24; 17:21, 25; 20:21; Galatians 4:4–6; 1 John 4:10, 14).

Jesus explained Isaiah 48:16 when He said:

*Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost
(John 20:21, 22).*

Jesus sent the disciples in the same way the Father sent Him. He gave them the commission to go, and He breathed on them the Holy Spirit (John 20:22). That is exactly what the verse we are examining says. Here it is again from the Bible in Basic English translation:

“And now the Lord God has sent me, and given me his spirit.”

The Old Testament does not teach that the Holy Spirit is a third member of the Godhead or is an individual named “God the Spirit.” Rather, it teaches that it is the *ruah*, the breath of God, the Spirit and life of God. It is the presence of

one divine Being that He gave to the other.

Let's let the Bible identify these two divine Beings . . .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 6

MONOTHEISM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Is *elohim*, a plural Hebrew word, used as a plural or singular word in the Old Testament?
2. How many divine Beings does the Bible present?
3. Which term does the Old Testament use—“Spirit of God” or “God the Spirit”?
4. Does the Old Testament teach that a spirit is its own being or that it belongs to another being?
5. Does the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters indicate that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead? See Genesis 1:2. Why or why not?

CHAPTER 7

THE TWO DIVINE BEINGS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is clear that:
There is one God.

Elohim is a plural word but the Bible uses it in a singular sense.

The Holy Spirit is not another God, is not called “God the Holy Spirit,” but is the spirit, presence, and life of God that He placed on His Son Jesus.

There are two divine Beings, and the Old Testament refers to both as God.

But who exactly are They?

The Old Testament describes the two divine Beings in more than one way.

The LORD and His Angel, or Messenger

And the angel of God [elohim], which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them (Exodus 14:19).

And it came to pass, that in the morning watch the LORD [Jehovah] looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians (Exodus 14:24).

Note: These two verses together identify the angel of God as the LORD, or Jehovah.

Notice also the words in Deuteronomy, referring to the same “angel”:

Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD [Jehovah] your God [elohim], who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in, in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go, and in a cloud by day (Deuteronomy 1:32, 33).

The angel of God is said to have been the one leading Israel in the pillar of cloud and of fire, yet this individual is also referred to by the name Jehovah and the title *elohim*. Both God and His Angel are referred to as Jehovah and *elohim*, hence both are divine. But nonetheless, One is referred to as the Angel, or Messenger, of the Other.

There are two divine Beings, yet One is the Messenger of the Other.

Another interesting insight about this “Angel” is found in Isaiah. He is called the Angel of His presence:

I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, and the praises of the LORD, according to all that the LORD hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his lovingkindnesses. For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie: so he was their Saviour. In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them (Isaiah 63:7–10).

Here the Angel of God is called the Angel of His presence, who is also called *elohim* and Jehovah. In verse 8 Jehovah is the Saviour of His children; in verse 9, the Angel of Jehovah's presence saved them.

This passage teaches that:

The Angel of God is the presence of Jehovah. Wherever He is, Jehovah is. He represents Jehovah. He is the Messenger and presence of God.

Both Jehovah and His Angel are referred to as having saved the people. Two divine Beings are involved in the work of redemption. Yet One is described as the presence of the Other.

It is important to look at the full context, because it sheds some light on the Ten Commandments:

And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of

Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Exodus 20:1–3).

God continued speaking, but the people were afraid, so they asked Moses to speak to God for them:

And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. And the LORD said unto Moses, thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven (Exodus 20:21, 22).

The same Being referred to as Jehovah and *elohim* continued speaking with Moses. There is no interruption in the speech until the end of Chapter 23.

Notice what this same Jehovah, who spoke the Ten Commandments, says at the end of the same conversation, with no interruptions:

Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his [the Angel's] voice, and do all that I [GOD] speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off (Exodus 23:20–23).

Notice two things from this passage:

First, God said in verse 22, “But if thou shalt indeed obey his [the Angel's] voice, and do all that I [GOD] speak . . .”

In other words, God said, “this Angel will speak my words; I speak through His voice. He is my Word. He is the Word of God. He is My thoughts made audible.”

Second, God said, “My name is in him,” implying that this Angel bears God’s own nature and authority.

The other divine Being:

- Is the Angel, or Messenger, of God
- Is the Presence of God
- Is the Voice of God
- Is the Word of God
- Has the name (nature and authority) of God in Him

With this in mind, who was it who spoke the Ten Commandments, and to whom does the first Commandment refer?

Just before Stephen was stoned, he said:

When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? The same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them

out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us (Acts 7:31–38).

In light of this, it was the Angel of God who spoke the 10 Commandments—the same Angel who spoke to Moses from the burning bush. However, He spoke the words of God, Jehovah, the Ancient of Days, because He is the voice—the *logos* or WORD—of God. Interestingly enough, Stephen calls Him “the voice of the Lord” (Acts 7:31).

Therefore, the Commandment that says “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3), must refer to Jehovah rather than to the Angel of Jehovah whose voice was heard speaking those words.

Furthermore, notice what is recorded when the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Moses in the burning bush:

*And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. Moreover he [the Angel of the LORD] said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God
(Exodus 3:2, 4, 6).*

Here we see the Angel, or Messenger, of Jehovah saying:

I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Exodus 3:6).

What does this claim mean?

Was the Angel of Jehovah claiming to be the One God of the Bible, or was the One God of the Bible speaking through His Word?

Notice whom Peter understood the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be:

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go (Acts 3:13).

According to Peter, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the Father of Jesus. Hence, a more accurate understanding of Exodus 3:6 is that the One God of the Bible was speaking through His Messenger. It was the words of God through the voice of His Angel, who is equally divine with Him.

Here we see two divine Beings referred to as Jehovah and *elohim*. One of these two Beings is said to be the:

- Angel of Jehovah
- Presence of Jehovah
- Voice of Jehovah
- One in whom Jehovah put His name

Even if that were all the Old Testament reveals about the two divine Beings, it does not support a trinity—at best, two Gods, or one God made up of two Persons/Beings.

After all, the evidence so far shows the existence of two, not three, Beings/Persons referred to as Jehovah and *elohim*. And the Holy Spirit is never referred to as “God the Holy Spirit” in the Old Testament. The trinity requires three divine persons, not two. However, the Old Testament reveals more information that sheds light on this topic.

God and His Son (Proverbs 8:22–30; 30:4)

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him (Proverbs 8:22–30).

Some would like to apply this passage to the “wisdom” of God since, contextually speaking, that is what is being spoken about. However, if we apply this passage to the attribute of wisdom alone, we will run into deep trouble.

The text clearly states that “wisdom” was “possessed” or “brought forth” at a certain “point” in the days of eternity before anything was created. If the text is referring to the

attribute of wisdom only, it would imply that before that “point,” God was not wise or did not possess the attribute of wisdom!

Moreover, the way the author records it does not fit with it being simply an attribute. It is more fitting to apply it to a “person” or a “being.”

Notice the following phrases in Proverbs 8:30:

- “I was by him.”
- I was as “one brought up with him.”
- “I was daily his delight.”
- I was “rejoicing always before him.”

Now consider how Proverbs refers to Wisdom:

- The giver of life and death (8:35, 36)
- The giver of wealth (8:18–21) and security (1:33)
- The source of counsel, wisdom, understanding, and strength (8:14)
- The source of government, rulership, and authority (8:15)
- The source of happiness (3:13, 18)
- The source of revelation (8:6–10, 32, 34)
- The one to be sought after/found/called (1:28; 8:17)
- The one who loves and is to be loved (8:17)
- The one who calls to men and seeks for them (8:4)
- The one who leads in the way (3:17; 8:20, 32)

This language is not describing an attribute. It is describing a Person—Jesus Christ!

The verses from Proverbs 8:22 to the end of Proverbs 9 all apply to Jesus, for He is the “wisdom of God.” See 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30 and compare Matthew 23:34 with Luke 11:49.

Also consider:

*Then I was beside him, like a master workman; and I
was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always
(Proverbs 8:30 RSV).*

Contextually, this is referring to the time of creation. The point of the text is that during the work of creation, Wisdom was there as a “master workman”—a skilled architect.

*Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? Who
hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the
waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends
of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's
name, if thou canst tell? (Proverbs 30:4).*

Again, while referring to the work of creation, the author attributes creation to two Individuals and identifies Them by relationship as Father and Son. The Son of God, Wisdom, was with the Father during creation.

Proverbs 8 presents two divine Beings involved in creation, God and His Son.

The Son of God is the Angel of God, the presence of God, the Voice of God, the Word of God, and the Wisdom of God.

A God and His God

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows (Psalm 45:6, 7).

This passage refers to two Beings. The one being spoken to is referred to as God:

“Thy throne, O God . . .”

Then the passage goes on to say, “Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee.”

Thus, the one who is being spoken to has a God, even though he himself is referred to as God.

Let’s compare this passage with Hebrews 1:8, 9:

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

We discover that the one being spoken to in Psalm 45:6, 7, is the Messiah. We can conclude that the Messiah has a God, even though He himself is referred to as God.

It is clear that the Angel of God, who is called Jehovah, has Jehovah as His God. Put simply, God refers to Himself as the God of His Son.

Summing up, the Old Testament presents two divine Beings, both referred to as Jehovah and *elohim*. Both are involved in the work of creation and redemption.

They are referred to as:

- Jehovah and His Angel
- Jehovah and His Son
- Jehovah's Son and His God (Jehovah)

The Angel of the Lord is referred to as Jehovah and *elohim* because He:

- Is the Son of Jehovah – Proverbs 8:22–30; 30:4
- Is the presence of Jehovah – Isaiah 63:7–9
- Is the voice/Word of Jehovah – Exodus 20:1–17; Proverbs 8:4; Acts 7:31
- Has Jehovah's name in Him – Exodus 23:20, 21
- Has the divine nature of Jehovah and is *elohim*, or God, by nature because He is the Son of Jehovah

According to the Old Testament, there is one God, yet two divine Beings. There is one God because the Father is the Source of all things, including His Son. It is not because God has a triune nature, or because only one Being is referred to as God. The term “one God” means “One Source of all things.”

The Son Himself said:

*The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way,
before his works of old. When there were no depths, I
was brought forth (Proverbs 8:22, 24).*

In other words, the Son Himself said, Jehovah gave Me life. He, Jehovah, brought Me into existence before creation took place. He is the Source of My life and My existence.

If both divine Beings, Jehovah and His Son, were involved in creation, and Jehovah is the Source of His Son's existence, then it follows that Jehovah is the Source of all things, including the life of His Son. It is by inheritance that the Son is equally divine with His Father. That is why the Old Testament explicitly teaches monotheism yet refers to two divine Beings.

One came out of, came forth, or was begotten from, the Other. He was begotten, not created.

The term "one God" refers to the one Source of all things, namely, the Father, the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9, 13). It does not mean only one divine being, or only one being with the God nature. It means one Source of all things—one Supreme Being who is above all, who has no God or Father, and always has been.

The Old Testament presents a truly monotheistic picture of God—only one divine Source. It does not teach a triune or a biune monotheistic God. This means that the Jews, including Elijah, worshiped the one true God of the Bible—Jehovah, the Father of Jesus, the Father of all—as the one God of the Bible. Views such as trinitarianism and modalism were completely foreign to them.

A crucial point worth mentioning here is that God gave His people, the Jews, special instructions to kill any person, including prophets and dreamers, who would entice them to worship other gods, other than "the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 13:1–10).

We have established from the scriptures that the one true God is the Father. It was the Father, through His Son, who created, delivered, and led the people. The Father was the

One worshiped and adored as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was He who spoke the commandment, through His Son, saying, “Thou shalt have none other gods before me” (Deuteronomy 5:7).

The Jews believed that if anyone else—even if it were an angel of light—had taught the people to worship any other god than the One revealed in the Old Testament, he would have been stoned, or killed.

This is important to highlight because, as our study now moves into the New Testament, we will see that Jesus Himself commended the Jews for their correct understanding of who God is.

Let’s take a look . . .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 7

**THE TWO DIVINE BEINGS IN THE
OLD TESTAMENT**

1. How does the Old Testament present the two divine Beings?
2. How does the Old Testament describe the relationship between the two divine Beings?
3. Who spoke the Ten Commandments, and to Whom does the first commandment refer?
4. Whom does the Bible identify as “wisdom”?
5. Whom did the biblical Jews worship, including Elijah?

CHAPTER 8

MONOTHEISM IN THE GOSPELS

Many Christians believe that the Old Testament did not clearly reveal who God is. It is true that Jesus came to give a fuller revelation of God to humanity, but it is often also taught that through His teachings we learn that the God of the Bible is a trinity.

Is this so? What did Jesus teach? Do His words and teaching support the trinitarian theology? Were His teachings in harmony with Old Testament Scripture?

In this chapter, we will examine the identity of God according to the Gospels and its main figures:

- John the Baptist
- The New Testament Jews
- Jesus Christ

John the Baptist

The man God ordained to declare the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies, proclaiming that the Messiah's coming was at hand, was John the Baptist. He was the one prophesied as the "voice of one crying in the wilderness" (Matthew 3:3).

His purpose and mission in life was to prepare the way for the Lord.

His birth was a miracle. An angel came from heaven and announced to his parents what was to take place.

Jesus described John as:

- The greatest of all the prophets – Luke 7:28
- The promised Elijah to come, the "second" Elijah – Matthew 17:10–13

Surely, John the Baptist knew who God is and worshiped the true God of heaven. If John was the one who came in the spirit and power of Elijah, it is only logical to believe that he worshiped the same God Elijah worshiped!

Did John believe in a triune monotheistic God? The fact that he was a first-century Jew indicates that he did not worship a trinity.

The Bible presents a significant detail that answers this question:

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said

unto them, Unto what then were ye baptised? And they said, Unto John's baptism (Acts 19:1–3).

These twelve people (see Acts 19:7) were baptised into John's baptism. Whether John himself or someone else baptised them is irrelevant at the moment. The point is that these people had not even heard of the Holy Ghost.

If John worshiped a triune god, wouldn't he have at least mentioned God the Holy Spirit? Presumably, he or his disciples would have told the people being baptised about the God they were to worship.

It is rather illogical to believe that John worshiped a trinity when those baptised into his baptism had not even heard of the Holy Spirit—let alone God the Holy Spirit!

Looking objectively at this account, we must accept the fact that John the Baptist, the promised Elijah, did not worship a trinity, along with the original Elijah. Rather, he worshiped the same God his fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worshiped.

The Jews

Did the New Testament Jews worship a trinity, a three-in-one god? Who was their God?

It is helpful to know the answer to these questions when studying the Gospels, especially when reading conversations relating to this topic between Jesus and the Jews of His day. Consider a conversation between Jesus and a scribe:

Which is the first commandment of all? (Mark 12:28).

Jesus's answer began with the words:

*The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel;
The Lord our God is one Lord (Mark 12:29).*

To a Jew, this was the most important verse to memorise. Every Jew knew it by heart. Notice the scribe's reply to Jesus:

*Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one
God; and there is none other but he:
and to love him with all the heart, and with all the
understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the
strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more
than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices
(Mark 12:32, 33).*

This was the confession of a monotheistic belief: "There is one God . . . none other but he."

Keep in mind that the scribe was not a twenty-first century trinitarian Christian. He was a first-century Jew. Jesus was a first-century Jew as well. Before reading Jesus's reply to the scribe, we must understand what the scribe believed and what he meant by his words.

Any twenty-first century trinitarian can say amen to what both Jesus and the scribe said. A trinitarian who understands the trinity would believe in one God and would refer to this one God as "He" or "Him"!

It is incorrect to suppose that the singular terminology used in the Bible in relation to God is proof against the trinity.

It is incorrect to argue that use of the terminology "He" and "Him" instead of "they" and "them" when referring to God, serves as evidence against the trinity doctrine.

The trinity belief is monotheistic. Therefore, any arguments about the oneness of God will harmonise with it. It is important to accurately understand any concept of God, so

as not to misrepresent it. To say that the trinity doctrine is polytheistic is to set up a straw man argument and attempt to defeat it. That is not the way to arrive at the truth.

Which monotheistic God?

Returning to the discussion between Jesus and the scribe, to what monotheistic God were they referring? Were they referring to a triune monotheistic god or to one individual (one being) monotheistic God called “God the Father”?

The answer to this question requires another question: Did the first-century Jews worship a triune monotheistic god? Or did they worship a one individual monotheistic god?

We have already established that Old Testament Jews did not worship a trinity and that neither did John the Baptist. The Jews in the days of Jesus would be no different.

Notice the following conversation between Jesus and the Jews:

Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me (John 8:41, 42).

Which God were they talking about? Were they talking about a trinity?

Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God (John 8:54).

Jesus told the Jews: The one that you say is your God, is my Father! It is your God who honours Me.

Jesus was born as a Jew and lived thirty-three years among first-century Jews. He mingled with them and worshiped in the same synagogue where they worshiped.

He knew what they believed. That is why He told them:

My Father is the one whom you Jews say is your God!

Did the Jews worship a triune God? Not at all!

The first-century Jews believed in one monotheistic God. Jesus's testimony to them was that the One they worshiped was his Father.

I AM

Continuing the discussion, another misunderstood verse comes up:

Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself (John 8:57-59).

Did Jesus claim the name of God as His? He did.

Was Jesus the One who spoke to Moses out of the burning bush? He was. He was the Angel of the Lord referred to as Jehovah (Lord) and *elohim* (God). The Angel of the Lord who appeared to Moses is the Son of God. He is the Word of God and the Voice of God, and in Him is found the name of the Father: "My name is in him" (Exodus 23:21).

Christ was the One who spoke to Moses saying, "I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14). Although, He was speaking the words of His Father. All things proceed from the Father. Back then, in the Old Testament, He spoke the words of God, and in the

New Testament, He did the very same thing.

This is not foreign to the New Testament. John tells us that Jesus is the Word of God, who was with God in the beginning, and was God (divine).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1).

Moreover, while on earth, He testified that He spoke the words of His Father:

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works (John 14:10).

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak (John 12:49,50).

Jesus made the thoughts of God audible. He was the mouthpiece of God, His Father, in both the Old and New Testament, and He continues to be the Word and Voice of God to the human race today. Very often, people will use Jesus's claim to the name of God (I AM) as proof that Jesus is a part of a triune God. But this conclusion is not correct.

Jesus was pointing the first-century Jews to the fact that He had been the One who had appeared to Moses and spoken with him. He was revealing the fact that He had existed before Abraham, using this encounter with Moses as the example, since every Jew knew this story well. In this He demonstrated His divinity and His identity as the Voice and

Word of God. This is not the same as claiming to be the one true God of the Bible, the Ancient of Days. This Jesus never did.

Jesus and the woman at the well

Jesus met a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well and told her the things she had done. The woman thought He must be a prophet and said:

*Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say,
that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to
worship (John 4:20).*

Jews and Samaritans had different understandings of where and whom to worship, thus the woman's implied question. Jesus responded:

*Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour
cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet
at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know
not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is
of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the
true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and
in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must
worship him in spirit and in truth
(John 4:21–24).*

Jesus told the Samaritan woman two things.

First, with His words, "Salvation is of the Jews" (verse 22), He was saying that the Jews knew the identity of God.

Second, by saying "the true worshippers shall worship the Father" (verse 23), He was indicating Whom she should worship—the Father.

In this conversation, just as in the previous one, the term “God,” used by Jesus and by the Jews, did not refer to a triune, monotheistic God; it referred to God the Father.

Scripture is clear about whom the Jews worshiped in the first century. They worshiped God the Father:

- The Jews said the Father was their God
- Jesus told the Jews, My Father is your God
- Jesus told the woman at the well to worship the God of the Jews—the Father

In Jesus’s day, John the Baptist and all the Jews did not believe in a triune monotheistic God. They believed in one, individual, monotheistic God, who according to Scripture, is the Father of Jesus Christ.

Jesus and the Scribe

The scribe said to Jesus:

Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he (Mark 12:32).

Whom did the scribe have in mind?

Was he referring to a triune, monotheistic God, or was he referring to God the Father, as a singular, monotheistic God?

It is obvious from Scripture the scribe was referring to God the Father alone, not to a unity of three persons. He believed in a singular, monotheistic God. This is what every first-century Jew believed.

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of

*God. And no man after that durst ask him
any question (Mark 12:34).*

This would have been a perfect opportunity for Jesus to clarify to the scribe, and to us, that the one God of the Bible is a unity of three persons. However, instead of a clarification or a correction, Jesus gave an affirmation: “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.”

Moreover, notice how Mark recorded the account almost forty years after the crucifixion:

*And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he
said unto him . . . (Mark 12:34).*

This is what Mark had been taught. Mark believed the scribe answered wisely or discreetly. Not only that, he believed Jesus thought the scribe’s answer was correct.

John Mark, the author of the Gospel of Mark, was recording what happened. It clearly expressed Mark’s understanding of the situation. Mark believed that Jesus was pleased with the scribe’s answer in that Jesus thought the scribe’s answer was wise and prudent.

The majority of researchers believe Mark was written about thirty-six years after the crucifixion, around 70 A.D. If he were a trinitarian, he would not have thought the scribe’s answer was wise. The insight this passage gives of Mark’s thinking indicates he was not a trinitarian and that he agreed with Jesus’s approval of the scribe’s understanding of a singular, monotheistic God in making no attempt to correct him. This passage leads to the understanding that the God of the Bible, referred to by Mark, by the scribe, and by Jesus Himself, is none other than God the Father.

Jesus Christ

Now let's consider more of how Jesus identified God.

As Jesus prayed to His Father, He said:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).

According to Jesus, eternal life is based upon knowing and having a relationship with two Persons or Beings: God and Jesus. Notice that Jesus referred to His Father as the only true God. Also, there is only one true God, meaning one God of all and above all; one Source of all life and being. In His prayer, Jesus did not present this one true God as a unity of three persons but as a single individual—His own Father.

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus taught the Samaritan woman to pray to the Father. See John 4:23, 24. And when the disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray, He began by saying:

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen (Matthew 6:9, 10, 13).

By this Jesus taught that the Father is the God of heaven and earth. We pray to the Father, asking His kingdom come and will be done, as all things belong to the Father.

Lord of heaven and earth

In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou

*hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and
hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so
it seemed good in thy sight (Luke 10:21).*

According to Jesus, His Father is the Lord of heaven and earth.

No claim to be God

Jesus never claimed to be the God of the Bible. He claimed to be divine, equal with God, and took the Father's name I AM upon Himself. He also clearly stated who He is: the Son of God.

We cannot approach the scriptures with preconceived ideas. That causes us to see what we want to see and ignore the rest.

Many quote some of Christ's words but ignore other words that shed a different light on what they are trying to prove. For example:

They quote "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30) and ignore "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

They quote "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58) and ignore "I am the Son of God" (John 10:36).

They quote "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6) and "the Son quickeneth whom he will" (John 5:21) and ignore "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (verse 26).

Two divine Beings give eternal life and are involved in the redemption of man, yet One received His life from the Other. In other words, the Father is the Source of all life and being, including the life of Jesus, who is the Saviour and the Author of life to the human race. See Hebrews 12:2.

Notice also the following words of Jesus. As you read them, please ask yourself, “Who is this God?”

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved
(John 3:16, 17).

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
(Matthew 27:46).

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God (John 20:17).

The purpose of Christ’s earthly mission was to reveal God to humanity. In these passages, the following characteristics of God are clearly revealed:

- He has an only begotten Son
- He is the God of Jesus
- He is the Father of Jesus

Jesus was speaking as a Man, but did He mean what He said? Is it possible to build a theology and faith on the teachings of Jesus while He was on earth?

Jesus declared that God the Father is not only our God, but also His God. Before and after His resurrection, He testified that the Father was His God.

Jesus also said:

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed (John 6:27).

The term “God the Father” is not a name. Other translations say:

For him did the Father seal—even God (YLT)

For him the Father, even God, hath sealed (ASV)

For him has the Father sealed, even God (DARBY)

For him the Father, even God, hath sealed (ERV)

While on earth Jesus identified the God who sealed him as His Father. He clearly declared that His Father is the only true God. He is my God and your God. Yet when speaking about Himself, Jesus declared Himself to be the Son of God:

Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am (Luke 22:70).

Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? (John 10:36).

Jesus stated in no uncertain terms who God is and who He Himself is. Here are a few other witnesses in the Gospels who testified that Jesus is the Son of God:

- God the Father – Matthew 3:17 and 17:5
- Demons – Luke 4:41; 8:28
- Followers of Jesus:
- Martha – John 11:27

- Peter – Matthew 16:16
- Roman soldier – Matthew 27:54
- All the disciples – Matthew 14:33
- John – John 1:1 (Jesus is the divine Word of God Who was with God before time began)

The Gospels clearly reveal the Sonship and divinity of Jesus. Jesus claimed to be divine when:

- He claimed to be the I AM
- He claimed equality with God by claiming to be the Son of God

But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God (John 5:17, 18).

He asked His followers to believe in Him in the same way they believed in God, making Himself equally the object of true faith:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me (John 14:1).

He wanted His disciples to have the same faith in Him as they have in God. He put Himself on an equal level with God when it comes to our faith.

Jesus is equally divine with His Father. He is God in that He has the God nature. Scripture does not shy away from calling Jesus God, Jehovah, and *elohim*; neither should we.

Thomas called Him “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28).

He is God. Yet Scripture—the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, the Jews, Jesus Himself, and His followers—maintains the singular oneness of God, who is identified as the Father of Jesus Christ.

The Gospels clearly reveal that Jesus is divine and God by nature, yet at the same time they explain why He is called God. It is not because He is the God of the Bible, neither is it because He is a third part of the God of the Bible. He is called God because He is the Son of God, the Word of God, and the presence of God, as we saw earlier. This is what we discovered in the Old Testament as well—two divine Beings yet one God.

Jesus's teachings in the Gospels were in perfect harmony with what the Old Testament taught regarding monotheism. They both testify that the monotheistic God of the Bible is God the Father, not a triune God.

Our aim in these first few chapters is to examine what Scripture teaches about the one God of the Bible. Hence, the verses that have to do with Jesus's Sonship or with the identity of the Holy Spirit have not been examined yet. We will address these topics in later chapters.

A correct understanding of who the one God of the Bible is lays a solid foundation on which the identity of Jesus and the Holy Spirit will be easily built.

Two Divine Beings, Yet One God

The Gospels reveal two divine Beings, yet one God. They reveal One who is identified as “the only true God” (John 17:3) and the ultimate Source of all things, including the life of the Son. The other divine Being is identified as:

- The Son of God
- The Word of God
- Equally divine with God

In the Gospels, we've learned about the same "only true God" we found in the Old Testament—the Source of everything, including His Son.

In the Old Testament, the two Beings are:

- Jehovah and His Angel – Exodus 14:19, 24
- Jehovah and His Son – Proverbs 8:22–30; 30:4
- Jehovah being the God of His Son – Psalm 45:6, 7
- The two Beings in the Gospels:
- God and His Messenger – John 17:25, 26
- God and His Son – John 17:3
- God the Father being the God of His Son – John 20:17, etc.

In the Old Testament, the Son of God is divine because:

- He is the Son of Jehovah – Proverbs 8:22–30; 30:4
- He is the presence of Jehovah – Isaiah 63:9
- He is the Voice and Word of Jehovah – Exodus 23:22
- He has Jehovah's name in Him – Exodus 23:21

In the Gospels, Jesus is divine because:

- He is the Son and presence of God – John 10:36, 30
- He is the Voice and Word of God – John 1:1; 12:49
- He has God's name, I AM, in Him – John 8:58

Both the Old Testament and the Gospels testify of the relationship between God and His Son.

They testify of two divine Beings, yet one God of all and one Source of all, whom we have come to know as God the Father.

Now let's examine how the apostles came to know the one God...

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 8

MONOTHEISM IN THE GOSPELS

1. What significant detail about John the Baptist indicates he did not worship a triune god? See Acts 19:1–3.
2. Did the New Testament Jews worship a triune God? See John 8:54.
3. Did Jesus calling Himself “I AM” in John 8:57–59 mean He was claiming to be God in the same way His Father is God? Why or why not?
4. What two things about God did Jesus tell the woman at the well?
5. What does Jesus’s conversation with the scribe tell us about who God is? See Mark 12:28–34.

CHAPTER 9

MONOTHEISM ACCORDING TO THE APOSTLES

All Christians have the same words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. One would assume that this would lead all to come to the same conclusion about the identity of God. But not all Christians share the same understanding about God. The problem is not in the words written but in how the reader understands them.

Jesus once asked a lawyer:

*What is written in the law? How readest thou?
(Luke 10:26).*

“How” does one read and understand it?

For example: Consider the difference between the Bible’s inspired words and the trinitarian interpretation:

- “One God” – “triune God” (3 in 1)
- “Son of God” – “God the Son”
- “Spirit of God” – “God the Spirit”
- “Only begotten Son” – “unique son”

This chapter will examine how the disciples understood the teachings of Jesus regarding biblical monotheism. We will examine their understanding of the Sonship of Christ and the identity of the Holy Spirit in later chapters.

We have established that when the Bible says “one God,” it refers to God the Father, not a unity or triunity or a family. Therefore, our understanding of the Sonship of Jesus and the identity of the Holy Spirit must fit in with this biblical concept of monotheism.

In this chapter we will examine the writings of the apostles to discover what they believed and taught regarding the identity of God.

Surely the disciples who walked and talked with Jesus, saw Him ascend to heaven, received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and wrote the New Testament, would have correctly understood Jesus’s teaching about God.

So, what did they understand from the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus on this topic? Did they believe in monotheism? And if so, what type of monotheism?

Did the disciples believe in monotheism (one God)?

*Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the
circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision
through faith (Romans 3:30).*

As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one (1 Corinthians 8:4).

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:6).

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5).

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble (James 2:19).

It is rather obvious that the apostles believed in monotheism. However, someone who believes in the trinity, or one, singular God and His Son, can say amen to these verses. It is important to understand what the apostles meant by one God.

What did they understand about the identity of this one God?

Paul

In 1 Corinthians 8:4, he said, “There is none other God but One.” In verse 6 he told us who this one God is:

*But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him
(1 Corinthians 8:6).*

When Paul wrote “one God,” what did he mean by it? Did he mean a triune God, or was he referring to one, singular God—God the Father?

The question is not what a twenty-first century Christian

understands. The question is what Paul understood, believed, and taught.

Paul was not uncertain about who the one God of the Bible is. It is the Father, the Source of all things. He repeatedly brought this point out:

*That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God,
even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
(Romans 15:6).*

*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called
in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one
baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all,
and through all, and in you all (Ephesians 4:4–6).*

Although Paul mentioned one Spirit and one Lord, he still emphasised only one God. He also specified who this one God is. It is not the Spirit, neither is it the Lord, neither is it a combination of all three; it is the Father.

Simply quoting verses that mention Father, Son and Spirit does not automatically mean a trinity. One must understand what the author was saying. He clearly and repeatedly stated that God is the Father of Jesus:

*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of
all comfort (2 Corinthians 1:3).*

God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Again, notice:

*And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then
shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put
all things under him, that God may be all in all
(1 Corinthians 15:28).*

Jesus will be subject unto the Father! Why?

So that God, the Father, might be all in all. Why?

Because the Father is the Source of all things, including the life of His Son.

Paul understood the term “one God” in the scriptures and in Christ’s teachings to refer to God the Father, the one Source of all things. He did not understand the term “one God” to refer to a unity of three beings.

James

*Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well:
the devils also believe, and tremble (James 2:19).*

What did James mean by “one God?” A triune God or God the Father?

*Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and
therewith curse we men, which are made after the
similitude of God (James 3:9).*

According to James, this one God is the Father. As did Paul, James said that the God of whom Jesus and the Old Testament spoke, the God they worshiped and whom Christians ought to worship, is the Father of Jesus Christ.

It is safe to understand the words of Jesus the same way His disciples did.

Peter

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten
us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus
Christ from the dead (1 Peter 1:3).*

Peter was repeating the same understanding. The one God of the Bible is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is not only our God, but He is the God of Jesus as well.

John

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him (1 John 4:9).

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10).

According to John, who is God? It is He who had a Son to send, the Father of Jesus.

If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life (1 John 5:9–12).

Clearly, John was speaking about God the Father—the Source of all things—who has a Son.

God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son (1 John 5:11).

Eternal life is not found in words, deeds, or efforts. Eternal life is found in a Person—Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He who has the Son has eternal life. If life is found in the Son, then the enemy of souls is aiming to take away your eternal

life by taking the Son of God from you. God chose to give us life through His Son.

Tragically, the enemy has managed to do this in people's lives by replacing the Son of God with "God the Son." These titles might sound similar, but in reality, they are worlds apart.

The term "Son of God" identifies whose Son He is. This identity qualifies Him as the only possible Saviour of the world, as the only divine Being who could die on man's behalf. However, the term "God the Son" no longer identifies a true Son, but rather introduces another god whose title is "Son." A good way to illustrate the difference is with the following parallel:

"The dog of John" versus "John the dog."

It is rather obvious that it makes a big difference in meaning.

Going on in the passage, John wrote:

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

Does this verse say Jesus is the true God?

Read it again:

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life (1 John 5:20).

“Him that is true” has a Son named Jesus. “Him that is true” is therefore the Father.

According to Jesus, in the Gospel of John, the Father is the only true God. In prayer to His Father, Jesus said:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).

It was John who wrote that Gospel. Would he contradict the words of Jesus he had earlier recorded? Absolutely not!

Jesus referred to His Father as the only true God. In his letter, John was reiterating the same idea: Christ’s Father is the true God.

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son (2 John 1:9).

Who is “God” in the above verse? Two Beings are mentioned in the first sentence—Christ and God. John is explaining that if you reject One, you reject the other. In the next sentence, he presents the opposite scenario—that if you have One, you also have the Other—and here he identified God as the Father, and Christ as the Son.

This is in perfect harmony with the words of Jesus recorded by John in his Gospel:

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him (John 14:23).

In his second letter, John again echoed the words of Jesus as

recorded in his Gospel, revealing the existence of two divine Beings, God and His Son.

According to Paul, James, Peter, and John, the one true God of the Bible is the Father. The apostles, after Christ's death and resurrection, and after receiving the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth, believed in and taught that God is one, singular individual. They did not teach that God was a trinity of three persons.

Clear verses

Allow me to highlight only one verse out of the ones mentioned. To me, 1 Corinthians 8:6 is one of the clearest verses in Scripture regarding this topic.

*But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him
(1 Corinthians 8:6).*

If Paul believed in a triune God, this passage would have been the perfect place to reveal it! He could have easily said, "But to us Christians, there is but one God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of whom are all things." But he didn't. He identified his "one God" as the Father alone, who is the Source of all things. He then presented Jesus Christ as his one Lord, or Master, "through whom are all things."

Obviously, Paul believed and taught that the Father is the Source of all things, and that His Son is the Channel through whom God creates, sustains, and redeems His creation. He described this in several other places:

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he

hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9).

Regarding God's Son:

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist (Colossians 1:15–17).

He understood that there were two divine Beings, both involved in creation. However, One—the Father—is the Source of all things, and the Other—the Son—is the Channel by whom God made all things. According to Scripture, there is only one Source of all things, the Father. Two divine Beings are discovered in the Old and New Testament, yet there is only one Source. Two involved in the work of creation and redemption, but One is the Son of the Other. One is the Messenger, Presence, Voice, and Word of the Other.

This is important to understand because the Bible refers to Jesus as God. Jesus is divine and worthy of our worship. He was begotten, not created. Unless we understand the foundational principle that the term “one God” refers to the “one Source of all things”—the Father—we will run into all kinds of confusion.

What about monotheism in the book of Revelation?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 9

**MONOTHEISM ACCORDING TO
THE APOSTLES**

1. How did Paul identify the one God? Give three Bible passages to support your answer.
2. What two passages confirm that James saw God as the Father?
3. According to Peter, does Jesus have a God? See 1 Peter 1:3.
4. According to John in 1 John 5:9–12, who is God?
5. What is the difference between “Son of God” and “God the Son”?

CHAPTER 10

MONOTHEISM ACCORDING TO REVELATION

Considering Revelation, the last book of the Bible, can we find monotheism? If so, is it a triune or a singular, monotheistic God?

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John (Revelation 1:1).

God gave this revelation to Jesus. Whom is this God?

If God gave something to Jesus, the identity of God cannot include Jesus. It must be a different individual, whom the following verses clearly identify as Jesus's Father:

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us

*kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen
(Revelation 1:5, 6).*

Not only does the book of Revelation confirm that God is the Father of Jesus, but it also confirms that the Father is the God of Jesus:

Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name (Revelation 3:12).

This is consistent with the Old Testament, with the Gospels, with the writings of the apostles, and with the words of Jesus.

Revelation 4

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone (Revelation 4:2, 3).

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things,

*and for thy pleasure they are and were created
(Revelation 4:8–11).*

John saw “One” sitting on the throne who is called “Lord God Almighty” (verse 8). He is worshiped by the four beasts and by the twenty-four elders.

Side note: When the four beasts cry “holy, holy, holy” they do not say it three times because of a trinity. No—the context tells us exactly why they say it three times:

*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was,
and is, and is to come.*

God is holy in the past, holy in the present, and holy in the future. There is only “One” sitting on the throne:

*And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne
a book written within and on the backside, sealed with
seven seals (Revelation 5:1).*

The Lord God Almighty, whom John saw sitting on the throne, had a book in His hand.

A few verses later, in verse 6, another individual entered the scene. John saw One like a slain lamb, standing in the midst of the throne of God and the twenty-four elders:

*And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of
the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a
Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and
seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth
into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of
the right hand of him that sat upon the throne
(verses 6 and 7).*

No one would deny that the One symbolised by the slain lamb is Jesus Christ. This means the “One” sitting on the

throne in heaven, and worshiped as the One God of the Bible, is the Father.

This vision bears close resemblance to the vision recorded in Daniel 7:

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him (Daniel 7:9, 13).

Both visions reveal two Beings involved in the work of redemption and judgment. One of the two Beings is referred to as “the Ancient of Days” or “the Lord God Almighty.” In both visions, only One was seated on the throne and worshiped as the God of heaven. Both visions present God the Father as the one God of heaven and earth.

Revelation 7

After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and

*power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.
Amen (Revelation 7:9–12).*

Notice what the great multitude said:

*Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne,
and unto the Lamb (verse 10).*

All the redeemed in heaven know who their God is who sits upon the throne.

They understand that the Father is their God, and that His Son is the Lamb. The Father is the “God” the angels worship and adore in verses 11 and 12.

Revelation 20–23

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years (Revelation 20:6).

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it (Revelation 21:22).

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him (Revelation 22:1, 3).

It is very clear who “God” is. Two Beings are mentioned together repeatedly. One is called God, and the other is called Christ or the Lamb.

The book of Revelation portrays the same truth as seen throughout the whole Bible. It is a monotheistic book. It does

not reveal a triune monotheism, but rather a single, individual God, of Whom are all things.

As does the rest of the Bible, the book of Revelation presents two divine Beings:

God and the Lamb—in other words, God and His Son.

Two divine Beings, yet one God, one ultimate authority in heaven. As Jesus said, it is the will of God the Father that is done in heaven. See Matthew 6:9, 10.

The first angel's message

In light of this, of whom is the first angel's message speaking?

Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters (Revelation 14:7).

Who is this God we are asked to fear, give glory to, and worship? Is it talking about a triune monotheistic God, or is it talking about God the Father?

The book of Revelation clearly testifies that it is referring to God the Father. Every time the term “God” is used in Revelation, it refers to God the Father. Therefore, the first angel's message is not instructing us to fear and worship a triune monotheistic God. It commands us to worship God the Father, as the one true God of the Bible, the Sovereign King of the universe.

After all, it was in the Gospel of John, the writer of Revelation, that we read the following words from Jesus:

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in

*truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him
(John 4:23).*

John's record of Jesus's words points the true worshiper to worship the Father. Therefore, it is illogical to believe John would contradict the words of Jesus in the three angels' messages, the very messages which are meant to turn the heart of the true seeker to worship and serve the God of the Bible.

After being threatened and released by the priests and rulers, John and Peter went back to their own company and joined their voices in prayer and thanksgiving to God. They prayed in one accord:

Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus . . . (Acts 4:24, 27).

Obviously, in this prayer, they believed that their Lord God, "which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea" (same description in Revelation 14:7) is God the Father, and that He has a "holy child" named Jesus. They could have been speaking only to the Father. Jesus is "the holy child" of the God referred to in Revelation 14:7.

The Bible is clear about the oneness of God, but it does not leave room for interpretation of what that "oneness" means, or what kind of monotheism is presented. It emphatically teaches that the one true God of the Bible is one individual Being called God the Father.

This truth is harmoniously taught and revealed in the:

- Old Testament
- Gospels, especially the testimonies of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Jews

- Writings of the apostles
- Last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation

This means:

The first Elijah, a Jew, worshiped the Father as the one true God.

The second Elijah, John the Baptist, worshiped the Father as the one true God.

And the third Elijah, God's last-day people (see Malachi 4:5), will give the Elijah message, the three angels' messages, to point people back to the Father as the one true God. Is it a wonder they have the Father's name written in their forehead? See Revelation 14:1.

As God's last-day people proclaiming the three angels' messages to the world, we must worship and point people to the same God Whom the first and second Elijah worshiped and to Whom they pointed.

Trinity foreign to Scripture

The trinity doctrine, which teaches triune monotheism, is foreign to Scripture. It presents a different god than the One worshiped throughout the Bible. At best, it is only man's confused interpretation of Scripture. This is evidenced in the following quote:

“While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, it is assumed as a fact by Bible writers and mentioned several times. . . . Only by faith can we accept the existence of the Trinity” (*Adventist Review*, Vol. 158, No. 31, 1981, 4).

Charles Ryrie, Systematic Theology professor and Dean of

Doctoral Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, who also served as president and professor at what is now known as Cairn University, in his respected work, *Basic Theology*, writes:

Many doctrines are accepted by evangelicals as being clearly taught in the Scriptures for which there are no proof texts. The doctrine of the Trinity furnishes the best example of this. It is fair to say that the Bible does not clearly teach the doctrine of the Trinity, if by clearly one means there are proof texts for the doctrine. In fact, there is not even one proof text, if by proof text we mean a verse or passage that “clearly” states that there is one God who exists in three persons. . . . The above illustrations prove the fallacy of concluding that if something is not proof text in the Bible we cannot clearly teach the results. . . . If that were so, I could never teach the doctrines of the Trinity or . . . (Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 89, 90).

In light of what Charles Ryrie, and the *Adventist Review* wrote in the above statements, please notice a challenge put out by the Catholic Church:

“The Protestant Churches have themselves accepted such dogmas, as the Trinity, for which there [is] no such precise authority in the Gospels” (Graham Greene, “Assumption of Mary,” *Life Magazine*, October 30, 1950, 51).

To enforce the trinity doctrine within Christian circles and make it a test of fellowship, is to make man’s understanding and tradition, and not the scriptures, a test of fellowship.

True biblical monotheism leaves no room for a triune God. The truth of the one true God and His only begotten Son is harmoniously taught throughout the whole Bible. From Genesis to Revelation, it presents only two divine Beings.

Old Testament:

- Jehovah and His Angel – Exodus 14:19, 24
- Jehovah and His Son – Proverbs 8:22–30; 30:4
- Jehovah, the God of His Son – Psalm 45:6, 7

Gospels:

- God and His Messenger – John 17:25, 26
- God and His Son – John 17:3
- God, the Father of His Son – John 20:17, etc.

Apostles and Revelation:

- God and the Lamb – Revelation 7:10
- God and His Son – Romans 15:6 and 2 Corinthians 1:3
- God, the God and Father of His resurrected Son – Revelation 3:12

Two divine Beings, yet one God, the One Source of all things—including His Son. This is biblical monotheism.

*But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him
(1 Corinthians 8:6).*

A correct understanding of the term “one God” reveals not only the God of the Bible but also why, though both the Father and Jesus are divine in nature, there is only one true God, one Source of all things.

So, who exactly is Jesus?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 10

MONOTHEISM ACCORDING TO REVELATION

1. How does Revelation 1:5, 6 identify God?
2. In Revelation 4:8, what is the real reason the four beasts say “Holy” three times?
3. How do we know the great multitude in heaven will acknowledge two divine beings and not a triune god? See Revelation 7:10.
4. What are the two divine Beings called in Revelation 22:1, 3?
5. Of whom is the first angel’s message speaking? See Revelation 14:7.

CHAPTER 11

WHO IS JESUS?

We have clearly established that the God of the Bible is a singular, monotheistic God, the Father of Jesus, the Source of all things, and the only true God. This chapter answers the question, Who is Jesus?

In chapters 6 through 10, we established the following about Jesus:

In the Old Testament, He:

- Is the Son of Jehovah – Proverbs 8:22–30; 30:4
- Is the presence of Jehovah – Isaiah 63:9
- Is the Voice or Word of Jehovah – Exodus 23:22
- Has Jehovah’s name in Him – Exodus 23:21

And in the Gospels, He:

- Is the Son of God – John 10:36
- Is the presence of God – John 10:30
- Is the Voice or Word of God – John 1:1 and 12:49
- Has God's name in Him – John 8:58

Being referred to as the Son of God raises more questions about His origin and divinity.

Whom did Jesus claim to be?

Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? (John 10:36).

Jesus claimed to be the Son of God. He never ever referred to Himself as “God the Son,” and neither did any Bible writer.

In another conversation between Jesus and the Jews, we read:

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God (John 5:18).

The reason the Jews wanted to kill Jesus is because He claimed to be the Son of God by saying God was His Father.

The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God (John 19:7).

He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God (Matthew 27:43).

Jesus clearly claimed to be the Son of God, and those who heard Him clearly understood what He claimed.

How did the Father identify Jesus?

The Gospels record God the Father speaking from heaven three times. Twice the Father said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17; 17:5).

Surely God’s words are trustworthy!

Some would say that God was speaking in simple, easy to understand human language.

This line of reasoning is usually used to promote the idea that Jesus is not the literal Son of God but is called the Son just so we can understand the triune nature of God, emphasising that He is really “God the Son,” coeternal with the Father.

If Jesus wanted his followers to believe that God is a trinity, that He is “God the Son” and that He was never begotten in the days of eternity, then why didn’t He just say so?

Why would He confuse us by claiming to be the Son of God, if in reality He was not? The confusion disappears when we accept by faith what Jesus said.

Whom did the disciples believe Jesus is?

John the Baptist

*And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God
(John 1:34).*

Nathanael

*Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King
of Israel (John 1:49).*

Peter

*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God
(Matthew 16:16).*

Paul

After his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus:
“And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that
he is the Son of God” (Acts 9:20).

*God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the
fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord
(1 Corinthians 1:9).*

Martha

*She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art
the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into
the world (John 11:27).*

Matthew’s record of Jesus walking on the water

*Then they that were in the ship came and worshiped
him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God
(Matthew 14:33).*

Whom did fallen angels say Jesus is?

*When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before
him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with
thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee,
torment me not
(Luke 8:28; see also Matthew 8:29).*

God the Father declared Jesus His Son, and the apostles and
demons also believed and confessed Jesus’s Sonship.

At Jesus's trial and crucifixion

*But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven
(Mark 14:61, 62).*

Jesus's claim about His Sonship was important enough for Him to be crucified for it.

The Bible emphatically testifies of Jesus as the Son of God:

- Paul preached it (Acts 9:20), and John the Baptist testified of it – John 1:34
- The disciples proclaimed it – Matthew 14:33
- Christ taught it to Nicodemus – John 3:16
- Jesus was crucified for it – Mark 14:61, 62
- The Father revealed it to Peter – Matthew 16:16, 17
- Twice the Father proclaimed it from heaven – Matthew 3:17 and 17:5
- The soldier under the cross confessed it – Matthew 27:54
- The devils believed and proclaimed it – Luke 8:28
- Jesus taught it – John 10:36 and 5:18

Jesus's Sonship a prerequisite for baptism and eternal life

Philip

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:36, 37).

John

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:31).

Believing that Jesus is the Son of God leads to eternal life:

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God (1 John 4:15).

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:13).

The Sonship of Jesus is a crucial foundational truth of the gospel and the plan of salvation. “God the Son” is not found in Scripture; Jesus is referred to as the “Son of God.”

Jesus's Sonship cannot be metaphorical

If Jesus's Sonship is metaphorical:

The Jewish leaders in His day would not have considered it blasphemy.

Those hearing His words would not have understood Him to be claiming that He was begotten of God in the days of eternity and would not have accused Him of blasphemy saying: “For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God [divine]” (John 10:33).

Jesus would not have said: “Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (John 10:36).

Those listening to Jesus did not understand His Sonship in a metaphorical way. They understood His Sonship to make Him equal with God and to give Him a divine nature.

In this chapter, we’ve established from Scripture that Jesus is the literal Son of God, not God the Son.

But *how* is He the Son of God?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 11

WHO IS JESUS?

1. Whom did Jesus claim to be?
2. How did the Father identify Jesus?
3. Whom did fallen angels say Jesus is?
4. Name two reasons Jesus's Sonship is very important.
See John 20:31 and Acts 8:36, 37.
5. Why cannot Jesus's Sonship be metaphorical?

CHAPTER 12

HOW IS JESUS THE SON OF GOD?

In the previous chapter we established from the Bible that Jesus is the Son of God. The question we need to answer now is, How is Jesus the Son of God?

Is He the Son of God through:

- Creation?
- Metaphor?
- Begetting?

The Bible repeatedly answers this question:

Jesus told Nicodemus:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3:18).

John wrote:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:18).

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him (1 John 4:9).

“Begotten” = only-born or only unique?

Some believe that the word does not mean “born” but simply “unique.”

The Bible is very clear. The word “begotten” comes from the Greek word *monogenes*, which is used nine times in the New Testament. Three of the nine times cannot mean anything else but born.

Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her (Luke 7:12).

For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him (Luke 8:42).

*And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying,
Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine
only child (Luke 9:38).*

In the above verses, *monogenes*, translated “the only son,” “one only daughter,” and “only child,” clearly means born, not “unique.”

The meaning of the word *monogenes* itself confirms this. According to Strong’s Concordance, *monogenes* is a compound word of *monos* and *ginomai* and is defined as “Only-born, i.e., sole – only (begotten, child) (James Strong, LL.D., S.T.D., The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, New Strong’s Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament, 59).

So, according to how the Bible uses it, and according to its definition in Strong’s Concordance, the word means “only-born.”

Some claim the Bible uses *monogenes* to mean “unique”:

*By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up
Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up
his only begotten [monogenes] son
(Hebrews 11:17).*

Even though the Bible is clear that *monogenes* means “born,” some conclude that since Abraham had more than one child, the word must mean “unique.” However, they fail to realise that Abraham had only one child from his wife Sarah. Isaac was “the only begotten” child of promise. He was the only son born to Abraham by a special divine promise, his only son from his wife Sarah.

Does that make him unique? Yes! But Isaac’s uniqueness does not negate that he was the only son born of Sarah.

So far, the word begotten (*monogenes*) clearly refers to birth. Why then, when it comes to Jesus, must the word have another meaning? Such would not be consistent Bible study.

Five times the Bible refers to Jesus as the only begotten Son. See John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9.

Allowing the Bible to be its own interpreter simplifies the understanding of Christ being the “only begotten” Son of God. This, no doubt, makes Him unique, just as Isaac was unique. There is no other Being in the whole universe who was “begotten” of God other than Christ. But again, Christ’s uniqueness does not negate the fact that He was begotten, or born, of God.

This is the point John was emphasising when he used the word *monogenes*.

Brought forth in the days of eternity

*In this was manifested the love of God toward us,
because that God sent his only begotten Son into the
world, that we might live through him (1 John 4:9).*

According to Scripture, Jesus did not become the only begotten when He was born of Mary. Jesus was the only begotten Son of God before He came into the world, meaning God had a Son prior to the incarnation. That is why the verse says, “God sent his only begotten Son into the world.” God had a Son to send.

Notice what Isaiah wrote:

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and
the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his
name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The*

How Is Jesus the Son of God?

*mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince
of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).*

For a child to be born, a Son had to be given. This is exactly what John said. And it is the same point Jesus made to Nicodemus:

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16).*

God had a Son before the incarnation. He loved you and me so much that He decided to send His Son into the world to save us. This happened when the child Jesus was born into the world through Mary.

For the Saviour to be born on earth, God had to give His only begotten Son. God had a Son to give. Jesus was the Son of God before He was born on earth as a child.

Here's another passage stating the same point:

Regarding Jesus:

*Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of
every creature [the firstborn before all creation;
begotten in the days of eternity]: for by him [by the
firstborn] were all things created, that are in heaven,
and that are in earth . . . all things were created by him,
and for him: and he [the firstborn] is before all things,
and by him all things consist
(Colossians 1:15–17).*

Jesus was the firstborn before anything was created. Notice how the Bible in Basic English (BBE) translates verse 15:

*Who is the image of the unseen God coming into
existence before all living things.*

Jesus came into existence, or was begotten, before all living things, or before all creation.

Micah wrote:

Bethlehem Ephrath, you are one of the smallest towns in the nation of Judah. But the LORD will choose one of your people to rule the nation—someone whose family goes back to ancient times (Micah 5:2 CEV).

His beginnings are from ancient times, from long, long ago (ERV).

Both the Old and New Testaments support the truth that the Son of God came into existence, or was begotten, back in the days of eternity before anything was created.

Consider Proverbs 8:

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth (Proverbs 8:22–25).

We established in a previous chapter that in this passage the Son of God was speaking about Himself under the title of wisdom. Note what Jesus said about Himself in verses 24 and 25:

When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth (Proverbs 8:25).

The phrase “brought forth” means begotten, or born. Here it is in other translations:

When there was no deep I was given birth, when there were no fountains flowing with water. Before the mountains were put in their places, before the hills was my birth (BBE).

When I was born, there were no oceans or springs of water. My birth was before mountains were formed or hills were put in place (CEV).

The Bible is clear that in the days of eternity, Jesus was brought forth (begotten, or born).

Regardless of how difficult it is to explain God’s speaking the creation into existence, resurrecting the dead, calming the sea, or healing the sick, the fact remains that it did happen. Our lack of understanding the “how” of it does not stop us from believing it.

And in the same way, Jesus was born in the days of eternity before anything was created. We do not understand the “how” of it, yet we believe it because the Bible says it happened!

Jesus is the Son of God because He was begotten of God in the days of eternity. God says it in his word, and so it is final.

Begotten = created?

When the Bible says Jesus was begotten, it does not mean He was created. “Born” and “created” are different words that describe two different things.

Adam and Lucifer (Satan) were both created. Jesus was not created; He was begotten (born) of God.

The fact that two different words are used indicates that the author had different meanings in mind. To be begotten does not mean to be created.

As human beings we understand what birth is. We understand that to be born of our parents means we are human like them; we inherit their qualities and nature. And, unfortunately, in this fallen world we inherit some of their weaknesses.

The point is, to be born means to come out of existing substance possessing its nature and qualities.

To be created, however, is to come out of nothing. Only God can create. We read that He spoke and it was. He created things out of nothing, such as Lucifer:

*Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou
wast created, till iniquity was found in thee
(Ezekiel 28:15).*

Jesus was begotten (born) of the Father and is a divine being having his Father's nature and qualities. Lucifer was not begotten but created and is a creature. There is a huge difference between the two. Lucifer is a creature. Jesus is the Creator.

How is Jesus the Son of God? He is the Son of God because He was begotten of God in the days of eternity before creation happened. That is what the Bible says.

And the good news is that God's love for you and me led Him to send His only begotten Son into the world. The begotten Son of God became the begotten Son of Man in order to save us.

Hallelujah!

How Is Jesus the Son of God?

What love, what mercy, what grace does the true gospel show—a gospel that speaks of an unfathomable love that led the God of the universe to send His only begotten and beloved Son to die for sinners like us.

Glory to God.

Now, let us examine the concepts of equality and sovereignty...

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 12

HOW IS JESUS THE SON OF GOD?

1. How do we know Jesus is the Son of God by birth?
2. What Scriptural evidence can you provide that Jesus is not just the “unique” Son of God?
3. What Bible passages suggest that Jesus was the Son of God before Bethlehem?
4. How are “begotten” and “created” different?
5. How can Jesus’s Sonship deepen our appreciation for God’s love?

CHAPTER 13

EQUALITY AND SOVEREIGNTY

We have established from Scripture that Jesus is the Son of God because He was begotten/brought forth from the Father in the days of eternity.

Now the question must be asked: Is Jesus divine—equal with God and worthy of our worship? The answer becomes clear when we understand what Jesus inherited from his Father.

Jesus inherited His Father's name

Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they (Hebrews 1:4).

Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him (Exodus 23:20, 21).

The Son of God inherited the name of God. He has God's name in Him.

Biblically, a name signifies:

- Nature – Genesis 5:2
- Character – Exodus 34:5–7
- Identity – Proverbs 30:4
- Reputation, fame, glory – Proverbs 22:1 and Ecclesiastes 7:1
- Authority – John 5:43; John 10:25; Matthew 21:23
- Power – Luke 9:1; 10:17; Acts 4:7

Jesus inherited His Father's life

Not only did the Son of God inherit the nature of God from his Father, He also had the same life as his Father:

For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself (John 5:26).

God the Father gave His Son the same life He had. An immortal, original, underived life. He gave it to Him to have in Himself. Meaning, the Father made His Son an Author of life, or a Giver of life.

Just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants to (John 5:21 CEV).

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).

For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell (Colossians 1:19).

It was God's will that His Son be divine.

Is Jesus equal with God?

Does that make Jesus equal with God?

Yes—it does. Paul wrote:

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God (Philippians 2:6).

What is the basis of Jesus's equality and divinity (Godship)? Is Jesus divine and equal with God because He is God the Son, the second member of the trinity? Or is He equal with God because He is the Son of God?

From what we have seen so far, the one God of the Bible is not a triunity of persons. It is God the Father. The Bible is very clear on that. He, the Father, is the Source of all things.

From the study of the verses presented so far, one cannot conclude a trinity.

If what Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 8:6 is true—that to us there is one God and it is the Father—then the conclusion can never be that the one God of the Bible is Father, Son, and Spirit. Either Paul was wrong or the trinitarian theology is wrong. They can't both be right.

This alone tells us that Jesus's equality with God cannot be based on Him being God the Son, the second member of the trinity.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God (John 5:18).

The Jews understood that Jesus's Sonship makes Him equal with God:

The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? (John 10:33–36).

According to the Jews, claiming to be the Son of God was equal to claiming equality with God and claiming to be divine.

Jesus inherited His Father's nature

A child is as much a human as its parents because it came out of them. It inherits their nature and life. This also applies to the Son of God. He inherited the nature and life (divinity) of his Father. Thus, Jesus has the God nature.

Consider what the book of Hebrews says:

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows (Hebrews 1:6–9).

Jesus is God because He is the Son of God. See Hebrews 1:8. His Sonship is the basis of His Godship.

The Jews were correct in understanding that His claim to Sonship equated a claim to divinity.

Do not miss what the rest of the passage says. Yes—Jesus is called God, but verse 9 says that the Father is the God of Jesus:

Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness (Hebrews 1:9).

Jesus is divine and is called God because he is the Son of God and inherited His Father's God nature. That is why He is worthy of our worship:

That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him (John 5:23).

Jesus asked His followers to believe in Him in the same way they believed in God, making Himself equally the object of true faith. He said:

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me (John 14:1).

So, to answer our question, Jesus is equal with God as my son is equal to me.

The Gospels clearly reveal the Sonship and divinity of Jesus. The Father and the Son are two individual divine beings possessing the God nature. Both have the power to raise the dead and to give life, to create and to judge. However, one, the Father, is the Source of the Other and of all things.

The Bible reveals that the Father is:

- The ultimate Source of all things – 1 Corinthians 8:6; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Romans 11:36; Ephesians 3:14, 15

- The God of Christ, in both His incarnation (Matthew 27:46) and in His resurrection –John 20:17; Ephesians 1:3; Hebrews 1:9; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 3:12
- Exclusively called the Most High—compare Psalm 78:17 with Isaiah 63:8–10)—while Jesus is called the “Son of the Most High” – Mark 5:7; Luke 8:28
- Is greater than all – John 10:29
- The Head of Christ – 1 Corinthians 11:3
- Above all – Ephesians 4:4–6
- Lord of heaven and earth – Matthew 11:25 and Luke 10:21

The Bible also reveals that Christ received from the Father:

- His life, power, and authority – John 5:26; Matthew 11:27; 28:18; John 5:22–27; 17:2
- His kingdom – Daniel 7:14; Luke 1:32; 1 Corinthians 15:24–28; Ephesians 1:22
- His right to receive worship – John 5:22, 23; Acts 2:36; Philippians 2:9, 10; Hebrews 1:6
- His name – Philippians 2:9; Hebrews 1:4
- All things – John 3:35; 13:3; Hebrews 1:2

Equality and sovereignty

Jesus is equal with His Father in nature and divinity. But this does not mean a trinity, neither does it negate the truth that God the Father is the Source of all things.

The Bible presents an equality between the Father and the Son, but it maintains the sovereignty of the Father:

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all
(1 Corinthians 15:28).

When sin is finally dealt with, Jesus will be subject unto the Father, that God the Father might be all in all because the Father is the Source of all things. He is the ultimate authority.

Jesus is the Son of God, begotten of Him in the days of eternity. This makes Him divine and equal with God in nature. Thus, He is referred to as God because He has the God nature.

The Bible is clear that Jesus's equality with the Father does not negate the Father's sovereignty. The Father is the one God of the Bible because He is the Source of all things, including the life of His Son. Therefore, the Son is equal with God and yet subject to God.

The Sonship of Jesus brings equality and sovereignty together. It explains His equality with God, His Father, and at the same time explains the sovereignty of the Father.

But what is Jesus's triune Sonship?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 13

EQUALITY AND SOVEREIGNTY

1. What did Jesus inherit from His Father?
2. What makes Jesus equal with God?
3. How does 1 Corinthians 8:6 disprove that God is a trinity?
4. What is the basis of Jesus's Godship?
5. What attributes do God and Jesus share, and what attributes do They not share?

CHAPTER 14

JESUS'S TRIUNE SONSHIP

The Sonship of Jesus has three phases: His divine Sonship (begotten as God), His human Sonship (begotten through Mary), and His resurrected Sonship (begotten from the dead).

Let's discuss how His threefold, or triune, Sonship affects the plan of salvation.

His divine Sonship (begotten as God)

The divine Sonship of Jesus is the first, most important, and most controversial phase of His Sonship.

Jesus, the Saviour of mankind, had to be a divine Being in whom is found life and righteousness. Thus, Jesus had to be 100 percent divine—otherwise there is no plan of salvation.

We have established from Scripture that Jesus is the Son of God because He was begotten in the days of eternity,

possessing the nature of God and equally divine with his Father.

*The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way,
before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting,
from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there
were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were
no fountains abounding with water. Before the
mountains were settled, before the hills was I
brought forth (Proverbs 8:22–25).*

“Possessed” means to have “gotten” a son. See Genesis 4:1.

“Brought forth” means to be born.

“Set up” means to be anointed.

According to this passage, back in the days of eternity, God the Father begat His Son and anointed him with His Spirit. Two things occurred: He was begotten and anointed.

We don’t know much about what happened back then, other than He was begotten and anointed.

His human Sonship (begotten through Mary)

The second phase of Christ’s Sonship began when He entered the human race.

In order to save mankind, God not only had to bring eternal life and righteousness into the human race, but He also had to restore the broken relationship. He had to reunite divinity and humanity.

That is why Jesus was “made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4). Jesus was begotten of God through Mary. Already the Son of God, He became the Son of Man. In Him, divinity and humanity were united.

Why was it necessary to be made like us?

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

To be the divine Son of God was not enough. He had to be born of a woman. He had to become a Man in order to be a merciful and faithful High Priest, in order to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Hence Jesus was born of Mary. This is the second time He was born, or begotten.

Jesus was begotten and anointed in Heaven. That is why He is the divine Son. This qualified Him to give humanity righteousness and eternal life. It qualified Him to represent God to Man.

Jesus was also begotten and anointed on the earth. He was anointed from birth by being born of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18), and He was anointed at His baptism with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16, 17). This made Him the divine-human Son. This qualified Him to represent Man to God and to reunite humanity with divinity.

His resurrected Sonship (begotten from the dead)

The third phase of Jesus's Sonship is His being begotten from the dead:

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed

*us from our sins in his own blood
(Revelation 1:5).*

*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the
beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all
things he might have the preeminence
(Colossians 1:18).*

God used the death and resurrection of Jesus to secure mankind's salvation.

*And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain,
and your faith is also vain (1 Corinthians 15:14).*

Through His death and resurrection, Christ conquered death:

*I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am
alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and
of death (Revelation 1:18).*

*Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling,
not according to our works, but according to his own
purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus
before the world began, but is now made manifest by
the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath
abolished death, and hath brought life and
immortality to light through the gospel
(2 Timothy 1:9, 10).*

It is important to understand that Jesus's death was dependent on and closely tied to His first birth in heaven. The ability to lay down His life was because He received it from the Father.

Jesus was and still is the divine son of God, possessing eternal life and the fullness of the Godhead. Regardless, He still died!

Had He not been begotten in the days of eternity, as some would have us believe, He would not have been able to die, to lay down His life and cease to exist. Christ's death and resurrection, His begetting from the dead, brought life to the human race. Through His death we were reconciled to God, but through His life we were given life (Romans 5:10).

Consider a fishing hook. Initially, it is in your hand. By attaching bait, it takes upon itself the form of food. As far as fish are concerned, it looks like food. Thrown in the water, it sinks deep and when reeled in, it brings up fish.

Jesus came from heaven. He took upon Himself the nature of man. He died. And when He was begotten, or raised from the dead, He brought with Him the whole human race. And as He sat on the right hand of God, the human race can be seated with Him in heavenly places.

Even when we were dead in sins, [God] hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:5, 6).

In Christ, the human race has been given life and made to sit in heavenly places.

Was Jesus anointed after His resurrection? The Bible tells us that Jesus was anointed on the day of Pentecost (Hebrews 1:8, 9; Acts 2:32, 33; 3:13).

The three times Jesus was begotten (born):

1. In heaven – fully and only divine – Proverbs 8:22, Psalms
2. On earth – divine and human in the likeness of sinful flesh – Romans 8:3

3. From the dead – divine and human with glorified flesh – 1 Corinthians 15:35–58

All three instances differ in their application.

As a Man, Jesus was born of Mary. He had a human mother and a divine Father.

His divine birth, however, was not like that. He did not have a mother. God the Father did not have a wife.

And his begetting from the dead was different as well.

None of the three phases of Jesus's Sonship happened in the same manner, but the underlying principle is the same, hence they are all illustrated as being begotten. The Sonship principle is applied to the three of them.

The reason the Sonship, or begetting, principle applies to Jesus in these three stages is because in all three, the Father gave life to His Son:

- In heaven, God was the Source of life for His Son – John 5:26
- In His incarnation, God was the Source of life for His Son – Luke 1:35
- And in His resurrection, God was the Source of life for His Son—God raised His Son – Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:10; 10:40; 17:3; 1 Peter 1:21

The first birth was the source of His divinity.

The second was the source of His humanity.

The third was the source of His glorified humanity.

He completed the deal for the human race.

He was also anointed three times:

- In heaven – Proverbs 8:23; Psalm 2:6, 7
- At birth (born of the Spirit) and at His baptism – Matthew 1:18 and Matthew 3:16, 17
- After His resurrection (Pentecost) – Hebrews 1:8, 9; Acts 2:32, 33; 3:13

This sealed the deal and unleashed God's blessing on humanity.

Jesus's Sonship is crucial to His identity and to the plan of salvation:

- His divine Sonship qualified Him to represent God to man
- His human Sonship qualified Him to represent man to God
- His resurrection qualified Him to present eternal life and righteousness to the human race—it qualified Him to fill all things – Ephesians 4:10

It is important to understand the threefold Sonship of Jesus and the three times Jesus was begotten. Surface readers will point to the fact that Jesus was begotten from Mary, or begotten from the dead, and say His resurrection, or birth on earth, is the reason why Jesus is called the Son of God.

This fallacy crumbles when the biblical teaching is understood that:

- The Sonship or begetting principle is applied to Jesus at three different stages: in heaven, at the Incarnation, and at the resurrection

- Each of those three differ in their application—the begetting was manifested differently
- Even though the manifestation or application differed, the underlying principle is the same: the Father gave life to His Son

The Sonship of Jesus indicates many things, one of which is the fact that He received His life from the Father.

When considering the second and third Sonship, no one debates the fact that He was both begotten and anointed. It is widely accepted that Jesus's begetting from Mary and from the dead indicates Him receiving life from God.

Why accept the last two and reinterpret the first one to mean something else? That cannot be. Scripture, logic, and consistency demands we apply the same principle to Jesus's first begetting, when He was brought forth from the Father in the days of eternity.

Jesus's Sonship is everything to us as a people. His first Sonship was the source of His divinity, the second was the source of His humanity, and the third was the source of His glorified humanity and our salvation.

Now let's take a look at which Messiah Jesus is . . .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 14

JESUS'S TRIUNE SONSHIP

1. What are the three phases of Jesus's Sonship?
2. Which phase is most important—and most controversial?
3. What two things happened to Jesus in the first phase?
4. Why did Jesus have to become a human Son?
5. What did Jesus's resurrection bring to the human race?

CHAPTER 15

WHICH MESSIAH?

Even when considering that Jesus is the Son of God, begotten in the days of eternity, equal with God in divinity, worthy of our worship, and begotten three times (in heaven, in the Incarnation, and at the resurrection), some still say, The Sonship of Jesus is a metaphor. They say, Yes—the Bible does say He is the Son of God and that He is begotten of God, but this is a metaphor; this is God is speaking to us humans in a way we can understand.

True enough, God is speaking to us in human language, speaking in a simple way that is understandable. Why didn't Jesus teach what today's theologians teach? Why did neither God nor Jesus even hint that there might be a trinity?

When God said, "This is my beloved Son" (Matthew 3:17; 17:5), and Jesus said "I am the Son of God" (Matthew 27:43; John 10:36), They meant what They said and said what They

meant! In simple human language God was telling man that Jesus is His Son and that He, God, is the Father of His Son whom He begat. There is no metaphor involved in this relationship!

Another evidence of Jesus's literal Sonship is His claim to Messiahship, and the Jews' reaction to it.

Messiah

The word "Messiah" comes from the Hebrew word masiah, meaning "anointed." It is translated into English as "Messiah" only two times in the Old Testament:

Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined (Daniel 9:25, 26).

The same word is used to refer to many people in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament says that the anointed priest was masiah (Leviticus 4:3), that the king was the Lord's anointed masiah (1 Samuel 24:6), and that even Cyrus was the LORD's anointed masiah (Isaiah 45:1).

To simply say Jesus was the Messiah is not good enough. That was not enough to make Him the promised Messiah.

Mark of the Messiah

Consider what Jesus said in relation to the promised Messiah:

*Saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They
say unto him, The Son of David
(Matthew 22:42).*

Notice what Jesus asked them. What do you believe about the Messiah, the Anointed One? He didn't ask them, What do you believe He will look like? or, What do you believe He will do? or, What do you believe will happen to Him? He focused their attention on the most important aspect about the Messiah: Whose Son is He? The question wasn't about being another king, prophet, or even a good man. The unique aspect about this Messiah was His Sonship!

Naturally, the Jews responded with, He is the Son of David! They believed the Messiah would be another anointed man—probably a mighty king such as David—who would conquer Rome and free Jerusalem.

Consider Jesus's response:

*How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying,
The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right
hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David
then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was
able to answer him a word, neither durst any man
from that day forth ask him any more questions
(Matthew 22:43–46).*

Jesus pointed out that the promised Messiah would not be a normal man and not purely human. King David, under inspiration, said, Jehovah said to My Lord—to Adonai—sit thou on my right hand.

The promised Messiah would be seated on the highest throne in the universe. He would not be just another king, priest, or messenger of the Lord. He would be divine and would be seated on the right hand of the throne of God.

The key to understand who the Messiah would be is closely tied with understanding whose Son He is.

The mark of His messiahship is His Sonship!

More than human Sonship

When the Pharisees said He is the son of David, Jesus told them, No—you are wrong. He told them there is much more to the Messiah's Sonship than His Sonship to David. Although Matthew says:

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1).

Why was Jesus not satisfied with the Jews' answer regarding the Messiah's Sonship? Matthew, under inspiration, said Jesus is the Son of David, a term used many times in relation to Jesus. So, why was Jesus not satisfied with the same title as an answer to His question?

Consider what Paul said to the Romans:

Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:3, 4).

Paul said that concerning His flesh, Jesus is the Son of David, but as far as His divinity and holiness are concerned, He is the Son of God, to which His resurrection from the dead testifies.

Which Messiah?

When talking to the Pharisees, Jesus had a specific Sonship in His mind. If the Messiah is only the Son of David, well, He is no different than the other messiahs.

Solomon, the king of Israel, was the literal son of David and was anointed as a king. He was Solomon the anointed masiah, or christ.

If the Christship, or Messiahship, of Jesus is based on His human birth, then He is no different than the other anointed people.

However, Jesus was the Christ. His anointing was based on a different Sonship—a divine Sonship.

That is the reason Jesus asked them, What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?

Two parables

The same day, talking to the same people, Jesus gave two parables that illustrated the answer very clearly:

Parable of the Tenants – Matthew 21:33–41

But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him (Matthew 21:37–39).

Parable of the Wedding Feast – Matthew 22:1–14

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son (Matthew 22:2).

Both parables are intended to convey the same message. The message revolves around God sending His Son, and the world rejecting and killing His Son.

It was in this context that Jesus asked the Jews, Whose Son do you think He is?

Believing that Jesus is only the Son of David, the son of a human being, prevented the Jews from understanding that Jesus is the Son of the Most High God. Jesus wanted them to understand that the promised Messiah will be the Son of the Most High God, hence divine.

Jesus's Messiahship and divinity is intrinsically linked with "whose Son He is."

The followers of Jesus understood this point:

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:13–16).

Not only are You the Christ, the anointed One, but you are also the Christ, the Son of God. You are not just an anointed priest, king, or even a prophet. You are the anointed Son of God. This is mentioned many times in the Gospels, including: Mark 1:1; Luke 4:41; John 6:69; 11:27; 20:31; Acts 8:37.

The people who confessed this not only highlighted that Jesus is the Christ/Messiah but also specified what they meant: "whose Son He is." "Thou art the Christ, the Son of

the living God,” highlighting that He is the Son of God.

A real or metaphorical Son?

Why did Jesus’s Sonship annoy the Jews?

The Jews believed themselves to be the sons of God. See Exodus 4:22; Isaiah 64:8; John 8:41.

King Solomon, for example, would have had the right to be called “Solomon, the messiah, the son of David, the son of God.”

If Jesus’s claim of Sonship was a metaphor, or referring to a spiritual ancestry (adoption), then he was not claiming anything new, in that the Jews also claimed sonship! Why did the Jews want to kill Jesus when he claimed to be the Son of God? It was because he applied a different meaning than what they understood:

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me (John 8:42).

Jesus used three different verbs in this verse:

- “Proceeded forth”
- “Came from”
- “Sent”

Consider what the commentator John Gill wrote about John 8:42:

For I proceeded forth; and came from God; the former of these phrases is observed by many learned men to be used by the Septuagint, of a proper natural birth, as in

Genesis 15:4; and here designs the eternal generation of Christ, as the Son of God, being the only begotten of the Father, and the Son of the Father in truth and love; and the other is to be understood of his mission from him, as Mediator
(“Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible,”
John 8:42 Commentaries, Biblehub.com).

This unbelievable doctrine of the “eternal generation of Christ” was invented to attempt to explain how Jesus could be begotten of the Father in the days of eternity as Scripture says, and at the same time be coeternal with the Father as the trinity says. Jesus was begotten in the days of eternity, a one-time event, not an ongoing process as eternal generation proposes.

Jesus clearly said: I was born of the Father, I came from Him, and He sent me.

The Jews understood what He meant by claiming to be the Son of God. They understood He was saying “I am the Son of God because I was born of God in heaven.” And that meant he was divine. That is why they did not like His claim of Sonship to God and wanted to kill Him:

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God
(John 5:18).

Again, the Jews clearly understood that Jesus’s claim to be the Son of God and that God was his Father was literal, not metaphorical. They understood he was making Himself divine and equal with God, and for that they wanted to kill Him.

Which Messiah?

This explains why when Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, the Jews accused Him of blasphemy:

Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? (John 10:36).

They truly understood what He meant.

Now consider what Jesus said in His prayer:

For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me (John 17:8).

They have known surely that I came out from God, that I proceeded forth from God, that I was born from God.

It was important that the disciples be convinced that Jesus came out from God because it is the identifying mark of the promised Messiah and is the basis of His divinity.

Proving His divinity

Twenty-first century Christians approach the scriptures backwards because they already believe in the trinity and divinity of Jesus. They read the scriptures with a preconceived idea that Jesus is divine, that He is God the Son and coeternal with the Father. Thus, when they read the words about Him being the Son of God and begotten of God, they interpret them backwards, trying to make them mean He was not literally begotten because He is God the Son, part of the trinity.

That is not how one should approach the scriptures—especially the stories in the Gospels. One should approach from the writer's perspective, not a preconceived idea.

Before they were chosen, the apostles did not believe Jesus was divine. His words and teachings were how He convinced them of His divinity. Their willingness to be convinced is why He chose them and taught them.

How did Jesus explain to them that He was divine? Did He say, “I am God”? “I am divine”? Or, “I have the nature of God”?

There is no record in the Gospels of Jesus making such a claim.

Jesus convinced His followers of His divinity by teaching them, and making sure they understood, that He is the Son of God, begotten of God, hence possessing the same nature as His Father.

He taught them He was divine but never said, “I am God.” He never said, “I am divine.” He simply taught them that He is the literal Son of God.

The disciples, and all those who believed their words, accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah, as the begotten Messiah, as the Son of God. That is why they often referred to Him as “Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Only begotten

And that is why John said Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. He understood that Jesus is the Son of God in a different sense than we are the sons of God.

John understood that Jesus is the literal Son of God in a different sense than born again Christians are sons of God. Thus, he called him the only begotten Son of God!

For Jesus to be the true Messiah, He had to be:

Which Messiah?

- Jesus the Anointed – Christ
- And Jesus the Son of David – from the seed of David
- And begotten Son of God – born of God and possessing the nature of God

The fact that Jesus is the promised Messiah negates the idea that His Sonship is a metaphor.

Either Jesus is the literal Son of God, the true Messiah, possessing the nature of God, or He is not the Messiah at all.

One must decide which Messiah to believe in. Either it is the promised Messiah—the literal Son of God—or it is another Messiah who has been interpreted wrongly as a metaphorical son.

Correctly understanding the literal Sonship of Jesus is to understand that Jesus was begotten of God in the days of eternity, inheriting the nature of God. Thus, His Sonship to God is the mark of His Messiahship.

By denying Christ's Sonship and turning it into a metaphor, twenty-first century Christians are destroying the mark of his Messiahship. If Jesus is not the literal Son of God, then He is not the promised Messiah!

Which Messiah do you believe in—the promised Messiah who is the literal Son of God, or another messiah who is not the literal Son of God?

Now let's explore what was likely Paul's greatest fear . . .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 15

WHICH MESSIAH?

1. Why is it not good enough to say that Jesus is the Messiah?
2. Why was Jesus not satisfied with being known as the Son of David?
3. Why did the Jews in Jesus's day get so angry at His claim to Sonship?
4. How did Jesus prove His divinity to His disciples?
5. What negates the idea that Jesus's Sonship is a metaphor?

CHAPTER 16

ANOTHER JESUS

In previous chapters, we have biblically established that:
There is one God. He is God the Father, not a trinity or a committee, of three.

Jesus is the Son of God, not God the Son, the second member of the trinity. He is the Son of God because he was begotten of God in the days of eternity and is therefore equal with God in divinity.

Nowhere does the Bible teach a three-in-one God. Misunderstanding Scripture has Christians worshipping a different god than is mentioned in the Bible.

In light of this, Paul's warning to the Corinthians becomes very relevant:

*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled
Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be
corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he*

that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him
(2 Corinthians 11:3, 4).

Paul, under the inspiration of God, warned the Corinthians about a deception that would introduce a new Jesus and a new spirit, which in turn would give them a different gospel.

Notice the identifying mark about the true Jesus. Paul said: “Another Jesus, whom we have not preached.” This means that Paul preached the true Jesus.

Knowing the Jesus Paul preached identifies any counterfeit.

According to Paul, who is Jesus?

And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God (Acts 9:20).

God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord
(1 Corinthians 1:9).

For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea
(2 Corinthians 1:19).

The Jesus Paul preached to the Corinthians is the Son of God, not “God the Son.”

Paul preached a Jesus who is the Son of God, not a Jesus who is part of a God or who is the one God of the Bible:

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by

*whom are all things, and we by him
(1 Corinthians 8:6).*

There is only one God, and He is the Father of Whom are all things (the Source), and there is only one Lord, and He is Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things.

According to Paul, the one God is not Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Son of the one true God:

*But I would have you know, that the head of every man
is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and
the head of Christ is God (1 Corinthians 11:3).*

The head of Christ is God. The Jesus Paul preached to the Corinthians is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Bible is the head of Christ.

*Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort
(2 Corinthians 1:3).*

Repeatedly Paul taught the Corinthians that the God of the Bible is the Father of Jesus Christ, implying that Jesus is the Son of the God of the Bible.

Paul warned the Corinthians about another Jesus, one who is not the Son of God. This raises the question, has another Jesus been introduced into Christianity, a Jesus which Paul did not preach?

Denying Christ

The majority of Christendom believes and worships Jesus, but not the Jesus Paul spoke about and worshiped. Christendom has accepted a Jesus who is not the Son of God in the fullest sense. The majority of Christendom believes in the trinity, in tritheism, or in modalism (Jesus only).

All of these teachings deny the reality of Christ's Sonship.

Modalism denies the existence of more than one being, thus the Sonship is only a metaphor, or a role play. Jesus could not be the Son because there is no other being to father Him!

Tritheism teaches that the Father, Son, and Spirit are three separate gods. No one came out of the other, hence denying the Sonship of Jesus. If Jesus was not begotten of Another, He could not be the Son of Another.

The trinity teaches that Jesus is God the Son, the second person in the Godhead and coeternal with the Father. And if He is coeternal, He could not have been begotten at some stage in the days of eternity as the Bible teaches. If Jesus never came out of the Father, and was never really begotten of the Father, then He could not be a real Son—a metaphor, yes, but not real.

Examples of what the trinity has led teachers to teach:

“The sonship of Jesus, however, is not ontological but functional. In the plan of salvation each member of the Trinity has accepted a particular role” (Gerhard Pfandl, “The Trinity in Scripture,” Biblical Research Institute, June 1999, 3, emphasis mine).

As God, the person we now know of as Jesus Christ had no beginning, was not begotten, was not a Son, and did not come into being. . . . But as man and as God's Son He was not eternal, He did have a beginning, He was begotten, this being the same time Mary had a Son. Therefore, the doctrine of eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ is irreconcilable to reason, is unscriptural, and is contradictory to itself (Finis Jennings Dake, Dake's Annotated Reference Bible, Comment on Acts 13:33, as

quoted in George W. Zeller and Renald E. Showers, *The Eternal Sonship of Christ: A Timely Defense of this Vital Biblical Doctrine*, March 2008, 31, 32).

The Scripture nowhere calls Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God, and He is never called Son at all prior to the incarnation, except in prophetic passages in the Old Testament. The term “Son” itself is a functional term, as is the term “Father” and has no meaning apart from time ... Many heresies have seized upon the confusion created by the illogical “eternal Sonship” or “eternal generation” theory of Roman Catholic theology, unfortunately carried over to some aspects of Protestant theology. Finally; there cannot be any such thing as eternal Sonship ... the word “Son” definitely suggests inferiority (Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1985), 117, 118).

Fifth, the father-son image cannot be literally applied to the divine Father-Son relationship within the Godhead. The Son is not the natural, literal Son of the Father. A natural child has a beginning, while within the Godhead the Son is eternal. The term “Son” is used metaphorically when applied to the Godhead. It conveys the ideas of distinction of persons within the Godhead and the equality of nature in the context of an eternal, loving relationship (Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “A Question of Sonship,” *Adventist World*, November 2015, 42; also published in Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, “A Question of Sonship,” *Seventh-day Adventist Church Biblical Research Institute website*, November 30, 2015, <https://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/materials/a-question-of-sonship/>).

The Jesus preached and believed upon in most denominations is God the Son, a divine being who was never begotten of the Father in eternity but whose Sonship is just a metaphor—a role play.

This is a different Jesus from the One Paul preached. Based on the Word of God, it is obvious that “another Jesus” has been introduced into Christianity. And the sad reality is that most Christians have been deceived into receiving him.

Through the trinity doctrine, Satan has managed to introduce another Jesus to God’s people, a Jesus who is not the Son of God.

Gospel implications

The concept of Jesus as only a metaphorical Son impacts the biblical gospel.

Consider this passage:

Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted (Hebrews 2:17, 18).

Jesus’s experience in humanity gave Him the experience or qualification needed to be a “faithful high priest” and “to succour [help] them that are tempted.”

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we

may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:15, 16).

We are tempted, and Christ, our High Priest, was tempted. He was tempted and overcame temptation. He condemned sin in the flesh.

In order for Jesus to condemn sin in the flesh, two things had to be in place:

1. He had to take our nature upon Himself, not the nature of angels
2. He had to be tempted—to come face to face with sin and conquer it

Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity (Hebrews 5:2).

Paul meant that Jesus was subject to like passions as His people are. His personal, experimental knowledge with the weaknesses and temptations of the flesh led Him to have an empathetic understanding of the weaknesses and failures of others, and qualified Him to give counsel and help to those in temptation.

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

Jesus was made perfect through suffering. See Hebrews 2:10. He became the Author of eternal salvation.

His life on earth qualified Him to be the author of eternal salvation. It was during His life on earth that He conquered sin and learned obedience through suffering. He

experienced what it means to be a human being, what it means to be tempted with sin, what it means to be tempted to walk away from God's will and plan.

His temptation played a major part in qualifying Him to be the High Priest of His people, and it was a major part of the gospel preached. The most cherished doctrine in Christianity, the trinity, denies this aspect of the gospel. It turns the temptations of Christ into a mockery.

Tempting God

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man (James 1:13).

James tells us God cannot be tempted. Yet the Bible says Jesus was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

If Jesus were God in the fullest sense that God is God, and if Jesus were the second person in the trinity, God the Son, then how could God be tempted to sin against Himself?

God makes the laws, and therefore it is impossible for God to sin or even be tempted to sin because God cannot sin against Himself.

According to the trinity, the one God of the Bible is God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Not just one person, or two persons, but three persons making up His one substance. He is the indivisible God. So, when James says that God cannot be tempted with evil, according to the trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit cannot be tempted with evil.

Question: If God is a trinity, then how could God be tempted to sin against Himself? Obviously, He cannot.

John Ankerburg, in answer to the question “Could Jesus have sinned?,” quotes the following theologian:

If it be argued that Christ’s humanity seemed to act separately in matters of knowledge, human weakness, and limitations, this may be conceded; yet not without a reminder that, though His humanity might seem to act independently in certain ways which involved no moral issues, because of the unity of His Person His humanity could not sin without necessitating God to sin. . . .

This vexing problem is thus reduced to the simple question whether God could sin; for Jesus Christ is God. If it be admitted that God cannot—not merely would not—sin, it must be conceded that Christ could not—not merely would not—sin. It remains only to observe that . . . He is “the same yesterday, and today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8)” (Excerpted from The Facts on “The Last Temptation of Christ,” 15–18; as quoted in “Could Jesus Sin?” The John Ankerberg Show, August 23, 2013, <https://jashow.org/articles/could-jesus-sin/>).

Notice how this Christian website answers the question, Could Jesus have sinned?

Answer: “. . . The clear teaching of Scripture is that Jesus was impeccable—Jesus could not have sinned. . . . He remained sinless because God is incapable of sinning. It is against His very nature (Matthew 4:1; Hebrews 2:18; 4:15; James 1:13). Sin is by definition a trespass of the Law. God created the Law, and the Law is by nature what God would or would not do; therefore, sin is anything that God would not do by His very nature” (“Could Jesus Have Sinned?,” Got Questions, <https://www.gotquestions.org/could-Jesus-have-sinned.html>).

If we follow the trinity to its logical conclusion, we must teach that Jesus could not have sinned because Jesus is God the Son; He is the second person of the trinity. Not all trinitarians believe the same regarding this issue. The only reason a trinitarian would believe Jesus could have sinned and could have fallen is he has not logically thought through his belief. If Jesus is the second person in the three-in-one God, then what would have happened to “God” had Jesus sinned?

How could James be accurate in saying “God (three-in-one) cannot be tempted with evil” if “God the Son” was tempted with sin? It just cannot be!

If God is a trinity, Jesus’s wilderness temptations were just a play, a metaphor, and it didn’t matter what the temptations were because there was no risk. They weren’t real temptations like your temptations because Jesus could not have sinned.

If Jesus could not have sinned, then God did not really risk much because Jesus could not have fallen.

The trinity denies the reality of this aspect of the gospel. It turns the temptations of Jesus, and the risk God took in sending His Son, into a mockery, a metaphor.

A belief in the trinity, turns . . .

- God’s Fatherhood into a metaphor
- Christ’s Sonship into a metaphor
- God’s immeasurable sacrifice in sending His Son into a metaphor
- Christ’s suffering and battle with sin into a metaphor

Nothing can be further from the truth. Christ’s incarnation

placed Him in a position where He could have sinned. He could have fallen because He fought a real battle with sin.

That is why He prayed, “Not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).

Jesus’s Sonship impacts other aspects of the gospel. If the foundation is wrong, the outcome will be wrong. If the Sonship is real, the rest of the gospel is real. If the Sonship is a metaphor, the rest of the gospel is a metaphor.

The testing question is this: Is Jesus the literal Son of God, or is He not? Paul said He is, Paul’s audience believed He is, and Jesus Himself said He is. See John 10:36.

How does the trinity doctrine impact the cross?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 16

ANOTHER JESUS

1. What did Paul fear the Corinthian believers would do? See 2 Corinthians 11:3, 4.
2. List three Bible passages that tell us that Jesus is not the one true God.
3. How are many Christians denying Christ today?
4. What two things had to be in place for Jesus to condemn sin in the flesh?
5. How do James 1:13 and Hebrews 4:15 disprove that God is a trinity?

CHAPTER 17

THE CROSS AND THE TRINITY

In the previous chapter, we discussed how a metaphorical Sonship leads to a metaphorical battle between Christ and sin. In this chapter, we will examine the impact of the trinity and Christ's metaphorical Sonship on His death.

The Bible says that the wages of sin is death. It is eternal separation from God. If Jesus is God in the same sense as God is God, the second member of the trinity, then how could Jesus die an eternal death?

Keep in mind that the trinity teaches a three-in-one God:

“We must confess that the Trinity is one indivisible God and that the distinctions of the Persons do not destroy the divine unity. This unity of God is expressed by saying that he is one substance. Nevertheless, in the divine unity there are three co-eternal and co-equal Persons, who, though distinct, are the One undivided and adorable God” (Raoul Dederen, “Reflections on the Doctrine of the Trinity,” Reprinted from

Andrews University Seminar Studies, Volume 8, 1970, No. 1, 16).

“The three persons share one nature. Each person of the Godhead is by nature and essence God, and the fullness of the deity dwells in each of them. On the other hand, each person of the Godhead is inseparably connected to the other two” (Ekkehardt Mueller, “Scripture Applied—A Bible Study,” Reflections, a BRI Newsletter, July 2008).

“In Scripture God has revealed His transcendent nature as Trinity, namely three distinct divine Persons who act directly and historically in history and constituting the one divine Trinitarian being” (Dr. Fernando Canale, Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology, Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopaedia, Volume 12, 138).

Think about it in terms of these colours:

Three light colours—green, red, and blue—are needed to make white light. In the same way, the trinity doctrine teaches that the three persons of the Godhead are needed to make up the trinity, the one divine trinitarian being, the one God of the Bible.

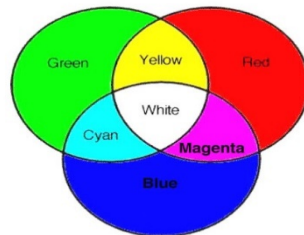


Figure 3. Additive colour mixtures of blue, green and red to produce cyan, magenta, yellow and white.

Consider what the Bible says about Christ’s death:

*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures
(1 Corinthians 15:4).*

Isaiah prophesied, “Thou shalt make his soul [his life, his person] an offering for sin” (Isaiah 53:10).

Notice that Isaiah was specific. He did not say, You will make His body an offering for sin but rather His soul—His life, His spirit.

Peter quoted from Psalm 16:10 where David prophesied about Jesus:

*Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt
thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption
(Acts 2:27).*

David, Isaiah, and Peter were specific in what they said. They highlighted that the death of Jesus extended to His soul. It was not a make-believe death. It was not only a bodily death; all that comprised Christ remained in the grave.

Paul highlighted what type of spirit was laid down on the cross:

*How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through
the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God,
purge your conscience from dead works to serve the
living God? – Hebrews 9:14*

Who with an eternal Spirit – WNT

Who, through his eternal Spirit – 20CNT

So, according to the Bible, the spirit, or life, that Jesus laid down on the cross was His eternal spirit. In other words, on the cross there was a divine and eternal sacrifice. It was not a mere human sacrifice; it was the divine Son of God who died.

Through His death, Christ destroyed the devil and death:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14).

According to the Bible, it was the divine Son of God who died on the cross:

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death (Revelation 1:18).

The death of Christ is foundational to the gospel. However, if we follow the trinity to its logical conclusion, we would have to believe that Jesus, God in the fullest sense, the second person of the trinity, could not have died because God cannot die.

“The trinity teaches he is the indivisible God ... This unity of God is expressed by saying that he is one substance. ... the One undivided and adorable God” (See Raoul Dederen quote above).

As a result of the trinity, some theologians have come to believe:

Augustine

“No dead man can raise himself. He [Christ] only was able to raise Himself, who though His Body was dead, was not dead. For He raised up that which was dead. He raised up Himself, who in Himself was alive, but in His Body that was to be raised was dead” (St. Augustine, Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament, trans. R. G. MacMullen, as quoted in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 6. Edited by Philip Schaff, 656).

Christian Apologetics and Research Ministry

“Did Jesus raise Himself from the grave or did God do it?”

So, while Christ’s body was dead, He remained alive (since God cannot die). . . . So, would it have been possible that Jesus through His divine nature even while His human body lay dead could have displayed His power through resurrection? Absolutely. . . . The act of raising Jesus from the dead was not the operation merely of one person within the Trinity but was a cooperative act done by the power of the divine substance. The fact that the Bible teaches that God raised Jesus from the dead and that Jesus raised Himself is yet another testament to Christ’s divinity” (Brad Huston, “Did Jesus raise Himself from the grave or did God do it?,” CARM, February 1, 2011, <https://carm.org/about-jesus/did-jesus-raise-himself-from-the-grave-or-did-god-do-it/>).

William Lane Craig

Q&A: Was God Dead for three days?

So, you can see that the divine nature, the divine person of Christ, is not in any way extinguished in the death of the human nature of Christ on the cross (William Lane Craig Q&A: Was God Dead for Three Days?, YouTube video, 1:24).

The trinity concludes that the one God of the Bible is made up of three persons and cannot change. “I am the LORD, I change not” (Malachi 3:6). Then, how could a third of Him die, cease to exist? It cannot be.

This impossibility is why it is proposed that Jesus was alive even though His body was dead. And they say the evidence is that He raised Himself.

The New Testament states twenty-three times that God raised His Son from the dead. And not even once does the Bible say that Jesus raised Himself:

Twenty-three verses stating the Father raised His Son:

Acts 2:24; 2:30–32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30; 13:34; 13:37; 17:31; Romans 4:24; 6:4; 8:11; 10:9; 1 Corinthians 6:14; 15:15; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:19, 20; Colossians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 1:21

The idea that Jesus raised Himself is based on one misunderstood verse that could be easily clarified by reading it from another translation. In the King James Version, the word “received” is translated as “take,” which has led to some confusion! Let’s read it in the CEV:

The Father loves me, because I give up my life, so that I may receive it back again. No one takes my life from me. I give it up willingly! I have the power to give it up and the power to receive it back again, just as my Father commanded me to do (John 10:17, 18 CEV).

This translation of the verse harmonises perfectly with the twenty-three verses stating God raised Jesus from the dead.

Here is another statement from another Christian organisation. Note how the reasoning is due to the trinity doctrine:

Christian Broadcasting Network

When Jesus Died on the Cross, Did He Also Die Spiritually?

Of course, God cannot die either. If God died, the universe would fall apart. And Jesus is God. If the Spirit

of Jesus died, then God Himself would have died, and the whole universe would have collapsed. . . . If Jesus—the Son of God and second Person of the Trinity—were truly separated in spirit from the Father, then God Himself would be torn asunder and would cease to be—another impossibility. . . . His Spirit was neither dead nor separated from God. Instead, He was continuing to please and serve the Father, as He is at this moment (Pat Robertson, “When Jesus Died on the Cross, Did He Also Die Spiritually?,” Christian Broadcasting Network, June 8, 1992).

You cannot have the trinity doctrine and the atonement in the same reasoning. Either the trinity is true and we have only a human sacrifice, or the trinity is false and we have a divine sacrifice.

A human sacrifice is not enough to save us—otherwise why couldn’t a person die for humanity? Why couldn’t any good human die for humanity? Why was there a need for God to send His divine Son to die in order to save humanity? A mere human sacrifice destroys the atonement and the gospel.

Plainly, the trinity denies the death of Christ. If Christ did not die, if the Son of God did not make His soul an offering for sin, then there is no divine sacrifice, only a human one. And if that is the case, then there is no gospel, no forgiveness of sin, no atonement, no reconciliation with God. There is no plan of salvation.

Paul said:

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared (Hebrews 5:7).

If Jesus could not—not would not, but could not die—as the trinity teaches, then this verse is meaningless. God saved Him from death by resurrecting Him from the death. But how could God save His Son from death when it was impossible for the Son to die?

The trinity turns the death of God's Son into a metaphor. It reduces the divine sacrifice into a human sacrifice. It turns God and His Son's amazing sacrifice into a role play: while Jesus's body was dead, He was alive elsewhere watching things unfold.

Again, if the foundation is wrong, if the Sonship of Christ is a metaphor, the whole gospel becomes a mockery, a great theatrical act.

God's love for us is real!

Christ's Sonship to the Father is real!

Christ's battle with sin is real!

Christ's death on the cross is real!

God's sacrifice for us was real!

Now, let us examine how the trinity doctrine impacts our view of the Holy Spirit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 17

THE CROSS AND THE TRINITY

1. What did David, Isaiah, and Peter say about Jesus's death?
2. What kind of sacrifice did Jesus make on the cross—only human or divine and eternal?
3. What problem does the trinity doctrine raise regarding Jesus's death?
4. Does the Bible say that Jesus raised Himself from the dead or that His Father raised Him?
5. How does a metaphorical Sonship of Christ impact the gospel?

CHAPTER 18

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

According to the trinity, “God the Holy Spirit” is not the Father, neither is he the Son. He is the third person in the Godhead—a different and separate person from the Father and from the Son. However, this cannot be because it has been established that the one God of the Bible is the Father, not a committee of three.

Is the Holy Spirit a different person than the Father and the Son? Consider these questions:

- What does the term “spirit” mean in the Bible?
- Is the Spirit of Jesus a different person than Jesus?
- Is the Spirit of the Father a different person than the Father?
- Who is the Holy Spirit?

What does the term “spirit” mean in the Bible?

The scriptures teach that the word “spirit” means wind. See Genesis 3:8; Isaiah 7:2; John 3:8. It also means breath. See Isaiah 42:5; Matthew 27:50. It also means the life force of a person, including the psyche or mind. See Judges 15:18, 19; Proverbs 18:14; Luke 1:46, 47.

When the Bible uses the term “spirit” in reference to a person, it always refers to the nonphysical aspect of the person himself—his own life, his own mind, his own person.

For example, when Jesus raised the ruler’s daughter:

*And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway:
and he commanded to give her
meat [food] (Luke 8:55).*

What came back into her? It was her own spirit, her own life.

*And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar
Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his
spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him
(Daniel 2:1; see also Acts 17:16 and
2 Corinthians 7:13).*

“His spirit was troubled” means Nebuchadnezzar was troubled. His thoughts, his mind, his heart was troubled, and hence he could not sleep. To understand the term “his spirit” to refer to someone else other than Nebuchadnezzar himself is neither scriptural nor logical.

So, in the Bible, the spirit of a person is the non-physical, intangible aspect of that person. It is not a different person. My spirit is not someone else other than me. It is me.

Even though most if not all Christians agree on this, because of preconceived trinitarian thinking, when the term “spirit”

is used in reference to God and Christ, many Christians interpret it to mean a different person other than Them.

This is neither logical nor biblical.

Is the Spirit of Jesus a different person?

The Bible presents the relationship between Jesus and His spirit in the same way as the relationship between man and his spirit.

Notice these verses:

*And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit
that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto
them, why reason ye these things in your hearts?
(Mark 2:8).*

Obviously, it was Jesus who perceived, not someone else called His spirit.

*And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth
this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you,
There shall no sign be given unto this generation
(Mark 8:12).*

Again, it was Jesus who sighed deeply, not someone else called His spirit.

When the Bible says, “Jesus perceived in his spirit” and “sighed deeply in his spirit,” we are to understand it in the same way as when the Bible says regarding Paul: “His spirit was stirred in him” (Acts 17:16).

The Bible does not refer to the spirit of Jesus as someone other than Him. It is talking about Jesus Himself—His own person and life, His non-physical, intangible aspect.

As Nebuchadnezzar’s spirit was Nebuchadnezzar himself,

the ruler's daughter's spirit was her own life, so Christ's spirit is who He is, His own life and person.

Notice also this verse:

*Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last
(Luke 23:46 ESV).*

When Jesus died on the cross, He committed His own spirit or life into the Father's hands—not someone else named "my spirit." That would be silly to believe! Jesus committed His own life and spirit to the Father.

Logic demands that Jesus's prayer to the Father be understood in the same way Stephen's prayer is understood:

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit (Acts 7:59).

Neither Stephen nor Jesus was referring to another person called "my spirit."

Likewise, when Bible authors refer to the spirit of Jesus, or to the spirit of the Son of God, they are referring to the life or person of Jesus Christ Himself, not someone else.

With this in mind, please note what God sends into the heart of the believer:

*And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying,
Abba, Father (Galatians 4:6).*

This verse is clearly saying that God sends the spirit, life, or person of His Son into our hearts. And that is why the Bible repeatedly refers to Christ in you. See Romans 8:10; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:17;

Colossians 1:27; 1 John 4:4, Revelation 3:20).

When the Bible refers to the spirit of Jesus, it is referring to Jesus Himself, not to a third entity different than Jesus Himself. This is a foundational truth on which a biblical understanding of the Holy Spirit is built.

Is the Spirit of the Father a different person than the Father?

Or is it the Father Himself?

For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:11 ESV).

In this verse, Paul was comparing man's relationship with his spirit, with God's relationship with His spirit. He was saying, No one knows what I am thinking except my spirit. And in the same way, no one understands the thoughts of God except His spirit.

God's spirit is to God, the same as man's spirit is to man. God's spirit is His own person, His own life, and His own presence—not someone else.

At Jesus's baptism, the Bible says that the Spirit of God descended on Jesus. See Matthew 3:16. It was not "God the Spirit" but the Spirit of God.

Later in the Gospels, Jesus said, "The Father is in me" (John 10:38; see also John 14:10, 11).

At the conception of Jesus, the angel told Mary:

The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that

*holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the
Son of God (Luke 1:35).*

The Holy Ghost in this verse refers to the Spirit of the Father, which is identified as the reason Jesus is called the Son of God and why God the Father is called His Father.

The Holy Ghost that came on Mary was not someone other than the Father. The one who fathered Jesus should be called the Father of Jesus. According to the trinity, the first person of the trinity is Jesus's Father but the third person of the trinity fathered Jesus.

This does not make sense. To maintain the harmony of the scriptures, we must believe that the Spirit that came on Mary was the Spirit of God the Father.

These biblical examples make it clear that the Spirit of the Father is the Father Himself, not someone else. It is the Father's very life, person, and presence.

The spirit of man is the life and person of the man himself.

The Spirit of Jesus is the life and person of Jesus Himself.

And the Spirit of God is the life and person of God the Father Himself.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Some believe the Holy Spirit to be the third member of the trinity, referred to as "God the Holy Spirit." Others believe the Holy Spirit is just a power or an influence from God. But what does the Bible have to say?

*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of
private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by*

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

*the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved
by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20, 21 ASV).*

Peter stated that the Old Testament prophets spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Who was this Holy Spirit who inspired them to speak?

*Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and
searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that
should come unto you: searching what time or what
manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them
did point unto, when it testified beforehand the
sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should
follow them (1 Peter 1:10, 11).*

The same author, Peter, in his first letter, said that it was the Spirit of Christ that moved the prophets of old to prophecy and write about the sufferings of Christ.

Peter used the term “Holy Spirit” to refer to the Spirit of Christ.

Comparing the following two verses adds something significant to our identification of the Holy Spirit. Notice how Mark recorded the words of Jesus:

*But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take
no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do
ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in
that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but
the Holy Ghost (Mark 13:11).*

Matthew’s record of the same account:

*But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or
what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that
same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that*

*speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh
in you (Matthew 10:19, 20).*

This shows that Bible authors also used the term “Holy Spirit” to refer to the spirit of the Father.

Biblically, the term “Holy Spirit” refers to the spirit of the Father or to the spirit of the Son. Never to anyone else! The context of the passage we’re considering should help us understand whose spirit is being identified. The underlying principle in understanding this term is very simple. “Holy Spirit” describes what type of spirit it is. It is a holy spirit because it belongs to Someone holy.

Since the Father and the Son are holy, the Bible refers to Their spirit as “Holy Spirit.”

The spirit of a person is the person himself, not someone else. In the same way, the spirit of the Lord is the Lord Himself, not someone else.

Notice how Paul interpreted the word “spirit” to mean “mind” when referring to the Lord. The following is the original verse:

*Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his
counsellor hath taught him? (Isaiah 40:13).*

And here is Paul’s quote of it:

*For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath
been his counsellor? (Romans 11:34).*

Paul understood that the spirit of the Lord is the Lord Himself—His own mind and person, not someone else.

In conclusion, the term “spirit” refers to the non-physical, intangible aspect of a person. It is not another person.

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

The Spirit of the Father is the life, mind, presence, and person of the Father.

The Spirit of Jesus is the life, mind, presence, and person of Jesus.

The “Holy Spirit” is a term referring to the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of His Son.

But whose Spirit do we receive?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 18

WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. Does the Bible present our spirit as a physical or non-physical aspect of ourselves?
2. How do we know that Jesus's spirit was His own and not a separate being?
3. What biblical examples make it clear that the Father's spirit is His own and not a separate being?
4. According to the Bible, to whom does "the Holy Spirit" refer?
5. Why is the Holy Spirit called holy?

CHAPTER 19

WHOSE SPIRIT DO WE RECEIVE?

In the previous chapter, we established from the Bible that the spirit of a person is the person himself, the Spirit of Jesus is Himself, and likewise the Spirit of the Father is Himself. We also concluded that the term “Holy Spirit” refers to both the Spirit of the Father and the Spirit of His Son.

This conclusion creates another question: Who is the Comforter, the Spirit Jesus promised to give us? What did the disciples believe and teach regarding this Spirit?

John

In His discourse with the disciples, Jesus promised to send the Spirit of Truth, whom He called the Comforter.

The term “Comforter,” which comes from the Greek word *parakletos*, is used five times in the New Testament, all by the apostle John. Comparing these five instances provides a

deep insight into how John identified the promised Spirit.

Four of the five instances were spoken by Jesus in John chapters 14 through 16.

In these verses, Jesus promised to send another Comforter (John 14:16) who would proceed from the Father. See John 15:26. He also said that unless He, Jesus, would go away, the Comforter would not come. See John 16:7. He also said the Comforter is the Holy Spirit. See John 14:26.

Note that in this discourse, Jesus was speaking to the disciples in proverbs, or figures of speech. When the disciples wondered at what He was saying (John 16:18), He spoke plainly to them and said:

I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures of speech but will tell you plainly about the Father (John 16:25 ESV).

Although Jesus was speaking figuratively, consider these direct hints identifying the Comforter in John 14–16:

- Comforter: The world “seeth him not” (14:17) – Jesus: “The world seeth me no more” (14:19)
- Comforter: “But ye know him” (14:17) – Jesus: “But ye see me” (14:19)
- Comforter: “He dwelleth with you” (14:17) – Jesus was dwelling with them at that time
- Comforter: “Shall be in you” (14:17) – Jesus: “I in you” (14:20)
- Comforter: “Give you another Comforter” (14:16) – Jesus: “I will come to you” (14:18)

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- Comforter: “He may abide with you for ever” (14:16) – Jesus: “I am with you alway” (Matthew 28:20)
- Comforter: The Spirit “will shew you things to come” (16:13) – Jesus: “I shall shew you plainly of the Father” (16:25)

It is rather obvious that Jesus was speaking about Himself in the third person while teaching the disciples in figures of speech.

However, this becomes even clearer when we read the John’s fifth use of the term *parakletos*:

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2:1).

John, the one who recorded Jesus’s discourse in John 14 through 16, and the only disciple who used the term *parakletos*, plainly identified the Comforter: “We have a [*parakletos*—Advocate or Comforter] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

Not only is it clear from Jesus’s discourse that the coming Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, is the Spirit—the life and person—of Jesus Himself, but John went further and stated very clearly, leaving no doubt in the mind of the reader: Jesus is our *parakletos*, our Advocate, our Comforter.

Paul

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote:

But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by

*whom are all things, and we by him
(1 Corinthians 8:6).*

He clearly stated that there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ. Notice what Paul wrote to the same church in his second letter:

*Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the
Lord is, there is liberty (2 Corinthians 3:17).*

After telling them that the one Lord is Jesus Christ, He told them that the Lord, or Jesus, is that Spirit.

Was Paul saying that Jesus became a spirit? Yes! That is exactly what he was saying.

*Thus it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living
being;' the last Adam became a life-giving spirit
(1 Corinthians 15:45).*

Paul said not only that Jesus is that Spirit, but also that Jesus was made a life-giving spirit.

And to the Galatians he wrote:

*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . .
that we might receive the promise of the Spirit
through faith (Galatians 3:13, 14).*

Who is this promised Spirit? He gave us the answer in the next chapter:

*And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his
Son into our hearts, crying,
Abba! Father! (Galatians 4:6).*

The promised Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. Paul was not unsure or ambiguous about the identity of the promised Spirit sent at Pentecost. He clearly identified it as the very

life, presence, and person of Jesus Christ.

That is why he repeatedly said in almost all of his letters that Christ is in the believer.

According to Paul, when the believer receives the promised Spirit, they receive Jesus Christ Himself. See Romans 8:10; 2 Corinthians 4:10, 11; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:26, 27.

Peter

Consider what Peter said in his sermon at Pentecost:

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you (Acts 3:19, 20).

Peter wrote both of these verses. Note the similarities:

- “Repent” – “repent”
- “Be baptized” – “be converted”
- “For the remission of sins” – “that your sins may be blotted out”
- “Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” – “and he [God] shall send Jesus Christ”

According to Peter, receiving the promised Spirit is equivalent to receiving Christ.

These two simple yet profound verses give us insight into how Peter identified the promised Spirit.

It is not a third person or being—other than Jesus Christ—called “God the Holy Spirit.” Not at all. Receiving the promised Spirit is receiving the spirit, life, and presence of Jesus Christ.

According to John, Paul, and Peter, the Comforter or promised Spirit is the Spirit of God’s dear Son, which according to what we’ve concluded from Scripture previously, is Jesus Christ Himself.

Also the Spirit of the Father?

This naturally raises the questions, Isn’t the promised Spirit and Comforter, the Spirit of the Father as well? Why did the apostles say it is Jesus Christ? Whose Spirit do we receive, the Father’s or the Son’s?

To correctly answer these questions, let’s look at Scripture:

All things proceed from the Father. He is the Source of all things. See 1 Corinthians 8:6 and Romans 11:36. The Father is the Source of even the life of His Son Jesus Christ. See John 5:26.

This foundational truth, which we established earlier, causes us to believe that after Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes from the Father.

Consider what Jesus said:

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which

Whose Spirit Do We Receive?

*proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify
of me (John 15:26).*

If all things—including the promised Spirit—comes from the Father, then why does the Bible clearly say in many places that the Spirit after Pentecost is Jesus Christ?

Jesus is the only Way to the Father. See John 14:6 and 10:9. He is the Mediator, the High Priest, and the Comforter. See 1 John 2:1.

Yes—the Father wants to dwell in human beings. Salvation is humans being reconciled to and united with God the Father. Human bodies are the temple of God the Father. See 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19.

But keep in mind—the only way God could be in humans is through His Son Jesus Christ:

*And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to
himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the
ministry of reconciliation. To wit, that God was in
Christ, reconciling the world unto himself
(2 Corinthians 5:18, 19).*

God dwelt among human beings and reconciled them to Himself through His Son Jesus Christ. He revealed Himself through His Son. See John 1:18; 12:45; 14:9.

And the only way for God to dwell in man is through His Son as well:

*For through him [Jesus] we both [Jews and Gentiles]
have access by one Spirit unto the Father
(Ephesians 2:18).*

Our destination is to access the Father. The purpose of the plan of salvation is to unite us with the Father, to make us a

living temple for the Father to dwell in. But do not miss the crucial point of the text:

The only way to access the Father, the only way to get to the Father and for the Father to dwell in us, is through His Son Jesus Christ.

This avenue or way to the Father was consecrated, or opened for us, through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. See Hebrews 10:19, 20 and 1 Peter 3:18.

The only way God the Father could dwell in man is through Jesus Christ, not someone else. See Ephesians 2:18.

That is why Jesus said when we receive the Comforter, or Himself, we will have both the Father and the Son. Consider:

*Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he
will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and
we will come unto him, and make our abode
with him (John 14:23).*

“We”—both the Father and Jesus—will dwell in the believer.

Why would Jesus say that, and how could it be? Because God was in Christ. That was demonstrated at the baptism of Jesus when the Spirit of God descended on Jesus. Also, Paul told us that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Through His indwelling Spirit, Jesus reunites us individually with His Father because the Father is in Him.

Jesus is the link between God and man.

That is why the foundation of the gospel, the good news of the gospel, the hope of our glory, is “Christ in you” (Colossians 1:27). Why?

Whose Spirit Do We Receive?

Because the indwelling of Christ brings the indwelling of God the Father.

Whose Spirit was sent at Pentecost? It is the Spirit, or life, of Christ in whom the Father dwells. Or to put it a different way: It is the Spirit of the Father coming to us through His Son Jesus Christ.

That is why John says:

*If we reject the Son, we reject the Father
(1 John 2:23 CEV).*

But if we continue to follow the teachings about Christ, we have “both the Father and the Son” (2 John 1:9; see also John 14:23; 1 John 1:3; 2:24).

The only way to be reunited with God is to have Christ within, not someone else called “God the Holy Spirit.”

We cannot get to the Father in any other way, other than through Jesus Christ.

That is why the Holy Spirit sent at Pentecost had to be Jesus Christ, not someone else.

But always remember, God was in Christ. He, the Father, comes to us in His Son. So, when you receive Jesus, you receive the Father also.

With this in mind, notice the different terminology Paul used to refer to the same Spirit:

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that

*raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your
mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you
(Romans 8:9–11).*

In this passage, Paul referred to the same Spirit as: “the Spirit of God,” “the Spirit of Christ,” “Christ,” and “the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus.”

It is rather obvious that in Paul’s understanding, the promised Spirit is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. Not only that, but he referred to the same Spirit as “Christ” Himself. This is in perfect harmony with what we just discovered.

When we receive Jesus, we receive both the Father and the Son.

Now let’s look at whether the Spirit is a person or not . . .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 19

WHOSE SPIRIT DO WE RECEIVE?

1. How is *parakletos* translated in John 14–16? And how is it translated in 1 John 2:1?
2. How do John’s references to *parakletos* tell us who the Comforter is?
3. How did Paul identify the promised Spirit sent at Pentecost?
4. What do Acts 2:38 and Acts 3:19, 20 have in common, and how do these similarities tell us how Peter identified the Holy Spirit?
5. Whose Spirit do we receive—the Spirit of the Father or the Spirit of Jesus?

CHAPTER 20

IS THE SPIRIT A PERSON?

In the previous two chapters, we established that the spirit of a person is the person himself, and that the Comforter, the promised Spirit, is the Spirit of Jesus Himself, in whom is also the Father. To receive Jesus means receiving both the Father and the Son.

This leads some to conclude that the Spirit must be a mere influence, power, or thoughts. Is this so? Is the Holy Spirit a person with a personality or an influence with power?

The New Testament writers often gave the Spirit personal attributes, which leads us to conclude that the Spirit is a person, not a mere influence or power.

Jesus spoke about the Spirit that was to be given:

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all

*things, and bring all things to your remembrance,
whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).*

*I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot
bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is
come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not
speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that
shall he speak: and he will shew you things
to come (John 16:12, 13).*

Jesus was speaking in parables. See John 16:25. It is very important to note how Jesus illustrated, or presented, the Spirit to His hearers:

- The Spirit will teach you and remind you of what Jesus taught
- The Spirit will guide you into all truth
- The Spirit hears what God says; in other words, God speaks to the Spirit
- The Spirit will speak the words that He hears

Jesus presented the Spirit that was to come as a person—as One who hears and speaks, knows things, understands things, teaches things, and reminds us of things.

This is not speaking about a mere experience one goes through when reading the word of God. Neither is it speaking about mere thoughts.

One cannot speak to a thought, but one can share thoughts and think thoughts and speak thoughts.

Notice how Jesus and the Spirit speak what they hear. Talking about Himself, Jesus said:

Is the Spirit a Person?

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak (John 12:49).

I have many things to say and to judge of you: but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him (John 8:26).

Jesus told the disciples: The words that I speak to you are what my Father is telling me. I hear from Him and tell you what He says.

When speaking about the Spirit to come, He said the same thing. The Spirit will not speak of Himself; whatever He hears He will relate to you.

This is identifying a person, not a force, influence, or words.

The apostles' experience with the Spirit

The Holy Spirit taught the apostles

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1 Corinthians 2:13).

Paul was endeavouring to show us that the Spirit had taught them these truths, by making these points:

- The Spirit searches the deep things of God—that is, the Spirit knows God’s thoughts
- He compares how man’s Spirit knows what man is thinking, with how God’s Spirit knows what God is thinking
- The apostles received the Spirit of God—this same Spirit that knows the things of God
- The Spirit taught them these things

This unlocks why Jesus spoke in parables. The Spirit was speaking not of Himself but was relaying what He heard.

Paul went on to say:

*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ
(1 Corinthians 2:14–16).*

Meaning, we know the thoughts of Christ and what He knows. Why?

Jesus said, Whatever I hear I say to you. That is, whatever the Spirit hears He will say to you. We know what Christ knows.

This of course is not a general statement to mean that now we are omniscient because Christ is—not at all. Paul was referring to what we as humans need to know.

Since we have the Spirit that is of God, we have the mind of Christ. We know what Christ knows. Paul did not say we have

Is the Spirit a Person?

the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit is none other than Jesus Christ. By receiving the Spirit, we receive Jesus Christ.

The Spirit speaks to people

*Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join
thyself to this chariot
(Acts 8:29; see also Acts 10:19 and 13:2).*

The Spirit speaks through people

*For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father
which speaketh in you
(Matthew 10:20; see also Mark 13:11; Luke 21:15).*

*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began
to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them
utterance (Acts 2:4; see also 21:4).*

The Spirit instructs people what to do

*So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed
unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus
(Acts 13:4).*

The Spirit makes decisions

*For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay
upon you no greater burden than these
necessary things (Acts 15:28).*

The apostles spoke about the Holy Spirit as if it, or He, were a person like them, making decisions as they made decisions.

The Spirit transports people

And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:39).

The Spirit can be lied to

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? . . . Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God (Acts 5:3, 4).

Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? (Acts 5:9).

It is the Spirit of the Lord, not someone else called God the Holy Spirit. Yet as far as the apostles were concerned, the Spirit of the Lord was a person whom could be lied to. The Spirit is a person, not a mere influence, thoughts, or mind.

The Spirit can forbid people from doing something

Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not (Acts 16:6, 7).

Notice how other translations translate the phrase, “But the Spirit suffered them not”:

The Spirit of Jesus suffered them not (ERV)

But the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them (ISV)

Is the Spirit a Person?

But the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them (ESV)

And the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not (ASV)

The apostles did not understand the Spirit to be a different person than Jesus Himself but His own spirit and person.

The Spirit gives spiritual gifts

*But the one and the same Spirit works all of these,
distributing to each one separately as he desires
(1 Corinthians 12:11 NHEB).*

Yes—the Holy Spirit is a person. But He is not someone other than Jesus.

The Bible is clear on the identity of the Spirit! It is indeed a person—the person, life, and presence of Jesus Himself.

Consider this point:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth (John 1:1, 14).

These two verses indicate that the Man Jesus is the Word that was with God and is God. Why believe this? Because the Bible says, “The Word was made flesh.”

This means, the same Word that was with God was made flesh and became Jesus Christ.

Prior to the Incarnation, was the word a person? Yes.

Did this Word become any less of a person when He was made flesh? No.

He is as much a person as God is a person.

At the end of Jesus's work on earth, the Bible says:

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit (1 Corinthians 15:45).

Jesus was made a life-giving spirit.

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father (Galatians 4:6).

The Word was made flesh to dwell among us and then was made Spirit to dwell in us.

Jesus said this in John 14 when talking about the Comforter:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you (John 14:16–18).

It is the same person in all these stages, and not any less of a person in any of these stages. The form, or manifestation, of this person had changed, but He was no less of a person:

- When He was with God before the incarnation, He was a person
- When He was made flesh, He was a person
- When He was made spirit, He was a person

We do not understand the “nature” He was in before the Incarnation, and neither do we understand the “nature” He is in now after the Incarnation.

But we know the self-same identity in these three stages: the Son of God.

We do not understand the nature of God, so we do not understand the nature of the Spirit. However, we must believe what the Scripture says: Jesus was made a spirit.

When He was on earth, Jesus was as much a person as God is a person.

When He was made a spirit, Jesus is again as much a person as God is a person.

In all these stages it is the self-same person, the Word who became Jesus who became a life-giving spirit.

To minimise the Spirit into a mere influence, power, or words, is the same as limiting God.

Just because the manifestation of the Son of God has changed, it does not mean that He lost His personhood.

So, to conclude, the Spirit is a person. It is the person of Jesus Christ in whom is found the Father.

Let's look a little more closely at the time when the Son of God was made a life-giving spirit . . .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 20

IS THE SPIRIT A PERSON?

1. Did Jesus present the Spirit as merely an influence or as a person?
2. List eight actions that the Holy Spirit did in New Testament times.
3. How do we know the apostles saw the Holy Spirit as Jesus's own spirit?
4. What Bible verse says Jesus was made a spirit?
5. In John 14:16–18, after promising to give His disciples “another Comforter,” whom did Jesus say would come to them?

CHAPTER 21

GLORIFICATION AND PENTECOST

In previous chapters, we have biblically identified the promised Spirit. It is the Spirit of Jesus in whom is found the Father.

When the Word was with God before the Incarnation, He was a person.

When He was made flesh, He was still a person.

When He was made spirit, He was a person as well.

In this chapter, we will explore the Son of God being made a life-giving spirit and examine lessons regarding His identity as the Spirit.

Consider this verse regarding the promised Spirit:

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him

*should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given;
because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)
(John 7:38, 39).*

When Jesus mentioned “rivers of living water,” He was referring to the Spirit. John told us that Jesus was talking about something that was not yet given because He was not yet glorified. According to John, the Spirit was not yet given on the day Jesus spoke those words.

The word “given” was added by the translators, but the meaning is clear in the text: The Spirit is not yet because Jesus has not yet been glorified. That is, the Spirit will not come until Jesus is glorified.

Jesus said:

*Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you
that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will
not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him
unto you (John 16:7).*

According to Jesus, the Comforter is “the Spirit of truth” (John 14:17), or “the Holy Ghost” (verse 26), which John said “was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” Both Jesus and John said the same thing.

The Spirit would not be given, that is, the Comforter would not come, until Jesus would go to His Father, at which time He was to be glorified.

Therefore, the impartation of the Holy Spirit was dependent on Jesus’s glorification (John 7:38, 39). The Spirit, or Comforter, could not be given until Jesus was glorified.

Yet Peter wrote:

*Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow
(1 Peter 1:10, 11).*

This verse proves that the spirit of Jesus was in the prophets of old. Yet John said the spirit was not yet given during the incarnation of Jesus.

Are these verses contrary to each other?

In order to solve this apparent contradiction, some have interpreted John's words to mean that the Spirit was not yet given in this measure before. But this is not what John said. He said it was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Jesus Himself said:

It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you (John 16:7).

In other words, before the glorification, the Spirit could not be given. As simple as that. Yet the Bible says that the spirit of Christ was in the prophets of old.

Glorification and Incarnation Linked

In order to harmonise these verses, we must understand what spirit, or life, John was talking about. This particular spirit is intrinsically linked to the glorification.

And the glorification is linked to Jesus's incarnation, death,

and resurrection. Notice Jesus's prayer in John 17. This was not long before the crucifixion:

I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was
(John 17:4, 5).

Jesus said to His Father, "I have glorified thee." Where? "On the earth." In other words, I finished the work You gave me to do on this earth!

And now, because I finished the work You gave me to do here on earth, glorify Me with Your own self.

As one of us, Jesus finished the work God gave Him to do on earth. And now, as one of us, as a Human Being, He asked the Father to glorify Him with His "own self."

It is important to understand that the life Jesus lived on earth, the life He was asking the Father to glorify, never existed prior to the Incarnation.

As a Man, He glorified the Father on earth. As a Man, He finished the work God gave Him to do. And as a Man, He was asking the Father to glorify Him. All along He was fully divine, fully God, but He was also fully Human.

The humanity of Christ never existed before the Incarnation. The experience Jesus went through as a human being, never existed before. And the life Jesus lived on earth as a Human Being never existed before.

Many miss the point that in the Incarnation, Jesus took upon Himself a nature and an experience He never had before (Hebrews 2:10, 14–18; 5:7–10). It was the divine-human Jesus, with His divine/human life/spirit, who was asking

the Father to glorify Him. In this sense John said, “The Holy Ghost was not yet.”

This divine/human life Jesus lived was not given yet because it was not yet glorified.

The Comforter, or the divine/human life of Christ, could not come yet because Jesus had not yet gone to the Father to be glorified.

That is why Jesus said, “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7). Jesus was telling His disciples that if He did not go to the Father and be glorified, He could not send the Comforter to them.

Divine/Human Spirit

The humanity of Christ is the key in the impartation of the Comforter. This Comforter has been where I am. He knows what it means to be human. He knows what it means to be tempted and tried. The Bible says, “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18).

This is one of the reasons why Jesus had to go through humanity before He could impart the Comforter. Without the humanity of Christ, there would be no Comforter as the One promised by Jesus and sent by the Father.

Upon hearing this, some will object, saying, The Spirit is completely divine with no humanity whatsoever in it. In doing so, they try to maintain their belief that nothing new was given at Pentecost and that the cross brought nothing new. In denying the human element of the Spirit, they maintain that Christ gained nothing new and could impart to us nothing new on this side of the cross. If this is true, the

Spirit the apostles received at Pentecost was the same as the one they had before, the only difference being the quantity of it.

This reasoning makes meaningless the words of Jesus in John 16:7 and the words of John in John 7:38, 39. It also diminishes the importance of the Incarnation and destroys the work Jesus accomplished through it.

Consider the following passage:

And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly (1 Corinthians 15:45–48).

Why did Paul use the term “last Adam”?

Names have meaning behind them. The Bible writers used various names for Jesus to emphasise something about Him: Lamb of God (God’s sacrifice), Christ (the anointed One), Jesus (Saviour), Michael (One like God), the man Christ Jesus (highlighting Christ’s humanity), etc. Why did Paul use the titles “last Adam” and “second man” in 1 Corinthians 15?

Paul was emphasising the humanity of Christ, just as he did in 1 Timothy 2:5, where he called Jesus “the man Christ Jesus.”

In 1 Corinthians 15:45, Paul wrote, “The last Adam [‘second man’] was made a quickening spirit.”

He was saying that the human Jesus, who was 100 percent divine at the same time, was made a spirit!

If the Comforter who comes to us does not encompass the humanity of Christ, then this verse becomes meaningless. For Christ to be my Comforter, He had to go through what I go through. He had to become human—one with me. It is His victorious experience and life as a Man that comforts the sinner. See Hebrews 2:17, 18.

Christ's glorification

With the correct understanding of who was asking for glorification, we can more deeply appreciate what happened at Pentecost.

A human being, our Brother, Jesus, fully God and fully man, was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows (Hebrews 1:9). A divine human being was anointed as the High Priest of His people.

This was the glorification John referred to when he said that the Spirit was not yet because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Peter related this in his Pentecost sermon:

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear (Acts 2:32, 33).

“The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go (Acts 3:13).

At Pentecost, Jesus “received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:33). This verse speaks of the fulfillment of Jesus’s prayer for the Father to glorify Jesus with “thine own self” (John 17:5).

The Father’s own self is the Father’s spirit. Jesus was anointed with the Father’s spirit. And because He was anointed, or glorified, He was able to “shed forth,” or impart, the Holy Spirit on His disciples on earth.

That is why when we receive Jesus, we receive both the Father and the Son. Because God was in Christ during the Incarnation, and because God anointed His Son with His own self—His own life and spirit—at the glorification.

What happened at Pentecost was typified in the anointing of Aaron as the high priest of Israel. Notice:

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments (Psalm 133:1, 2).

The oil is of course a representation of the Spirit.

When Aaron was anointed, the oil ran down “to the skirts of his garments.” That is, it came down onto his body.

And in the same manner, when Jesus was anointed in heaven with the Father’s own self, or the Father’s spirit, the oil, or the spirit, came down to His body. The church is the body of Christ, and He is the head of the body.

Paul brings it all together in the following text:

Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered [during His humanity, or

incarnation]; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Hebrews 5:8, 9).

In other words, Having been qualified because of what He accomplished, He became the author, or source, of eternal salvation, or life, which is His life.

Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec (Hebrews 5:10).

Because of His humanity, He was qualified to be anointed as our High Priest, which took place at Pentecost.

And now, as our High Priest, He ministers His own divine/human eternal life, which never existed before, to those who obey Him, to those who believe on His name. This divine/human eternal life is known as the Comforter. It is none other than the Spirit of Christ sent by the Father. See Galatians 4:6.

This beautiful truth, that the promised Spirit we receive is the life of Christ, is also illustrated by the ratification of the old covenant.

Notice the comparison Paul made:

For if the blood of bulls and of goats . . . how much more shall the blood of Christ. . . And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament. . . Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, this is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you (Hebrews 9:13–15, 18–20).

Paul was comparing the old covenant and its ratification with the new covenant and its ratification. The old covenant was ratified with the blood of calves and of goats, while the new covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ.

But please do not miss the significance of the types, or symbols, in these ratifications. Moses took the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkled it on the people, illustrating that they belonged to that covenant and would benefit from it.

Biblically, blood represents life. See Leviticus 17:11. Thus, Moses sprinkled the “life” of the sacrifice on the people.

With this in mind, notice what Jesus said:

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you (Luke 22:20).

The new covenant is in the blood, or life, of Christ. That is why God’s people in the new covenant were sprinkled with the blood, or life, of Christ, which happened at Pentecost and continues to happen for every believer today.

This explains why John would say, “The Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39).

And it explains why Jesus said, “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7).

The promised Spirit, or Comforter, could not be given until Jesus was crucified, resurrected, and glorified by the Father, because the Comforter is none other than the spirit, life, and person of Jesus Christ Himself.

Consider what Paul wrote:

*Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things
(Ephesians 4:9, 10).*

Jesus, the One who descended into the grave, and ascended up to heaven, was glorified at Pentecost, which enabled Him to “fill all things.” His spirit is the promised Spirit. Jesus is our Comforter! And Jesus is able to give His followers His own divine/human eternal life, or spirit, which never existed before, because He rose from the dead, was glorified, and was made our High Priest and Author of eternal salvation.

This very life, which is available to us today, is our eternal life. Remember, Jesus Christ Himself is our life. See John 14:6 and Colossians 3:4. Therefore, when we receive Him, we receive His life, which is our eternal life. Eternal life is inseparable from Jesus, the Author of this life. God put this eternal life in His Son and said, If you want life, you need to have my Son:

*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life
(1 John 5:11, 12).*

Because Jesus rose from the dead and was glorified, because He lives, we can live His life also. The link between the glorification of Jesus and Pentecost is another confirmation that the promised Spirit and Comforter is none other than the spirit, life, and person of Jesus Christ—“God the Holy Spirit.”

What kind of life do we receive when we receive the Spirit?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 21

GLORIFICATION AND PENTECOST

1. What had to happen for the Holy Spirit to be given?
2. What aspect of Christ is key to the impartation of the Comforter/Spirit?
3. Did the humanity of Christ ever exist before his incarnation?
4. Why do we receive both the Father and the Son when we receive Jesus?
5. What happened to Jesus that allows us to live His life today?

CHAPTER 22

INDWELLING SPIRIT

After telling His disciples that He would go away and send them the Comforter, Jesus said:

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you (John 14:18–20).

Here we see Jesus speaking about a state, quality, or type of life that has to do with His resurrection (“because I live”) and His coming to us (“I will come to you”).

When He said, “Because I live, ye shall live also,” He was not referring to a mere physical life that everyone possesses. He was not referring to our probationary life that sinners and saints alike possess. He was not even referring to a life that begins only after our resurrection. No. He was referring to them obtaining a special kind of life that is dependent on His

resurrection and coming to them. A life they did not possess on the day Jesus spoke these words.

Contextually, this promised life would begin the day:

- Jesus went to His Father – John 14:12
- The other Comforter would come – John 14:16
- Jesus would be in them – John 14:17
- Jesus would come to them – John 14:18
- When Jesus would live and they would also live – John 14:19
- When Jesus would be in them – John 14:20

So, this type of life Jesus was talking about begins on the day when He comes to us and lives in us. He was referring to a life that begins on this earth in our mortal flesh upon receiving the Comforter.

What did Jesus mean by saying, “Ye shall live also”? (John 14:19), and how is this life related to the indwelling promised Spirit?

To better understand what life Jesus was talking about and how it is related to the indwelling Spirit, we need to understand that the indwelling Spirit is the indwelling of Christ Himself.

Notice the following parallels in Jesus’s words:

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).

So, according to Jesus, the Father would send the Comforter in Jesus's name. Paul wrote the fulfillment of this promise:

*And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit
of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father
(Galatians 4:6).*

The Comforter who comes from the Father is the Spirit of Jesus.

A bit later in His discourse, Jesus said:

*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto
you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which
proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify
of me (John 15:26).*

According to Jesus, the Comforter proceeds from the Father. Notice what we read after Jesus's resurrection:

*And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and
saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost
(John 20:22).*

Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit onto His disciples, illustrating that the promised Spirit is His own breath, spirit, and life.

Talking about the same Comforter, Jesus said:

*Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot
receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him:
but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be
in you (John 14:17).*

After the resurrection of Jesus, the Comforter was going to be in the believer. A few verses later Jesus said:

*At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and
ye in me, and I in you (John 14:20).*

Regarding the same promise, Jesus said that on the day the Father would send the Comforter, Jesus would be in them.

It is rather clear that the indwelling of the Comforter is the indwelling of Christ.

We find a revealing parallel when we compare Luke's record of the book of Acts with Mark's summary of it.

The Gospel of Luke tells the story of Jesus's life, while the book of Acts is Luke's record of the Holy Spirit's work through the disciples. The book could be rightly named "The Acts of the Holy Spirit."

Mark summed up the book of Acts in one verse, shedding a different light on it:

*So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was
received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of
God. And they went forth, and preached every where,
the Lord working with them, and confirming the word
with signs following. Amen (Mark 16:19, 20).*

According to Mark, it was the Lord working with them. Why would he think that? Because the promised spirit is the spirit, life, and presence of the Lord Jesus.

Moving forward to the writings of Paul, we find another instructive parallel:

*Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is
in you (1 Corinthians 6:19).*

In his second letter to the same church, he wrote:

Indwelling Spirit

*Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is
in you, except ye be reprobates?
(2 Corinthians 13:5).*

Paul's writings clearly teach that the indwelling Holy Spirit—the Comforter—is the indwelling of the Spirit of Jesus, that is, Jesus Himself.

When we receive the Holy Spirit, we are receiving Christ Himself. And when we receive Christ, we are in actual fact receiving His own life. The only reason we receive His life is because we receive Him.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, or the Comforter, is the indwelling of the life of Christ.

The Bible repeatedly states that Christ is in the believer. Notice:

*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith
(Ephesians 3:17).*

*And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin;
but the Spirit is life because of righteousness
(Romans 8:10).*

Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27).

*Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in
the world (1 John 4:4).*

*Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is
in you, except ye be reprobates?
(2 Corinthians 13:5).*

*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear
my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and
will sup with him, and he with me (Revelation 3:20).*

*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I,
but Christ liveth in me (Galatians 2:20).*

*I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made
perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou
hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast
loved me (John 17:23).*

*He that descended is the same also that ascended up far
above all heavens, that he might fill all things
(Ephesians 4:10).*

*I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you
(John 14:18).*

When Jesus dwells in us, we receive His life. It is His life that is living in us:

*Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord
Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest
in our body. For we which live are always delivered
unto death for Jesus's sake, that the life also of Jesus
might be made manifest in our mortal flesh
(2 Corinthians 4:10, 11).*

The promised life is the victorious life of Jesus, which we receive by receiving Him. The only way to become one with God, to turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, is to have Christ living in us.

The indwelling of Christ is our only hope of glory and of oneness with God.

When we look at the big picture, we discover that everything pertaining to mankind has been and will forever continue to be through Jesus Christ. He is the Mediator between God and mankind. Salvation, eternal life, and oneness with God come through Jesus Christ.

Back in the days of eternity, Jesus was referred to as the Word of God. See John 1:1–3. That same Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14), and after His resurrection He was made a life-giving spirit. See 1 Corinthians 15:45.

As the Word of God, He created us. The Bible says that God created all things through His Son. God worked through the Word—His Son—to create humanity. See Ephesians 3:9 and Hebrews 1:2.

As the Word made flesh, Christ dwelt with us. The Bible also tells us that “God was in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:19). God the Father dwelt with humanity through His Son. Hence Christ’s name was Immanuel, God with us.

As the Word made a life-giving spirit, Christ dwells in us. The Bible repeatedly tells us that Jesus dwells in us yet also says that we are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in us (1 Corinthians 3:16). It says that He who raised up Jesus dwells in us. See Romans 8:11. God dwells in us through His Son.

God created us through His divine Son, dwelt with us through His incarnated Son, and dwells in us through His resurrected and glorified Son.

The spirit we receive is not “God the Holy Spirit,” the third member of the trinity. No. The spirit we received is the spirit and life of Jesus Christ; it is Jesus Christ Himself in spirit form.

If we are to take the Bible as it reads and believe what it teaches, we must believe that Jesus Christ Himself, the person of Jesus—without the physical form, of course—dwells in the believer.

Anything other than or less than the person of Jesus Christ

is a deception. To have another person, or merely the words of Christ, is not good enough!

As we saw in the previous chapters, the Holy Spirit is as much a person as God is a person. He is divine and has the God nature because it is the very person of Jesus Christ.

This explains why the spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified. See John 7:39.

This explains why Peter said that by lying to the Holy Spirit the person was lying to God (Acts 5:3, 9).

This explains why the apostles would say that the Spirit forbade them (Acts 16:6), and then say that the Spirit of Jesus forbade them. See Acts 16:7. Several Bible translations translate the “Spirit” in verse 7 as the “Spirit of Jesus.” See Chapter 20 of this book, The Spirit can forbid people from doing something.

It explains why Luke recorded in the book of Acts what the Spirit did through the apostles, and Mark said that the Lord Jesus was working with them (Mark 16:20).

This harmonises Jesus’s words, “I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20), with, “If I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7).

This harmonises the Holy Spirit in you with Christ in you the hope of glory. See Colossians 1:27.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the indwelling of Jesus Christ, in whom is also the Father. Hence, when we receive Jesus, we receive both the Father and the Son (John 14:23).

But do we receive the Spirit, or is it formed within us?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 22

INDWELLING SPIRIT

1. When Jesus said, “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19), to what type of life was He referring?
2. Who was working with the disciples after Jesus’s resurrection? See Mark 16:19, 20.
3. List five Bible passages that say Jesus lives in us.
4. What is the only way to turn from darkness to light?
5. Why is it not good enough to have only the words of Jesus in us?

CHAPTER 23

FORMED OR RECEIVED?

In previous chapters, we established from Scripture that the Comforter, or promised Spirit, is the spirit of Jesus, and that the indwelling of the Spirit in the believer is the indwelling of Christ.

Is the Spirit received or formed? Some would have you believe that the indwelling of the Spirit, or the indwelling of Christ, is merely knowing His word, having a good relationship with Jesus, and developing a Christlike character. Is receiving the Spirit only metaphorical talk?

Or do we as believers receive something from outside the body into the body? Do we receive something called the Comforter, the Spirit—life from above?

Pentecost

Prior to the outpouring of the Spirit, Jesus told the disciples to “wait for the promise of the Father. . . . For John truly

baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:4, 5).

It is important not to miss the point. Jesus told them to “wait” for the promise, and that they “shall be” baptised. Jesus was referring to something they did not have as of yet. Up till that time, they had not been baptised with the Holy Spirit. That is why He told them to wait for it.

And on the day of Pentecost:

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:2–4).

God demonstrated the baptism of the Holy Spirit in a physical way for a reason. One reason was to show the Jews that there was something to what the disciples believed and taught. And another reason is for modern believers to understand that the disciples received something they did not have before. They received something from outside of them.

Some would like to say that the Holy Spirit is formed, or produced, within the heart by reading the Word of God because it contains the Spirit. In other words, the Word of God is the seed that is in us, and when we believe it, we activate this seed and manifest, produce, or form the life of Christ/Holy Spirit within. They share many verses to attempt to prove that the Spirit is in the Word.

Although the Word of God is indeed an avenue to receive the

Spirit, I would like to highlight that all the apostles had the Word of God before Pentecost:

- They had faith
- They believed
- They read the Word
- They prayed and meditated on God
- They loved the Lord and obeyed Him

But Jesus told them to “wait for the promise of the Father” because they would “be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:4, 5).

If the Spirit is produced or formed in our hearts only by reading and believing the Word of God, then why did the disciples need to wait until Pentecost to receive it? Why did Jesus say that if He did not go away, the Comforter would not come? See John 16:7. And why did John say that the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified? See John 7:39.

Clearly, this Spirit/Comforter Jesus spoke about was dependent on Him being glorified more than on the disciples reading and believing. While it is true that unless the disciples believed they wouldn't receive, but simply reading and believing before the glorification did not result in them receiving the promised Comforter. They received Him only after the glorification.

Acts 19

He [Apollon] said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy

Ghost. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied (Acts 19:2, 5, 6).

These twelve disciples received something they did not have before.

Why emphasise this point? It is necessary to understand that when Jesus said the Comforter would be in His disciples, He meant that they would receive something they did not have before. Something or someone would come from the outside in. This was clearly demonstrated on Pentecost and in Acts 19. And it is the same for us today.

Notice Jesus's words:

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:7, 8).

Notice what is being said about the Comforter:

- “Come unto you”
- “Send him unto you”
- “When he is come”

Jesus put it in a way that we cannot miss the point. He would send him, and the Comforter would come. This is not language used of something that is simply produced in the heart as a result of faith and belief in the Word of God. It is language used to describe something sent from the outside and received on the inside.

In other words, regardless of how much faith and belief and knowledge of the Scripture the disciples had before the Comforter/Spirit was sent, they could not receive Him because He hadn't been sent yet.

The Bible says:

*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?
(1 Corinthians 3:16).*

This is not metaphorical. It is a reality. We literally receive the Spirit of God into our hearts. We—our bodies—are the temple of God where God will dwell through His Spirit.

Peter's sermon

*Then Peter said unto them [the people of Israel],
Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of
Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall
receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).*

The Spirit was something they did not have but could receive through repentance and accepting Jesus.

The believers in Samaria

Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me

also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:14–19).

These people were baptised in Jesus's name but had not yet received the Spirit. The apostles had to lay hands on them, and instantaneously they received the Spirit. It is not that they developed a new scriptural understanding that blessed their hearts and minds. They received the Spirit the moment hands were laid on them.

Peter's report of his experience with Cornelius

And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? (Acts 11:15–17).

Being baptised with the Holy Spirit means to receive the Spirit from the outside in. We receive Someone we did not have before. It is not a forming, progression, development, progression, or attainment. It is receiving the Spirit in an instant.

- The Spirit is a person
- The Spirit is received
- The Spirit is received instantaneously

People in the Bible believed the truth, learnt nothing new, and were baptised in the name of Jesus. But they received the Spirit only after the disciples laid their hands on them.

Christ formed within

The Bible is clear that we receive Christ instantaneously when we are baptised with the Spirit and are born again. Jesus said:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee [Nicodemus], Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:5).

With this in mind, how should we understand the following words?

My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you (Galatians 4:19).

Some use this verse to counteract the indwelling of Christ. They say, See? The indwelling of Christ, or the reception of the Spirit of Christ, is something we form in ourselves! As we study the Word of God and develop a relationship with Jesus, our character grows more and more to resemble Him. That is what it means to have Christ within. It means to form Christ within.

Consequently, they interpret all the verses in the book of Acts in light of their misunderstanding of this one verse.

What does Christ formed in you mean?

“Until Christ be formed in you.” The word “until” denotes a process, a duration of time, something that is yet to happen in the future. How does this stack up in comparison to all the instantaneous reception of the Spirit in the book of Acts? Was Paul talking about the same thing or about something different that follows after the reception of the Spirit?

When we read Galatians 4:19 in context, it becomes very easy to understand.

The Galatians had already received the Spirit. Prior to this verse in question, Paul wrote:

*This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by
the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
(Galatians 3:2).*

*And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit
of his Son into your hearts, crying,
Abba, Father (Galatians 4:6).*

When Paul told them, “Until Christ beformed in you,” he was not referring to them receiving Christ/the Spirit. Not at all. He told them they had already received the Spirit.

The problem was not in them receiving the Spirit; it was in them growing in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit.

The forming of Christ in them would be the continuing result of their new birth/reception of the Spirit.

There is a difference between receiving Christ and growing into His character. The Bible talks about growing in Christ:

*He that descended is the same also that ascended up far
above all heavens, that he might fill all things. And he
gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some,
evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the
perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for
the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the
unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of
God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the
stature of the fulness of Christ (Ephesians 4:10–13).*

Christ dwells in the believer for a reason—to lead us all to grow into His image. See 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18.

Because Jesus is in us, we grow from glory to glory.

Can a person dwell in another?

Someone might say, This cannot be. How could one person be in another person? How could Jesus be in the believer? Well, let us ask the question: Can a spiritual being dwell inside a person?

Demons, who are ministering spirits, can:

And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked

(Luke 8:30–33; see also Mark 1:25; 5:12; 9:25).

If fallen angels can dwell inside people, why not Jesus? Remember, the same Word who was with God and made flesh to dwell among us, was then made Spirit to dwell in us.

The problem is that people are confusing:

- The new birth with Character perfection
- Receiving Christ with forming Christ
- Being born again with growing in Christ

These are connected, but one precedes the other. An indwelling Saviour precedes a manifested Saviour.

Let us take it with baby steps:

- The Spirit came on Jesus at His baptism (Matthew 3:16), and Jesus said the Father was in Him. See John 14:10.
- Christ promised to be in believers. See John 14:20.
- Christ breathed on the disciples. See John 20:22.
- Christ told them to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Spirit. See Acts 1:4, 5.
- They were in one accord, still believing the same thing, strong in faith because they had seen Christ alive after His resurrection, but they did not have the Spirit yet.
- At Pentecost, Jesus received the Spirit from the Father. See Acts 2:33.
- At Pentecost, the Spirit came down from heaven and rested on the believers. See Acts 2:3.
- Peter told the people of Israel to repent, be baptised, and then they would receive the Spirit. See Acts 2:38.
- In Samaria, they believed and were baptised in Jesus's name, but only after hands were laid on them did they receive the Spirit. See Acts 8:14–17.
- In Acts 19, they were baptised, and when Paul laid hands on them, the Spirit came on them. See Acts 19:6.

If we are honest Bible students, when we read this, we can arrive at only one conclusion. The reception of the Holy Spirit is an instantaneous event. The Spirit comes from outside into the believer. It is not something that we develop through Bible study, prayer and fasting. No. It is a Gift from

God given to us when we repent and open our heart to Jesus.

Jesus says to us:

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me (Revelation 3:20).

When people in the Bible received the Spirit, they received something from the outside in that was dependent on Christ being glorified.

Their reception of the Spirit was instantaneous upon accepting Jesus and the laying on of hands.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the indwelling of Christ.

When we receive Christ, we receive his life into us.

Now let's look at the priesthood of the Spirit . . .

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 23

FORMED OR RECEIVED?

1. Why did Jesus tell the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit? See Acts 1:4.
2. How does the story in Acts 19:2, 5, 6 demonstrate that the Holy Spirit is received from the outside in?
3. How did the believers in Samaria receive the Holy Spirit—through a gradual new understanding, or instantaneously? See Acts 8:14–19.
4. What is the difference between receiving Christ and growing into His character?
5. What enables us to grow from glory to glory? See 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18.

CHAPTER 24

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE SPIRIT

Throughout the Bible, we read stories about four temples. First, the earthly temple with the Levitical intercession. Second, the heavenly temple with Christ's intercession. See Hebrews 8:1, 2. And third, the personal bodily temple with the Holy Spirit's intercession. See 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. Fourth, the church—the body of Christ—built up together as a spiritual temple, also having the Spirit's intercession. See 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; Ephesians 2:21, 22; 1 Peter 2:5.

No one debates the identity of the earthly priesthood or the heavenly priesthood. But when it comes to the bodily temple, there is confusion about the identity of the priest interceding in it. Who is the priest of this temple?

According to trinitarian theology, the Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son but a separate being.

If this is true, then the priest of the bodily temple is not Jesus nor the Father but someone else called “God the Holy Spirit.”

The Spirit’s intercession in Romans 8:26, 27

With this in mind, notice what the Bible says:

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God (Romans 8:26, 27).

The Spirit intercedes for the saints. The context does not point to intercession in heaven but in the bodily temple. Paul did not mean that the Spirit is somewhere in heaven speaking to the Father on our behalf and praying for us. The text applies to the work and intercession of the Spirit in the bodily temple, not the heavenly temple.

The Holy Spirit is interceding, or ministering, in our bodily temple. This is the work of a priest.

“The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us”

The Holy Spirit intercedes for us and moves on our hearts to pray, giving us the words needed, “for we know not what we should pray for as we ought.” The Spirit gives us faith, confidence, and boldness to come to God in prayer and to call God our Father.

“With groanings which cannot be uttered”

The Spirit intercedes for us with sighs—deep, intense anxiety in the oppressed, burdened heart of the Christian.

Notice that the Holy Spirit is not the one groaning. The Spirit stirs up groans within the saints themselves, which makes them long for something. See Romans 8:23. The groaning, or longing, within us is the result of the Spirit's convicting work, and the Spirit understands these groans.

"The mind of the Spirit"

This simply means the impressions of the Spirit, or what the Spirit moves us to say and think. God knows the desires that the Holy Spirit excites and produces in our heart.

Romans 8:26, 27 tells us that the Spirit ministers in our bodily temple in a different way than He does in heaven. He works in our hearts to convict and lead us into the ways of God.

Two priests

The Spirit is the priest of the bodily temple. It is He who is interceding within us and leading us to where God wants us to be. Who is the Priest? Is it Jesus or someone else called "God the Holy Spirit"?

In the trinitarian understanding, there are two priests. This creates a problem. Looking at the sanctuary service in the old covenant, one is reminded that there has been only one high priest at a time. Many priests, but only one high priest.

In the new covenant, the Levitical priesthood was replaced with the priesthood of Christ. One High Priest ministers in the temple—Jesus Christ. We are a royal priesthood ministering on earth. Therefore, the high priest was replaced by Christ, and the many priests were replaced by us.

Yet, according to trinitarian theology, it appears that Jesus is our High Priest ministering on behalf of the church in

heaven, and the Holy Spirit is ministering in the bodily temples here on earth.

This creates a theological problem because it does not harmonise with the type.

Qualifications of a priest

The theological problems with the trinitarian view increase when we learn from Scripture the qualifications of a priest:

Taken from among men

The priest must be a human being in order to represent human beings. See Hebrews 5:1, 2. Jesus fulfilled this prerequisite. See Hebrews 2:14–16.

But we never read of the trinitarian “God the Holy Spirit” taking upon himself human flesh. This is a problem. How could he be a priest ordained for men if he never was a man? How could he represent us if he has never been us?

Offer for sins

Every high priest ought to have something to offer for sin. See Hebrews 5:1–3. Jesus fulfilled this prerequisite. He offered up Himself. See Hebrews 8:1–3 and 9:26.

The trinitarian “God the Holy Spirit” never offered Himself, never died for humanity, hence he cannot be a priest because he has nothing to offer.

Compassed with infirmity (has weaknesses)

The high priest must understand by experience what it means to be tempted with the weakness of flesh so he can have compassion on those who are going through the same

experience. See Hebrews 5:2. Jesus fulfilled that. See Hebrews 2:17, 18 and 4:15.

Jesus has been in my shoes; He knows what it means to be me. He knows what it means to be hungry, poor, and rejected. He knows what it means to be tempted with sin—to take myself out of the Father’s hands, to put self first. He can comfort me when I’m struggling because He can empathise with me.

But we never read of the trinitarian “God the Holy Spirit” being tempted with sin. One of the reasons Jesus took humanity upon Himself was because, as God, He could not be tempted, but as a Man He could. “God the Holy Spirit” has never been tempted with sin, and if he did exist as a separate third divine being, he couldn’t be tempted with sin.

Called of God as was Aaron

Not anyone can fill the position of priest; he must be called, or ordained, by God to be a priest. See Hebrews 5:4. To be called as a high priest was to be anointed as a high priest. Again, Jesus fulfilled this requirement. See Hebrews 5:5. Jesus was called to be our High Priest, and His Father anointed Him to be the High Priest of His people.

We never read of the trinitarian “God the Holy Spirit” being called or anointed to be our high priest.

The trinity doctrine creates a major problem when it comes to the bodily temple and to the priesthood of the Spirit. “God the Holy Spirit”:

- Does not fit with the type that teaches one high priest at a time

- Does not fit the qualifications of a priest as presented in Hebrews
- Was never incarnated, never tempted with sin, has no offering to give, and was never called of God to be a priest

As you can see, the understanding that the Holy Spirit is a different person than Jesus creates a major problem when it comes to the priesthood of the bodily temple.

But when we understand what we have seen in previous chapters, that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit, life, and person of Jesus Christ, the problem vanishes.

Jobs of the high priest

Virtually all Christians, including trinitarians, would agree that Jesus is the Antitype of the earthly high priest, not “God the Holy Spirit.” Yet as we examine the five jobs of the high priest, we will see that in the trinitarian perspective, the Holy Spirit is the one performing these jobs in the bodily temple, not Jesus Christ.

This should serve as evidence that the Holy Spirit who performs the jobs of the high priest cannot be someone other than Jesus Christ.

Let’s consider five jobs of the high priest.

Atoning and cleansing

The high priest made atonement for and cleansed the temple, his household, and all the congregation of Israel. See Leviticus 16:16–20. However, when we consider the cleansing of our body temples, or our souls, from sin, it is the Holy Spirit that does that. Notice:

The Priesthood of the Spirit

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied (1 Peter 1:2).

The Spirit is doing the antitypical work of the high priest when it comes to making the bodily temple holy.

Overseeing the priests

Another of the high priest's jobs was to oversee the responsibilities of all the subordinate priests. See 2 Chronicles 19:8, 11.

We, the believers, are the priests. See 1 Peter 2:5, 9 and Revelation 1:6.

Who oversees our responsibilities as priests? Who dictates our duties?

As we read the book of Acts, we discover that the Holy Spirit directed and instructed the apostles. Yet we know Jesus is the High Priest. He is the Antitype of the earthly high priest.

Communicating the will of God

Only the high priest could wear the Urim and the Thummim, which served to reveal the will of God to the people. See Numbers 27:21. The high priest was to communicate the will of God to His people. He received instruction from God and related it to the people.

Yet when we come to the bodily temple of the church here on earth, it is the Holy Spirit who communicates the will of God to you and me. It is the Spirit who whispers in your ear, This

is the way, walk ye in it. See Isaiah 30:21 and John 16:13. This is the antitype of the work of the high priest.

Teaching the people

Aaron the high priest and the other priests were to teach the people the difference between holy and unholy. See Leviticus 10:10, 11.

Yet again, when we look at the bodily temple of the church of God, it is the Spirit who teaches and convicts of sin. See John 16:8; 14:26; 1 John 2:27.

These are the jobs of the Spirit as the Priest of the bodily temple. Yet they are the exact fulfillment of the types performed by the earthly high priest. The Bible tells us that Jesus is the Antitype of the earthly high priest, not “God the Holy Spirit.”

Wear specific clothing

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest was to put on special holy clothes before he went in before God in the Most Holy Place. And before he came out, he was to change into other clothes. See Leviticus 16:23, 24.

In other words, when appearing before God, the high priest was to dress and look differently than when he appeared before the people.

Talking about the priests, God said:

They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge. And it shall come to pass, that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall

come upon them, whiles they minister in the gates of the inner court, and within. They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird themselves with any thing that causeth sweat. And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments (Ezekiel 44:16–19).

A bit further in the passage we see the priests' job of teaching the people:

And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean (Ezekiel 44:23).

When the priests appeared before God, they were not to be dressed in the same clothes they were wearing when they taught the people. In other words, they were to appear in another form.

One of the duties of Christ, our High Priest, is to teach the people outside the sanctuary. Not only that, but according to the type, He wears a different outfit—He appears in another form—in the presence of God.

While Jesus ministers in the heavenly sanctuary in His physical, or bodily, form, He appears in another form—His spiritual form—as by His Spirit He ministers to the church on earth. See Galatians 4:6.

It is the same Priest but in a different form. It is the same Jesus but in a different manifestation and capacity. Physically He is in heaven with the Father, but He teaches,

guides, instructs, and relates the will of God to the people, in a different form. He comes to our bodily temple in His Spirit. He is referred to as the Holy Spirit, or as Paul put it, “The Spirit of His Son” (Galatians 4:6).

The Bible tells us that Jesus was with His followers wherever they went to preach:

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen (Mark 16:19, 20).

From examining the jobs of the earthly priests and seeing their antitypes, we learn that the High Priest of our bodily temple is none other than Jesus Christ Himself—the heavenly Priest in a different form.

Each message to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 begins by identifying Jesus as the Author of the letter and ends by saying, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” See Revelation 2:1, 7; 2:8, 11; 2:12, 17; 2:18, 29; 3:1, 6; 3:7, 13; 3:14, 22.

It is the same Person in two forms doing two jobs: communicating the message from heaven as the Son of God, and delivering it to the church on earth, the bodily temple, as the Spirit. Jesus said:

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (John 14:16).

When we receive the Holy Spirit, we are receiving Christ Himself. It is the same Priest in another form.

The Antitype of the earthly high priest is Jesus Christ, not someone else called “God the Holy Spirit,” which doesn’t fit

the type nor the priestly criteria.

Jesus is the High Priest of our bodily temple here on earth. He is the only Mediator between God and mankind. See 1 Timothy 2:5.

How does the Godhead question impact righteousness by faith?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 24

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE SPIRIT

1. In what temple is the Holy Spirit/Spirit of Christ ministering?
2. In Romans 8:26, 27, who is groaning, the Spirit or us?
3. How many high priests were there at a time in the tabernacle service? Why does the trinity doctrine present a problem here?
4. How do the qualifications of the priests point to Jesus as the Spirit ministering in us?
5. How do the jobs of the priests point to Jesus as the Spirit ministering in us?

CHAPTER 25

IMPACT ON RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit”
(1 Corinthians 6:17).

What is righteousness by faith?

In order for us to know how the Godhead issue affects the righteousness by faith message, we need to first understand what righteousness by faith is. Put simply, righteousness by faith refers to a righteousness received by faith. Notice the following text:

Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference (Romans 3:20–22).

Please do not miss the point. Paul was not talking about man's righteousness. He was talking about the very righteousness of God Himself. He calls it "the righteousness of God." Notice what he said in chapter 10:

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (Romans 10:3).

The righteousness being offered to us is not of human origin; it is God's own righteousness. It is what Martin Luther called a *justitia alienum*, an alien righteousness; a righteousness that belongs properly to somebody else. He went on to say it's a righteousness that is *extra nos*, outside of us. Namely, the righteousness of Christ.

Paul was clear in his message. He was pointing us to a special kind of righteousness, a righteousness that cannot be attained through obedience to the law. God has manifested His righteousness apart from the whole principle of law, apart from the whole idea of legal obedience as a way of obtaining righteousness, apart from the legalistic system the Jews of Jesus's day presented as the basis of righteousness.

The righteousness of God is available only "by faith of Jesus Christ" to all those who "believe" (Romans 3:22). The only condition is to believe. That is where the term righteousness by faith comes from. It stands for the good news that we can receive the righteousness of God by faith.

Now, of course, we are saved by faith alone, but faith that saves is never alone; it is always accompanied with a change. We are not saved by faith and works; we are saved by faith that works. The righteousness by faith message does not do

away with the works of faith, but it does do away with the works of the law—and there's a big difference between the two. The first is the source of man's righteousness, and the latter is the fruit of God's righteousness.

Righteousness by faith is the term used in reference to the righteousness we receive by simply believing in Jesus and accepting Him as our Lord and Saviour.

Notice what Paul wrote to the Philippians:

*And be found in him, not having mine own
righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is
through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is
of God by faith (Philippians 3:9).*

It is a righteousness that comes from God by faith—not as a result of me keeping the law but of believing on Jesus. This is the biblical teaching of righteousness by faith. Very simple yet true and liberating.

Receiving by simply believing?

Until we have learned the truth about God and his Son—especially the identity of the Holy Spirit—righteousness by faith is only a theory. Through understanding the Bible teaching of the Holy Spirit, we are able to understand the deep implications of righteousness by faith, which enables us to praise God from the depths of our heart for His wonderful plan of salvation.

If the righteousness we receive by faith is not based on obedience to law, then what is it based on? It cannot be my works. Righteous actions will be the fruit of an internal righteousness; however, we are looking for the root.

There are different schools of understanding relating to God's righteousness:

Actions

Some interpret God's righteousness as righteous actions. The focus is on actions, obedience to the law, the dos and don'ts. In this school, we determine our stand with God based on our obedience.

A change of a record in heaven

Some view God's righteousness as simply a change in God's books in heaven, a change in God's mind about the sinner. God sees us as a sinner before we accept Jesus then changes His mind and see us as being righteous. In this school, the emphasis is on a changed record in heaven, not on a changed life.

A Person

There is an element of truth in the first two schools, but they both miss the main point. This righteousness is referring to a Person. Ultimately, it is not a righteous action nor change of record. The righteousness God has offered us by faith is found in a Person because it is His nature. It will result in righteous actions, but it is not founded on righteous actions.

Can one be holy without God? No—holiness is an attribute of God alone; hence, without God we cannot have holiness. The same goes for righteousness. Righteousness is an attribute of God (Matthew 19:16, 17; 1 John 1:5; Psalm 119:137, 142). Without God, we cannot be righteous. Holiness and righteousness are attributes found only in God because they are part of His nature. As far as the human race is concerned, the only way we can become partakers of God's nature is

through Christ (John 14:6). Hence, righteousness is found in a Person, not in actions.

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jeremiah 23:5, 6).

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30).

These verses testify that the Lord Himself is our Righteousness. Jesus Himself “is made unto us” righteousness. His name is the Righteous Branch. “Their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD” (Isaiah 54:17).

Paul

Notice what Paul said:

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone (Romans 9:30–32).

Why did the Gentiles attain to this righteousness and the Jews did not? What was Paul’s point? The Gentiles did not trust in their own works but trusted in God and accepted Jesus as their Saviour. The Jews trusted in their own efforts

and rejected Jesus. Righteousness is found in Jesus. If you have Jesus, you have the righteousness of God. If you do not have Him, you do not have this righteousness.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Corinthians 5:21; see also Romans 8:1–4).

We are made the righteousness of God in Christ. Only in Christ is found this righteousness. He has been made righteousness to us. In other words, the righteousness we are to receive by faith, or the righteousness by which we are saved, is found in the life of Jesus Christ Himself.

For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life (Romans 5:10).

We are saved and made right with God, or made righteous, by receiving the life of Christ. Salvation and righteousness are found in Jesus Christ. See 2 Timothy 2:10. The reason this is so, is because Jesus accomplished the work of salvation in Himself. That is, He authored:

- A life free from sin, the seed of death (John 14:30)
- A life that is eternal (John 1:4 and 1 John 1:2)
- A life partaking of the divine nature (John 1:1, 14; 14:10, 11)
- A life fully united with God (John 10:30; 6:57; Colossians 1:19)
- A life of everlasting righteousness (Daniel 9:24; Romans 3:21, 22; 1 Corinthians 1:30)
- A life in which sin is condemned (Romans 8:3)

- A life that defeats sin and its author (Hebrews 2:14)
- A life of eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:9)

The crux of righteousness by faith

The life of Jesus is the crux of righteousness by faith. When a sinner repents and accepts Jesus as his Saviour, God imparts to him the Spirit/life of His Son (Galatians 4:6; Acts 3:26).

That is why the Bible says:

*Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus's sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh
(2 Corinthians 4:10, 11).*

The basis of the righteousness by faith message is found in the indwelling of Christ. See Colossians 1:27; 1 John 4:4; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:17; 2 Corinthians 13:5; Romans 8:10. The only reason we become righteous is because we partake of the divine, or righteous, nature of God, by receiving the life of Jesus Christ. See 2 Corinthians 4:10, 11.

Looking back at the first verse in this chapter:

*But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit
(1 Corinthians 6:17).*

In other words, when a sinner repents, he receives the life of Christ. This brings God's nature, righteousness, and sanctification. The life of Christ is the centre of the righteousness by faith message. It is an exchange of life, not a modification of life.

Therefore, righteousness is found in a Person—Jesus Christ.

It is not merely doing right but being right. And being right relates to our spirit, our soul. It is an internal thing. It refers to who we are on the inside. When we receive God's righteousness by faith, our life will change. Change always accompanies conversion because it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. See Galatians 2:20.

What this means is that the righteousness by faith message is based on each one of us receiving the righteous life of Christ—the divine Person, Christ Himself.

All this is linked to a correct identification of the Holy Spirit. Understanding the true identity of the Holy Spirit, that it is the life of Christ, helps us to know how we become one Spirit with Him. We become one Spirit with Him when we receive His very life.

The gospel is about restoring life to man. The Bible tells us that this life is found in His Son and that we receive it by receiving His Spirit. John tells us:

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God (1 John 5:11–13).

The reason John could say the above is because life, righteousness, and salvation are found in Jesus Christ. He is our life. See Colossians 3:4.

Through the trinity doctrine, a new spirit, another spirit, has been introduced. See 2 Corinthians 11:3, 4.

Trinity problems

“The Father is not the Son, and the Holy Spirit is not the Father or the Son” (Jeffrey E. Brower and Michael C. Rea, “Understanding the Trinity”).

“The Father is not the Son; Son is not the Spirit; Spirit is not the Father, etc.” (Green.House Youth—Bible Studies for Youth, edited by Pastor Damien Rice for Youth Ministries Department of Seventh-day Adventist Church (North NSW, Lesson 5—Who’s Ya Daddy?).

According to the trinity belief, “God the Holy Spirit” is not Jesus; meaning, the spirit we receive is not the spirit, or life, of Jesus.

According to this teaching, it is “God the Holy Spirit” who dwells in us, the “temple of God” (1 Corinthians 3:16), while Jesus is in heaven with the Father. Through this teaching, a third person/being—“God the Holy Spirit” is regarded as equal with God and worthy of worship, reverence, and adoration as is God. Yet, every Bible student knows the term “God the Holy Spirit” is never mentioned in Scripture.

In light of this, it is significant what the Bible says:

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4).

The trinity doctrine takes Christ away from the believer. Instead of receiving His life/spirit, we receive another person/being called “God the Holy Spirit.”

We're talking about a direct attack on the foundation of the righteousness by faith message. In actuality, we receive righteousness by receiving Jesus, not another person called "God the Holy Spirit," who never experienced humanity, and was never tempted or overcame temptation.

Righteousness by faith is built on the truth that we become righteous when by faith we believe and hence receive the righteous life of Jesus. See John 1:12, 13.

The trinity doctrine destroys this beautiful truth by replacing the indwelling Christ with the indwelling of another being called "God the Holy Spirit" who is not Jesus. It turns the beautiful teaching of righteousness by faith into a meaningless theory.

After understanding the true identity of the Holy Spirit, righteousness by faith becomes a meaningful reality. It highlights what Christ has done and is doing for us. Paul's words, "Ye are complete in him" (Colossians 2:10) will become the highlight of our experience.

Now I'd like to share my own experience with the Godhead issue...

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 25

IMPACT ON RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

1. What is righteousness by faith?
2. Whose righteousness are we talking about?
3. What is the only condition of receiving righteousness?
4. What is the crux of righteousness by faith?
5. How does the trinity doctrine mess up biblical righteousness by faith?

CHAPTER 26

HOW THE GODHEAD IMPACTED MY LIFE

I believe that unless a teaching impacts my life, it is almost irrelevant to me.

Why do I believe it is important to study this topic and get to the bottom of it? What has it done for me? How has this truth affected my spiritual walk with God?

Since accepting this truth, I have noticed some changes in me toward God. Here are some of them.

Increased my love for God and His Son

Understanding the Sonship of Jesus amplified what God did for me and how much He loves me.

As a father of three boys, I know what a father feels toward his son. The first time I read the story of Abraham offering up his son on Mount Moriah (see Genesis 22), emotion tore my

heart. *How could he be willing to give up his son?* I thought to myself.

As a father, I know the love a parent has for his child. Virtually every human parent understands that. God was speaking to humans when He inspired John to write:

*In this was manifested the love of God toward us,
because that God sent his only begotten Son into the
world, that we might live through him (1 John 4:9).*

God chose to manifest His love toward you and me in giving up His Son. He was the One who instilled this paternal love in our hearts. Why did He do that? Do you think it has any relation to understanding the plan of salvation?

When I brought my firstborn son Daniel home from the hospital, I was the proudest and happiest dad on earth. I will never forget the experience I had that night when I knelt beside my bed and prayed, Father, I want to experience what You went through for me. Help me to picture what happened to Jesus on the cross as happening to my son. I could not endure the feeling for more than five seconds. I shook my head and thought, Sorry, Father. I cannot do it.

God truly has a Son, and God truly loved me so much that He was willing to risk losing His beloved Son in order to save me. He truly gave His only begotten Son so I can live. A real Father gave His real Son. It was not a metaphor or role play. It was reality. This is love worth pursuing, love worth dying for, and more importantly, love worth living for.

Understanding this truth revealed God's love to me in a way beyond what words could express. It touched my heart in a practical way. I thought I loved God, but when I understood this truth and contemplated its reality, my love for Him increased beyond measure. Furthermore, His love became

a reality that can never be doubted or shaken.

No wonder John wrote:

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? (1 John 5:5).

This is not mere theology. It is purely the outworking of God's love. Realising how much God loved us by understanding the real Sonship of Jesus, brings forth love in our hearts and back toward God. The Bible says:

We love him, because he first loved us (1 John 4:19).

The deeper my understanding of God's love, the greater my love for Him. And the greater my love for Him, the greater my surrender will be.

So, understanding this truth impacted practically my relationship with God, my love and appreciation for Him, and my commitment to follow Him.

Assured of salvation and confidence in God

Understanding the truth about God has increased my confidence in God and His Son. Throughout my Christian life, I have spoken to many Christians from various denominations and have come across people who are resting in God and others who worry about their salvation.

I was never one to worry about my salvation, as I have trusted God. But at times I wasn't sure. Since having learned the truth about God, I understand the sacrifice of God in sending His real Son, and the beautiful truth of Jesus's indwelling in me. As a result, my love for God has quadrupled, along with my confidence and rest in Him.

Paul said:

*I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed,
and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I
have committed unto him against that day
(2 Timothy 1:12).*

Paul had a lot of confidence in Christ. There was a time when I wondered how I could attain to such confidence. I no longer wonder. Now I know and I am persuaded that God is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him. How could I doubt Someone who loved me so much?

Truly, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).

My assurance, my confidence, my hope of salvation and eternal life, find a resting place in God’s love and mercy. With so much love manifested toward me, how could I lose confidence? He is my Father, and He loves me as much as He loves His Son Jesus. To me this is not mere theology or fancy talk. It is reality because I know the love I have for my children—and now I would give my life for them.

Yet God the Father was willing to see His only begotten Son die on a tree. He was willing to separate Himself from His own Son during His greatest trial, and He was willing to hide His loving face just to see me saved, just to give me another chance to be one with Him again. This was not a role-play, a metaphor, but a real Father offering His real Son—just for me!

My assurance in God was boosted like never before. I can now say with Paul: “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12). And “the love of Christ constraineth” me (2 Corinthians 5:14).

Love has a special way of impacting the heart and mind. The more I understand God's love for me, the more I trust Him. And the more I trust Him, the more I rest in Him, the more confidence I have in Him, the more assurance I have in His desire to save me.

O love of God, how rich and pure!

How measureless and strong!

It shall forevermore endure—

The saints' and angels' song.

Affected my prayer life

Jesus told the scribe, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with . . . all thy mind" (Mark 12:30). He told the woman at the well, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23).

Before understanding this truth, I would pray to "God," but in my mind I was not sure exactly who I was talking to. Many Christians pray to "God" without knowing who He is. You can hear it in their prayers and discussions. I was once one of them.

After understanding this truth, subconsciously my prayers became more direct. I can talk to God the Father or to Jesus His Son knowing I am talking to a real Person. I can have a relationship with God and His Son, knowing that I am made in Their image.

A prayer partner once asked me to share my belief about God and His Son. I did and left it with him. Later, I could tell from his prayer the truth made sense to him. His prayers became more direct. The way he addressed God was intentional.

I have seen the effect of this truth in my prayers and in the prayers of others. That is why Jesus admonished us to love God with our heart, soul, strength, and mind, or understanding. See Mark 12:30, 33.

Impacted my understanding of righteousness by faith

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the righteousness by faith message became a reality to me after understanding the identity of the Holy Spirit. My Bible says Christ in me is my hope of glory. See Colossians 1:27. It says I am crucified with Christ and that He lives in me. See Galatians 2:20. It says God gave me eternal life, and this life is in His Son. And then it says he who has the Son has life. See 1 John 5:11, 12.

It was impossible for me to comprehend these things with my previous perspective of God because it took Jesus away from me and gave me a different person/being called “God the Holy Spirit.” However, when I understood the biblical teaching that the Holy Spirit is the life of Christ Himself without His physical form, it all made sense. I understood the reality of it and realised that if Christ is in me, I am righteous and saved because I have His victorious, righteous, and eternal life within me. I realised that righteousness by faith is not just a theological phrase, or an impractical truth; it is an actual reality that took place when I received Jesus into my life.

Jesus truly is in me. I have His life and righteousness because I have Him. I believe it and receive it by faith, as Scripture says. What a glorious reality!

Impacted my understanding of Satan's greatest deception

The Bible says that all the world will wonder after the beast and that those who wonder after the beast will end up worshiping the dragon, who is Satan. This is found in Revelation 13:3, 4.

Have you ever thought about this? Those who wonder after the beast are described as “all the world.” Their number is so large that they appeared to John in vision as nearly everyone on planet Earth.

I could not understand how this would be fulfilled with one-third of the world being Christians. I now understand how it is possible. The sad reality is that we are witnessing it with our own eyes. What Paul feared has already happened, and the majority of Christians are totally unaware. Satan has managed to introduce another Jesus and another spirit into Christianity. See 2 Corinthians 11:3, 4.

Through deception, Satan has almost managed to destroy the foundation upon which Jesus built His church. In its infancy, Jesus said He would build it on the rock of the truth that He is the Son of God. See Matthew 16:16–18. Today, due to the trinity doctrine, Christians are ostracised and disfellowshipped if they believe in the literal Sonship of Jesus. I was disfellowshipped from the denomination I belonged to because I believed and taught that Jesus is the literal Son of God.

God's people will have the Father's name and Jesus's name written on their forehead. See Revelation 14:1. The apostate church will have “mystery” written on her forehead (Revelation 17:5), which symbolises the god they worship.

Understanding this truth has set me free from Satan's rampant deception. I pray all of God's people will be set free.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed (John 8:36).

How can we be truly set free if we reject the Son in whom freedom is found?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
CHAPTER 26

HOW THE GODHEAD IMPACTED MY LIFE

1. How has the truth about God and His Son impacted your life?

HANDBOOK TO THE FREE ONLINE COURSE – 26 LESSONS

The identity of the God of the Bible has for years been shrouded in human tradition and philosophy. That which has been made very clear by Jesus and the apostles has been classed a mystery that no human mind can comprehend. As a result, most Christians are confused regarding who their God is. Many hold to a belief that they neither understand nor can defend.

- Who then is the God of the Bible? Who is the Source of all things? Is there one God, or are there three Gods? And if there is one God, is He a triune God or an individual?
- And who is Jesus Christ? What does it mean to be begotten? How many times has Jesus been begotten? Is He God, or is He the Son of God? Is He equal with God, or is He inferior to God?
- And what about the Holy Spirit? Is He God the Holy Spirit, a third person like the Father and the Son? Is He even a person? Does He have a priesthood? And who is it who dwells in the believer? What does the Bible mean when it says, “Christ in you, the hope of glory”?

In the free online course that accompanies this handbook, Imad Awde explains the Bible’s answers to these questions and many more. By the end of the course, you will know not only what the Bible teaches in answer to these questions, but also how to confidently present it and answer objections.

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