

Is There Only One God? - Christians, Three Gods, and the Trinity (Part 1)

Author: Larry W. Wilson

Shortly before Jesus was crucified, He was arrested and tried by the Sanhedrin, Israel's Supreme Court. The Bible says, **"The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put Him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward."** (Matthew 26:59,60) Even though the false witnesses accused Jesus of several crimes, He did not defend Himself.

Wishing to move quickly to a guilty verdict, **"The high priest [Caiaphas] stood up and said to Jesus, 'Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?' But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, 'I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of God.'** 'Yes, it is as you say,' Jesus replied. 'But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of Heaven.' Then [with a show of indignation and outrage] **the high priest tore his clothes** [something which God forbade the high priest to do, Leviticus 21:10] **and said, 'He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses [to condemn Him]? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy [with your own ears].'** " (Matthew 26:62-65, insertions mine)

Caiaphas had heard that Jesus claimed to be the Son of God on many occasions. Therefore, he reasoned that if he could get Jesus to declare Himself the Son of God, the Sanhedrin would hear this "blasphemy" and reach a unanimous verdict. When Jesus confirmed that He was the Christ, the Son of God, He insulted the most sacred doctrine within Judaism, a doctrine called "monotheism."

The Jewish version of monotheism teaches there is one God. His name is Jehovah and all other gods are false and imaginary. The Jews considered any challenge to this doctrine to be blasphemy, punishable by death. Jesus understood the trap before responding to Caiaphas. If He denied His identity, He would be a liar. If He spoke the truth, He would be killed for blasphemy.

Monotheism and Judaism

The basis for Jewish monotheism is described in the Old Testament. Consider the following three passages. One day, Moses saw a burning bush and as he approached, **" 'Do not come any closer,' God said. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.'** Then He said, **'I am *the* God of your father [Amram], the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.'** [Notice the singular, "I am *the* God."] **At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.'** " (Exodus 3:5,6, italics and insertions mine)

Later, from Mount Sinai, God spoke the first commandment: **“I am the Lord [Jehovah] your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me** [Notice that “me” is singular.]” (Exodus 20:2,3) Shortly before Moses died, he made the declaration: **“Hear, O Israel: The Lord [Jehovah] our God, the Lord is one** [Notice that “one” is singular.]” (Deuteronomy 6:4) Finally, notice what God said about Himself: **“This is what the Lord [Jehovah] says -- Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord [Jehovah] Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God** [Notice that “me” is singular.]” (Isaiah 44:6)

These verses and many others in the Old Testament explain why Jewish monotheism teaches there is one God and His name is Jehovah (Eternal God). We need to understand Jewish monotheism because Jesus came to Earth to confront this doctrine and the Sanhedrin sentenced Him to death for it.

“Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy.’ What do you think?” ‘He is worthy of death,’ they answered.” (Matthew 26:65,66) Because monotheism is the foundation of Judaism, the Jews in Christ’s day believed it was impossible for Jehovah to have a Son. Currently, orthodox Jews still anticipate the Messiah will come, but they insist He has to be an ordinary mortal because monotheism mandates that it is *impossible* for more than one God to exist.

Judaism’s View of Jesus

The high priest became livid when Jesus said that He was the Son of God. The problem was this: If Jehovah had a son, there had to be two Gods! If there were two Gods, monotheism was a false doctrine and Judaism was a false religion. This story in John 5 will help to illustrate the problem. One Sabbath day, Jesus came upon a crippled man lying beside a pool of water in Jerusalem and Jesus healed him. Later, when the man learned that Jesus had healed him, he told the priests. **“So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted Him** [as a law breaker]. **Jesus said to them, ‘My Father is always at his work to this very [Sabbath] day, and I, too, am working** [within the boundaries of the Sabbath commandment – which the Jews had badly distorted].’ **For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill Him; not only was He breaking the Sabbath [they thought], but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”** (John 5:16-18, insertions and italics mine)

The Jews understood a son was the equal of His father because this is the order of life. A watermelon produces a watermelon because the seed within the parent is identical to the seed within the offspring. A cow produces a cow because the seed within the parent is identical to the seed within the offspring, and the seed within the father is identical to the seed within his son. “Like begets like.” Therefore, when Jesus said that God was His Father, the Jews became furious because His use of language declared that He was equal with Jehovah. They screamed blasphemy! Stone Him!

Jesus Spoke the Words of the Father

When Jesus said that God was His Father, it was actually the Father that spoke through Jesus' lips. Jesus did not speak on His own. The Father wanted the Jews to know that Jesus was His equal, so the Father spoke words through the lips of Jesus that clearly conveyed this idea to them. The Jews were outraged and insulted by the Father's words, but Jesus was not the one speaking! Jesus said: **"For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me *what to say and how to say it.*"** (John 12:49, italics mine) On another occasion, Jesus said: **"These words you hear *are not my own*; they belong to the Father who sent me."** (John 14:24, italics mine) Jesus said to His disciples, **"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you *are not just my own.* Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing His work."** (John 14:10, italics mine) While praying for His disciples, Jesus said to the Father, **"For I gave them *the words you gave me* and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me."** (John 17:8, italics mine)

This is a profound point to consider: The Father confronted the Jews through Jesus and He received their abuse. The Jews were insulted and highly offended because their religious beliefs did not align with the truth about God. This is how it will be during the Great Tribulation. Jesus will speak through the lips of the 144,000! His words will be insulting and inflammatory, and Satan's agents will punish and torture God's servants as if the 144,000 spoke on their own! We should not be surprised because the sinful nature is hostile toward God. (Romans 8:7) For a moment, put on the sandals of the Sanhedrin. How could a poor, homeless and homely looking man from Nazareth, about 33 years of age, be so insulting and brazen? How could He claim to be the Son of God? How could He be an equal of Jehovah?

The Father confirmed who Jesus was on several occasions: At His baptism, the Father spoke from Heaven. He said, **"This is my Son."** (Matthew 3:17) On the Mount of Transfiguration, the Father spoke from Heaven. He said, **"This is my Son."** (Matthew 17:5, 2 Peter 1:16,17) Just before His crucifixion, Jesus was in the temple and He called upon His Father to speak from Heaven so that everyone present could know that He was the Son of God – and the Father did! (John 12:28-30) When Jesus died, the Father sent an angel to tear the temple curtain from top to bottom. This wool curtain, believed to be about 4 inches thick, separated the Holy place from the Most Holy place. Tearing it open indicated temple services were finished. The Jews killed "The Lamb of God" and His death terminated the Levitical system. (Mark 15:38, Colossians 2)

The apostle John describes another time the Father conveyed the fact to the Jews that Jesus was equal to Himself. One day, after healing the man beside the pool, **"The Jews gathered around Him [Jesus], saying, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ [the Messiah], tell us plainly.'** Jesus answered, **'I did tell you [that I am the Christ], but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I and the Father are one.'** Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, **'I have shown you many great miracles from the Father.**

For which of these do you stone me?’ ‘We are not stoning you for any of these,’ replied the Jews, ‘but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, *claim to be God*’ ” (John 10:24-33)

When the Father said through Jesus, “I and the Father are one,” He did not want the Jews to understand that He and Jesus were the same person. Instead, the Father wanted the Jews to understand that He and Jesus were like identical twins. The Father wanted the Jews to learn this because they worshiped and embraced a “Jehovah” which was nothing like the “Father.” **“Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love me, for I [am exactly like the Father and I] came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own [I am not saying what I want to say or doing what I want to do]; but He sent me. . .’ ‘He who belongs to [the genuine] God hears what God [the Father] says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God [you belong to your god, the devil].’ ”** (John 8:42, 44, 47, insertions mine)

I hope you now understand how the Father’s testimony which Jesus spoke put the Jews and Judaism in a very difficult position. The Jews could either admit that monotheism was a false doctrine or kill a lowly looking homeless man for blasphemy. If the Jews admitted that Israel’s most sacred doctrine was false, their religion which dated back to Abraham, would be shaken. Truth is a doubled edged sword, isn’t it? (Hebrews 4:12) Have you had a cherished view about God crumble? Have you experienced a complete paradigm shift? Have you lost friends, family, church and job because of new light? If you have, you understand the bittersweet joy of truth and the pain of rejection.

Jesus and the Father are One

Jesus spoke the Father’s testimony which Jesus gave to the Jews. The Father made it perfectly clear that He and Jesus were equals, and the Jews correctly understood the Father’s testimony. This is proven by their responses to Jesus on several occasions. The Jews eventually killed Jesus for blasphemy. If you had been born and raised a Jew and could trace your religious culture and heritage all the way back to Abraham, and you heard the Father say through the lips of Jesus that Jesus was a God, how would you have reacted? What would you have thought if Jesus said to you: **“He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God?”** (John 8:47) Jesus said He did not come to Earth on His own. He *was sent* to Earth to confront many errors which the Jews embraced as truth. Jesus allowed the Father to speak through his lips and the result was very painful. Looking ahead, the 144,000 will endure the same hardship for 1,260 days. No one with a sinful nature could faithfully endure this. This is why the sealing is such a wonderful doctrine. Jesus will remove the sinful natures of the 144,000 before their work begins; otherwise, the sinful nature would retaliate and would ruin their ministry! They would not be a perfect reflection of Jesus! Retaliation is rooted within the sinful nature and it has to be rooted out! To be continued.

Why Jesus is Called "The Word"-Christians, Three Gods, and the Trinity (Pt. 2)

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Last month, I wrote the Father sent Jesus to Earth so the Father could speak to the Jews through Jesus' lips. Several times, Jesus told the Jews that His words were not His own and the Jews put Jesus to death for blasphemy.

For more than one thousand years, Jews thought monotheism was an *absolute* truth, but the Bible teaches monotheism is what I call a *sufficient* doctrine. Sufficient doctrines exist because God allows people to embrace incomplete and faulty ideas. (1 Corinthians 13:9-12) When God reveals greater truth, sufficient doctrines become weak and insufficient because He has given more light on the topic. Sufficient doctrines always have loose ends and are not scripturally complete. People who accept a sufficient doctrine overlook and diminish parts of Scripture that, within the context of the sufficient doctrine, make no sense. For example, what would you do with this passage if you were a devout believer in monotheism? "[The Father said to the Son,] **Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God [the Father calls Jesus, "God"], your God, has set You above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.**" (Psalm 45:6,7, insertions mine) The Jews often read Psalm 45, but, within their concept of monotheism, they could not figure out how one God (the Father) could speak to another God (the Son) and elevate Him above His companions! (See Hebrews 1:8,9) Therefore, the Jews ignored and diminished Psalm 45 because it did not fit their preconceptions.

The Father sent Jesus to Earth so the Father could speak through a faithful witness. A few people believed the Father spoke through Jesus and He supported this belief when He prayed to the Father, " **'I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world . . . For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.'** " (John 17:6,8) Jesus' ministry reveals a very interesting process: Man's understanding of truth is always incomplete. We cannot know more than God has revealed. When God wants more truth known, He sends "new light" and it often produces conflict. Jesus said, "**This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.**" (John 3:19-21) We cannot know when or through whom "new light" will come, but we know the Father will continue to reveal it for eternity because He is constantly revealing more truth. The irony with new light is that seekers of truth are delighted and defenders of tradition are insulted because their darkness is threatened.

Paul observed this phenomenon, but only after He became a Christian: "**Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the**

mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, *which was not made known to men in other generations* as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets." (Ephesians 3:2-5, italics mine)

When the Father releases new light in religious matters, there are always two results. The first is insult and rejection. The Jews rejected Jesus because He presented a doctrine of two Gods (new light) which was not compatible with their doctrine of one God (tradition). Secondly, people who embrace new light will suffer for it and the price may be death (like Jesus and the first Christian martyr, Stephen). However, truth will move forward because the Holy Spirit will help seekers of truth to understand and embrace it! (John 16:13)

Jesus is the Son of God

The Father sent Jesus to Earth (He did not come on His own - John 10:18) to reveal more truth, but the mission did not go well. **"Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. *I have not come on my own; but He sent me.* Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire [which is to murder me for blasphemy] . . . He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.'**" (John 8:42-44, 47, italics and insertion mine)

Of course, the Father knew that Israel's leaders would have a very difficult time letting go of monotheism so He often confirmed Jesus was "the Son of God" through astonishing signs and miracles. The first miracle was the virgin birth of Jesus. No other virgin had given birth to a child. The Father sent the angel Gabriel to Mary saying: **" 'You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.' 'How will this be,' Mary asked the angel, 'since I am a virgin?' The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.'**" (Luke 1:31-33) You may not realize it, but the angel made a profound revelation when He called Jesus, "The Holy One."

The Jews considered the title, "The Holy One" very important and they used this title in the Old Testament about 50 times to describe Jehovah. Notice Isaiah's words: **"To whom, then, will you compare God? What image will you compare Him to? . . . Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the Earth was founded? He sits enthroned above the circle of the Earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the Heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than He blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. 'To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?' says *The Holy One.* 'Lift your eyes and look to the Heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of His**

great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing . . . Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord [Jehovah] is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the Earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom.’ ”
(Isaiah 40:18-28, italics and insertions mine)

After reading Isaiah 40, and many similar passages in the Old Testament, we can see why the Jews regarded monotheism as an absolute truth. Until God chose to give “new light,” it was a *sufficient* truth in God’s sight. However, Gabriel gave Mary “new light.” “The Holy One” (Almighty God) would be born to a virgin. John describes the miracle this way: **“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory [on the Mount of Transfiguration], the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace [compassion] and truth [no lies].”** (John 1:14, insertions mine)

Jesus is called the “Word” because the Father’s testimony came through His lips. When the Father wants to say something, He speaks through Jesus. Many people do not realize that the Father rarely speaks in the Bible and when He does, He speaks *through* Jesus, *to* Jesus, or *to exalt* Jesus. Notice these passages:

Through Jesus: Jesus told the Jews that it was the Father speaking through Him: **“For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it . . . He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”** (John 12:49, 14:24)

To Jesus: The Father said to Jesus: **“ ‘Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.’ ”** (Psalm 45:6,7) The Father called Jesus “God” and He identifies Himself as “God” in Psalm 45. This should have been a big hint to Israel that monotheism was not an absolute doctrine. Tradition has a way of hiding things that we do not understand.

Exalts Jesus: Now, notice how the Father exalted Jesus: **“While he [Peter] was speaking [on the Mount of Transfiguration], a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. A voice came from the cloud, saying, ‘This is my Son [my equal], whom I have chosen [the Messiah]; listen to Him.’ ”** (Luke 9:34,35, insertions mine) The Father also exalted Jesus when He was baptized: **“As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment Heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him. And a voice from Heaven said, ‘This is my Son [my equal], whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.’ ”** (Matthew 3:16,17) When the Father announced from Heaven that Jesus was His Son, He exalted Jesus as His equal! The Jews perfectly understood the equality of a father and son and this claim made them furious. (John 5:18; 10:33)

Jesus Speaks for God the Father

The Father is invisible. No created being has seen Him and no created being will ever see

Him! Even the angels can only see an outline of His brilliance. At the Second Coming (Matthew 26:64) and for all eternity, the redeemed will only see an outline of His brilliance. No created being can see the Father because He lives in “unapproachable light.” His infinite glory and power would blind anyone who is exposed to the Father. This explains why only Jesus and the Holy Spirit can see the Father and enter into His glory. Each of them is God in the same way the Father is God. When the Trinity formed, Jesus was appointed “The Word” and He will be the Father’s spokesperson forever. Carefully study these verses:

1. Jesus said: “**No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only He has seen the Father.** (John 6:46)
2. Paul wrote: “**He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God . . . The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being.**” (Colossians 1:15, Hebrews 1:3, insertion and italics mine)
3. Paul wrote: “**God [the Father], the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To Him be honor and might forever. Amen.** (1 Timothy 6:15,16, insertion and italics mine)
4. John wrote: “**No one has ever seen God [the Father] but God [the Son] the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made Him known.**” (John 1:18, insertions and italics mine)

In the previous study, I wrote that Jesus is like the Father’s identical twin. This is important because the Father sent a duplicate of Himself to Earth. When we consider Jesus’ life of self-denial, sacrifice, humility, and kindness, we are also considering the Father’s character. Remember, Jesus washed the dirty feet of His disciples and allowed wicked men to ridicule, spit on and beat Him within an inch of His life before He went to the cross. Then, on the cross, He said, “Father forgive them,” before He died. Through His life on Earth, Jesus reflected the Father perfectly. We can know the Father would have done the same things because Jesus and the Father are identical in character, too. “**Jesus answered [Philip]: ‘Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’ ’**” (John 14:9, insertion mine)

Jesus is the Word

The Father lives in unapproachable glory so He has chosen to speak through the lips of Jesus who is like an identical twin. This is why Jesus is called “The Word.” The “Father’s testimony” comes out of His mouth. When Jesus was on Earth, He did not speak on His own! The Father confirmed that Jesus was His spokesperson to help those that seek truth. Jesus was born to a virgin and performed many miracles, signs, and wonders. The Father resurrected Jesus, took Him to Heaven, and seated Him on His throne. When we understand why Jesus is called “The Word,” John 1:14 makes perfect sense: “**The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us** [so that mankind could understand the Father and hear from Him].”

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Jesus Is the God of the Old Testament!-Christians, Three Gods, and the Trinity (Pt. 3)

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John wrote the book of Revelation about A.D. 95. Later, after John's exile on Patmos, he wrote three epistles and a gospel that bears his name. The gospel of John is much more than his recollection of personal experiences with Jesus; it also contains "new truth" which Jesus revealed to John when he wrote the book. This is why John's gospel differs considerably from the other three. At the beginning of the second century A.D., Christianity was in trouble. The spiritual condition of the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3 reveals how quickly a church can apostatize. Therefore, to help the believers, Jesus gave John information that would have resolved many conflicts if church leaders had considered and implemented the Gospel of John.

The Gospel of John is only surpassed by the book of Revelation in revealing all that Jesus is and the book of John is a theological cornerstone. John, with divine influence, wrote the Gospel of John for those who received the "early rain" in the same way he wrote the "Revelation of Jesus" for those who will receive the "latter rain." It is so ironic that while God gave the Gospel of John to settle conflicts between early Christians, the very first sentence ignited a conflict that continues to endure through today! **"In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word was God [just like the Father]."** (John 1:1, insertions mine)

Jesus wants His followers to know that He is a God just like the Father is a God. The first sentence in the Gospel of John declares that two separate, distinct, coeternal Gods existed before creation. Many early Christians (mostly Jewish converts) strongly opposed the idea that Jesus was deity (because Jewish tradition rejected polytheism) and other early Christians (mostly Gentile converts) easily embraced the idea that Jesus was deity just like the Father because polytheism was not a strange concept for them. After centuries of lively dispute over the deity of Jesus, church leaders in Rome terminated the conflict during the sixth century. Their solution was a disaster. The Catholic Church claimed there is one God who manifests Himself as three persons (thus, monotheism was preserved and the *appearance* of polytheism was recognized). The Catholic Church and many Protestant churches today try to maintain this futile compromise.

The Catholic solution (one God manifesting Himself as three persons) is not a viable solution because it places the Bible in a state of internal conflict. Internal conflict occurs when one Bible verse violates the meaning of another. For example, in Revelation 5, the Father conducted a search throughout the universe for someone worthy to receive the book sealed with seven seals. Eventually (according to the Catholic solution), the Father found another version of Himself to be the only person in the universe worthy to open the book. This conclusion is nonsense. The Father is not Jesus and Jesus is not the Father. The Catholic solution also makes the Bible unintelligible. For example, if there is only one God manifesting Himself as three persons, we have to consider who spoke from Heaven at Jesus' baptism and said, **"This**

is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17) Does the Father mean, “I’m very happy with myself?” Additionally, if there is only one God manifesting Himself as three persons, we have to consider who prayed to whom before going to the cross. Jesus said, **‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.’**” (Luke 22:42) If there is one God manifesting Himself as three persons, why would Jesus pray to Himself, saying “not my will, but yours be done?” Of course, a single God does not have two separate, distinct wills.

In John 1:1, Jesus declared to John that He and the Father are separate, distinct, coeternal Gods. Last month, we learned that Jesus is called “The Word” because the Father speaks through Jesus. The Father is an invisible God (Colossians 1:15; John 6:46) and He lives in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16); therefore, when the Father has something to say, He speaks through the only God that is a visible God. (1 John 1:1)

Jesus is the Creator of Everything That Exists

John 1 reveals another fact about Jesus and, strange as it may seem, many Christians still do not believe that Jesus is the Creator of everything! They think the Father created the universe, but John wrote, **“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. . . He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him.”** (John 1:14,10) Jesus created the universe, the angels, everything in Heaven, mankind, and everything on Earth. Jesus creates whatever the Father wants created. **“For by Him [Jesus] all things were created: Things in Heaven and on Earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him [Jesus] and for Him [the Father].”** (Colossians 1:16, insertions mine)

It is important to know that Jesus is the Creator, the Father speaks through Jesus, and that Jesus is a God who was with the Father before anything was created, because these facts indicate there is more than one God! In fact, later in this series of studies we will learn that three Gods function as one God! The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit decided to set up the operation of the Trinity in this way and this arrangement is one of the most beautiful things that a human being can contemplate.

Given what we know from John 1, consider Isaiah 44:6, 24. **“This is what the Lord [Jehovah] says – Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. . . This is what the Lord [Jehovah] says – your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the Earth by myself.”** Is it the Father or Jesus speaking in this verse? Before you answer, zoom forward in time about 750 years to A.D. 95. John is exiled on the island of Patmos and one Sabbath day, He received a vision. **“On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet. . . I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. . . When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead. Then He placed His right hand on me and said: ‘Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades [the grave].’ ”** (Revelation

1:10-18, insertions mine)

John saw someone who was dead, but is alive forever and ever, who was the first and the last, and who held the keys of death and Hades. Only one possible individual could be this person: **Jesus**. Isaiah 44:6,24 referred to Israel's King and Redeemer; as someone who stretched out the Heavens and spread out the Earth all by Himself; and someone who was the first and the last and apart from Him, there is no God. The only individual who fulfills these three elements is **Jesus!** However, this raises a couple of questions. How can Jesus say that apart from Him, there is no God if the Father is also a God? How can Jesus say that He is the first and the last if He was with the Father in the beginning?

My understanding is that when Jesus spoke to Isaiah, Isaiah interpreted His words within the context of monotheism. Israel did not know that two Gods existed (although the Old Testament offers several hints). *The time had not yet come for Israel to know about two Gods*. Therefore, the *only God* who revealed Himself in the Old Testament was Jesus. Notice what this means: Jesus created Adam and Eve. Jesus sent the flood in Noah's day. Jesus was the Almighty God who spoke with Abraham and Moses. Jesus passed over Egypt killing the firstborn. Jesus delivered Israel out of Egypt. Jesus spoke the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai. More than 97% of the time, the Jehovah [eternal God] mentioned in the Old Testament is Jesus. Now that we understand there are many references to Jesus in the Old Testament, perhaps the infinite sorrow found in this statement will make sense: **"He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him."** (John 1:11)

Apostasy overtakes people when people refuse "new light." When a religious body becomes set in its ways, whatever truth it may have will become stagnant. *When truth becomes tradition, tradition becomes absolute truth*. Of course, the Father understands the process and this is why He is constantly releasing "new light" to freshen and expand the body of truth that exists. (Ephesians 3:1-6) When people reject "new light," they cannot prevent themselves from falling into darkness (apostasy) because the light of truth never stops moving forward. Therefore, if we insist on standing firm on our traditions and refuse to move forward with "new light," we will soon be left in darkness.

Tradition Versus Truth

Suppose you were a priest in Israel at the time of Christ. Naturally, you would be deeply committed to the doctrine of monotheism. Moreover, you would have memorized (among many Scriptures) Isaiah 54:5: **"For your Maker is your husband -- the Lord [Jehovah] Almighty is His name -- the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; He is called the God of all the Earth."** Given your religious knowledge, what would you have thought if Jesus physically stood before you claiming to be Jehovah, "the God of all the Earth?" You would not believe that a homeless man could be Israel's Maker and Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the Earth unless the Father revealed it to you.

The disciples struggled to understand who Jesus was. One day, Jesus tested His disciples: **"But what about you?" He asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You**

are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus replied, ‘Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in Heaven.’ ” (Matthew 16:15-17) Even John the Baptist had a moment of doubt during the final days of his life. (Matthew 11:3) However, after the disciples saw Jesus die on the cross and ascend to Heaven, their faith in Him became unshakeable.

John wrote: **“The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you *the eternal life*, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.”** (1 John 1:2, italics mine) Jesus is Jehovah (an eternal God) just like the Father. He is the only one who has ever seen the Father: **“No one has ever seen God [the Father] but God [Jesus Christ] the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made Him known.”** (John 1:18) So, Jesus came to Earth with “new light” from Heaven during the 70th week of Daniel 9. The Father wanted to terminate fourteen centuries of Jewish monotheism and a few people in Israel eventually saw “the light.” **“In Him was life, and that life was the light of men!”** (John 1:4)

Summary

“New light” never ends. “New light” always produces conflict because leaving tradition is a social and religious test of faith. Of course, not everything called “new light” is “new light.” The devil produces so many lies that many people feel safer if they stay with tradition. Standing firm in tradition is much easier than embracing new light with its social and religious consequences. Therefore, common sense dictates that no one should abandon religious tradition without prayer, careful Bible study, and an honest investigation. No one should abandon religious tradition without seeking and receiving confirmation (peace about the matter) from the Holy Spirit. Finally, no one should abandon religious tradition for any other reason than an honest desire to walk in the light of truth. Those who love truth are always eager to know the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit even better!

Larry Wilson

Did Jesus Die in Our Place? - Christians, Three Gods, and the Trinity (Pt. 4)

Author: Marty Purvis

A thorough study of Jesus' death is extensive. His role in the plan of salvation raises many questions. For example, why does the plan of salvation require that someone die? If the Father loves sinners enough to sacrifice Jesus, why did the Father not give Himself to die for sinners? What prevented the Father from selecting or creating an angel to die for sinners? Is there something in God's law that requires an innocent person to die so a guilty person can go free? Why did the Father wait 4,000 years before He sent Jesus to Earth? What happens to people who have died without hearing about the ministry of Jesus? Did Jesus die the first or second death? Did Jesus die in our place?

Most Christians believe the Father sent Jesus to die as a sinless substitute for sinners. (Romans 3:23; 6:23) These two verses declare that *everyone has* sinned and the penalty for sin is death, therefore God has condemned all human beings to death. Furthermore, since one sinner cannot atone for the sins of another sinner and since each sinner has been condemned to death for his own sins, the Father's solution for saving sinners was for a sinless substitute to die. Christians maintain that the Father sent Jesus to Earth to die in our place. Still the question remains how the death of a sinless person can save a guilty person. Is there something in God's law that requires an innocent person to die so that a condemned person can go free? God said **"The soul who sins is the one who will die."** (Ezekiel 18:4) Jesus' role in the plan of salvation is complicated. However, most Christians agree that salvation requires a sinless substitute. This understanding leads to an interesting dilemma if we consider an endless number of people and an endless amount of time.

Sin has already occurred twice, once in Heaven and once on Earth. If sin does occur again, will God provide another sinless substitute? I know many Christians believe sin will never occur again (the Bible does not teach this) and I cannot say that it will. However, billions of years from now, after God has created billions of new planets with billions of new beings living on them, the possibility of sin exists because what I call God's "sudden death law" never expires. As long as finite beings live with an infinite God who we cannot understand and as long as finite beings have the power of choice, the *probability* of sin occurring is low but the *possibility* is never eliminated. However, when created beings have knowledge of good and evil, if a person sins, God will immediately execute him just as God was to execute Adam and Eve on the day they sinned. (Genesis 2:17)

Guilt is Transferred to Heaven's Temple

The Bible does not teach that Jesus died in our place; instead, Jesus died for much higher reasons! The Bible teaches that Jesus saves sinners through a process I call, "The Transfer Doctrine." God does not forgive sin (all sins are recorded), but God is willing to separate a sinner from his guilt by transferring a sinner's guilt into Heaven's temple through the sinless blood of Jesus. This transfer is possible if the sinner will in good faith confess and forsake the

sin, provide restitution, and humbly obey the inner voice of the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 8:5 says the earthly temple (starting with the tabernacle Moses built) and its services were a *shadow* of the real temple in Heaven. This means the ceremonial law in the Old Testament and its temple services were a *model* that generations of people could carefully study and understand how Jesus accomplishes the plan of salvation in Heaven's temple. During Old Testament times, if a person sinned and wanted to be free of guilt, the first step was to show sorrow for his sin by making restitution to the person he offended. Then the sinner brought a flawless lamb to the temple. When the sinner arrived at the Altar of Burnt Offering, he confessed his sin to God with his hands resting on the lamb's head. The sinner then killed the lamb and a priest captured some blood in a cup. The priest applied this blood to the four horns of the altar, separating the sinner and his guilt. The sinner's guilt was transferred to the temple through the sinless blood of the lamb and simultaneously, the righteousness of the lamb (lambs are sinless) was transferred to the sinner.

The beautiful point is that when the sinner left the temple, it was as though, in God's sight, he had never sinned! So, God is willing to separate the sinner from his guilt by transferring it to the temple. Simultaneously, God is willing to *justify* a sinner by transferring the righteousness of the lamb to him! The word *justify* in this context means, from God's perspective, it is as though the sinner never sinned. Remember that earthly temple services were a *model*, a shadow of events occurring in Heaven's temple. The Bible says that animal blood could not transfer guilt. (Hebrews 10:4)

The Transfer Doctrine is wonderful because it also makes salvation possible for people who have never heard of Jesus. After Adam and Eve sinned, the Father planned to send Jesus to Earth about 4,000 years later. The Father foreknew that billions of people would live on Earth who would not have a chance to hear about Jesus. So the Father, with generosity and love, designed the plan of salvation to include *all* human beings. Here is the process: From the time Adam and Eve sinned, salvation has been based on faith, not knowledge. This occurs whenever a person hears and obeys the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is why God gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to every person (Romans 12:3) and *our response to His voice determines our eternal destiny*. (Matthew 12:31,32) God will save everyone who faithfully obeys the Holy Spirit (as the harlot Rahab did - Hebrews 11:31). Through faith, the Father can legitimately transfer a sinner's guilt to Heaven's temple through the blood of Jesus and simultaneously bestow the righteousness of the Lamb of God on him.

The Scapegoat is the Guilt Bearer

The Transfer Doctrine resolves an interesting problem. If the penalty for sin is death and Jesus did not die in our place, who pays the penalty for the sins of the saints? First, all who refuse to obey the voice of the Holy Spirit will die for their own sins. Their guilt will rest on their own heads. Jesus said, **"I am He who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds."** (Revelation 2:23) Unfortunately, this will be a huge number of people! (Revelation 20:8) On the other hand, each person who faith-fully obeys the voice of the Holy Spirit will have his guilt transferred to the temple through the blood of Jesus; his guilt remaining there until the temple is cleansed and transferred to the head of *the* guilt-bearer.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the earthly temple was cleansed of guilt. After the high priest was found worthy to officiate for Israel, two flawless goats were brought into the temple courtyard and the priest cast lots to see which goat would die. The remaining goat became the guilt-bearing goat (scapegoat) and the guilt in the temple was transferred to its head.

Two goats, instead of two lambs, were used on the Day of Atonement to show that sin began in Heaven. The two goats represented Michael and Lucifer. (Jesus lived in the form of Michael the archangel before coming to Earth to live in the form of a man. Although Jesus is a member of the Godhead, He takes our form and lives among created beings as one of us.)

Before sin began, Michael and Lucifer were “covering cherubs,” the highest possible positions in Heaven. Both of them were sinless until Lucifer became jealous of Michael, because Lucifer wanted to be worshiped as Michael was worshiped. When the Father told Lucifer that was impossible because Michael was a member of deity, Lucifer became angry and rebellious. The Father was patient and He did everything possible to keep Lucifer and his followers from sinning. Eventually, the Father cast the devil and his angels out of Heaven when they rebelled.

The casting of lots to see which goat would become the guilt-bearer indicates the Father’s omniscience. The Father foreknew the mind, heart, and ways of Lucifer long before Lucifer was created. Yet, the Father gave him life and made him the highest and most capable of all created beings. The Father and Michael loved Lucifer dearly, but Lucifer became vain and hostile when fellow angels could not worship him like Michael. Lucifer’s disaffection led him to seek sympathetic followers, and one-third of the angels followed Lucifer.

In the temple services after the lot was cast, the priest killed the *chosen* (the anointed) goat. He sprinkled the blood of the sinless goat on the Ark of the Covenant, the horns on the Altar of Incense, and the horns on the Altar of Burnt Offering. After this, the priest placed his hands on the head of the guilt-bearing goat and announced that the temple was clean. All of the guilt that had been stored in the temple during the year was transferred to the scapegoat. A strong man took the scapegoat far into the desert so that the goat might die a slow protracted death. The scapegoat was not killed. In this service, the scapegoat does not pay the penalty for sin; instead, it bears the consequences for sin. This part of the model reveals there is no substitutionary death in the plan of salvation. Lucifer will suffer for a period of time in hell before he dies. First, he must die because his own guilt is upon his own head. Second, he must die a protracted death because he received the guilt, which the saints transferred to the temple.

The cleansing of the earthly temple model illustrates how judgment day occurs in Heaven. After breaking the third seal on the Book of Life in 1844, Jesus began reviewing the records of every dead person. Jesus presents the life of each person to watching angels. He shows them everything, most of all, that person’s response to the Holy Spirit. When Jesus completes His presentation, as God He pronounces a verdict: The sinner’s guilt is assigned to his own head or transferred to Lucifer’s head. Either way, that sinner’s guilt is no longer in the temple. When Jesus completes the judgment process, the Heavenly temple will be clean, totally free of guilt.

Jesus is the Perfect Sacrifice

The Father selected Jesus to die for sinners because Jesus, as a member of the Godhead, had elements within Himself that could be transferred to sinners. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost face-to-face communion with God, their beautiful garden home, access to the Tree of Life, and the infinite joy and excitement that comes with endless life. *They also lost two elements that a created being (an angel or a perfect man) could not give a sinner – their ability to live forever and propensity for righteousness.*

All created beings borrow life from God. We live from one moment to the next because God gives us the breath of life. Sinless beings have a propensity for righteousness because the power from God never ceases to flow. Therefore, the Father needed a God, a member of the Godhead, who was willing to bestow these powers to sinners. If the Father could provide such a donor, He could legitimately transfer both divine powers to sinners and intelligent angels would unanimously agree that the Father had infinitely exceeded the demands of justice. This is achieved by transferring the guilt of sin to the head of the *father of sin* and transferring Christ's propensity for righteousness to every repentant sinner. All of the redeemed sinners, despite how evil they might have been, would easily "fit in" with the eternal happiness and joy that fills Heaven.

When the Father informed Jesus that He needed a "divine donor," Jesus volunteered. On the day that Adam and Eve sinned, Jesus became "The Son (the subject) of God." (Psalm 2:7-12) When Jesus came to Earth, He came as the "Lamb of God," (John 1:29) and through His infinite sacrifice, the Father can restore Adam and Eve and their offspring to Eden without breaking or changing His laws of love! The Father is a God of love. He and Jesus have proved they love their neighbors as themselves. No greater demonstration of love is possible! No price for the salvation of sinners could be higher!

When we combine the Transfer Doctrine with the conclusions presented in the first three parts of this study, the evidence is clear: Monotheism and the idea that one God manifests Himself as three different persons are insufficient doctrines. The truth is the Father and Jesus are separate, distinct, coeternal members of the Godhead, who love one another with all their hearts and their neighbors as themselves.

Why the Bible Calls Jesus The Son of God – Christians, Three Gods, and the Trinity (Pt. 5)

Author: Larry W. Wilson

Jesus and the Trinity

At this point in our study on the Trinity, we need to synthesize what the Bible teaches about Jesus. For example, the Bible teaches that Jesus and the Father are separate, distinct, coeternal members of the Godhead. Jesus is not a created being. Like the Father, Jesus is a God who is “from everlasting to everlasting.” (Nehemiah 9:5, John 1:1) Jesus and the Father have independent wills. (John 6:38, Luke 22:42) The Father spoke through Jesus to ensure the Jews understood that Jesus and the Father are compeers (equal in standing, ability, or accomplishment) even though they assume different roles. (John 5:18, Matthew 26:63-66) The Father not only gave Jesus the words to speak, but also told Jesus how and when to say them. (John 12:49, 14:24) The Father declared to the Jews that Jesus was a God just like Himself, but the Jews rejected the Father’s testimony and crucified Jesus for blasphemy. (Matthew 26:65,66)

In Revelation 19:13, Jesus’ name is the “Word of God” because the Father speaks through Him to the universe. According to Jesus, no one has ever seen the Father (John 1:18, 6:46) for He lives in a glorious, unapproachable light. (John 6:46, 1:18, 1 Timothy 6:15,16) Therefore, when the Father wishes to say something, He usually speaks through Jesus. (John 17:8) The Bible teaches that Jesus created everything, including the universe, for the Father. (Hebrews 1:2, Genesis 1:1, John 1:3, Colossians 1:16)

When the name *God* is used in the Old Testament, the Bible is actually referring to Jesus! In fact, 97% of the Old Testament references concerning God pertain to Jesus. Jesus created Adam and Eve and drove them out of the garden, sent the flood in Noah’s day, spoke to Moses from the burning bush, passed over Egypt, killed Egypt’s firstborn and delivered Israel from slavery, spoke the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai, and spoke to the Old Testament prophets. If we understand Jesus, John 1:11 makes total sense, “**He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him.**”

Jesus could not and did not die in our place. Yes, you read the statement correctly. Instead, Jesus died so the Father could transfer our guilt to Heaven’s temple through Jesus’ blood. This is necessary because a substitutionary death cannot produce salvation. When a person sins, he is not only condemned to death for his sin, but, he is also transformed by the law of sin—He becomes a slave to sin. (John 8:34) Since a substitutionary death has no effect on a sinner’s slavery to sin, a substitutionary death is inadequate for salvation. *Because sin has transforming power, the plan of salvation includes the transfer of Christ’s transforming power. We need His propensity for righteousness to replace our natural propensity for sin.* (Romans 1:16)

The Father Asked Jesus to Give Everything

When we understand who Jesus is, the process required and ransom he paid to save sinners is mind boggling. No one will ever be able to *intelligently question* the legitimacy of the Father's plan to save sinners. When we study the plan of salvation, we must approach the topic with a set of presuppositions. These include the following facts: The Father is righteous and true; He lives and acts within boundaries set by laws of love; everything He does is to benefit His children; the Father has infinite wisdom, so He is deliberate and purposeful in everything He does. As we investigate the plan of salvation, we will not be disappointed because the facts prove that the Father chose the very best way to save sinners. The Father could not use a magic wand to erase sin and save sinners, because the Earthly temple service teaches that God does not forgive sin. Each sin is a recorded fact. Therefore, the Father designed a plan to legitimately save sinners whereby a sinner can be separated from his guilt. However, to transfer guilt, a member of deity needed to die. The Father determined the best way to transform "slaves of sin" into people who love and cherish righteousness was to transfer the power of righteousness from Jesus to sinners. Of course, this transfer could only be possible if Jesus came to Earth, produced the needed righteousness (overcame every temptation), gave up His propensity for righteousness, and ceased to exist.

When Jesus was on Earth, He said that the Father gave Him authority to forgive sins. (Luke 5:24) Jesus did not imply that He could forgive sins with a simple command. If this were possible, it would not have been necessary for Jesus to die! When Jesus agreed to come to Earth to save sinners, the Father made him the judge of mankind. (John 5:22,23) Jesus will save everyone who has obeyed the voice of the Holy Spirit because He has transferred their guilt to the temple. The Transfer Doctrine (see Part 4) and Jesus' words are not in conflict. This doctrine explains how Jesus separates guilt from the sinner and forgives them.

The Father has given each sinner the power of choice, but He has offered salvation to sinners with one condition. Sinners must choose to obey the Holy Spirit's voice if they want to be saved. The Holy Spirit constantly confronts us because each of us has intelligence, reason, and the power of choice. We have freedom to choose if we want to live by faith. As Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego demonstrated, living by faith is to obey the Holy Spirit's voice, do what the Spirit says, and leave the consequences with God. (Daniel 3:18) The Father requires faith as a condition of salvation for everyone who wants to live with the Trinity throughout the endless ages to come! (See Matthew 12:31,32.)

I am sure that Jesus was shocked when He heard the details of the Father's plan to save Adam and Eve, and their offspring; Jesus would have to pay the ultimate price to save sinners. The Father offered Jesus a reward *if* He was willing to go forward with the plan. The Father promised Jesus *if* He successfully carried out the plan, the Father would resurrect Jesus and restore everything that He gave up. Additionally, the Father promised Jesus that He would ultimately be exalted forever as equal to the Father; this is why the last book in the Bible is called the revelation of Jesus Christ. As a bonus, the Father would give all the redeemed to Jesus as personal property. (Notice this transfer in John 17:6.) The faith one God put into another God's promises illustrates the faith required to be part of God's family.

The Title “Son of God”

Instead of killing Adam and Eve on the day they sinned (which the law demanded), the Father legitimately stayed their execution because Jesus submitted to the Father’s plan of salvation. On that day, Jesus became man’s intercessor (high priest). (Hebrews 5) The Father and Jesus entered into a covenant and this promise is recorded in Psalm 2:

“I will proclaim the decree of the Lord [the Father]: He said to me [Jesus], ‘You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the Earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery. Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the Earth. Serve the Lord [Jesus] with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son [obey Him, submit to His authority], lest He be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for His wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in Him.’ ” (Psalm 2:7-12, insertions and underlining mine)

The Hebrew word for son is *ben* and it means “a subject, a slave, one under authority.” Ever since the day Adam and Eve sinned, Jesus has been called “the *ben*,” the son, the slave of the Father. We see this submission stated in John 8:42, **“I have not come on my own; but He sent me.”** John 6:38 says, **“For I have come down from Heaven not to do my will but to do the will of Him who sent me.”** Jesus told the Jews that it was not His idea to appear on Earth. Instead, the Father sent Him. He came as a subject under authority because the Father required Him to do this to save sinners.

Clearly, two wills and two separate persons are involved: One God “The Sender,” the other “The Sent.” Now that you know these things, look at this verse through informed eyes: **“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 KJV)

Even though Jesus is an eternal God, this verse calls Him the Father’s “only begotten Son” for several reasons.

1. There are two stories in the Bible about parents slaying an only child as a burnt offering to God. The first is Abraham offering Isaac (Genesis 22) and the second is Jephthah offering his daughter. (Judges 11:3-40) Even though Abraham was willing to kill Isaac and Isaac was willing to die, both were spared. However, in Jephthah’s case, I believe he killed his willing daughter. These two examples are parallels of the Father’s incredible anguish in giving us Jesus. The Father loves Jesus more than any parent can love an only child and had it been possible, the Father Himself would have come and died for us. Even though it was the intent of wicked men to kill deity while He hung on the cross, the Father took Jesus’ life.
2. *The love between members of the Trinity is the greatest force known in the universe.* The Father could not give more or pay a higher price than to give us Jesus! Jesus had to die the death that sinners will die so that everything belonging to Jesus could be transferred to those who obey the voice of the Holy Spirit. From a standpoint of sin’s

penalty (which is sudden death), the Father will not impose greater suffering on any sinner than what Jesus suffered. From the standpoint of restitution, the Father will impose suffering on sinners in Hell in proportion with the suffering they imposed on others. For sinners who are unable to make restitution for the suffering they caused (like the thief on the cross), Jesus has paid the price. This is why He was scourged and beaten beyond human endurance before going to the cross.

3. Finally, how does a changeless God legitimately satisfy the law that says, **“The soul who sins is the soul that will die?”** The answer is found on the cross. The Father made an innocent Jesus suffer the second death (2 Corinthians 5:21) so that He could legitimately transfer everything that belonged to Jesus to repentant sinners. (Romans 5:17-19)

Jesus is Eternal God

“In the sixth month [of Elizabeth’s pregnancy], God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee. . . He said to Mary: ‘You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God [the Father] will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end.’ ‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin?’ The angel answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One [of Israel] to be born will be called the Son of God.’ ” (Luke 1:26-35, insertions and emphasis mine)

Jesus is called “the Holy One” in the Old Testament about fifty times! Gabriel gave a statement to Mary that confirmed the baby forming within her was the God of the Old Testament. Jesus became an obedient slave of the Father because of Jesus’ infinite love for his Father and sinners. Jesus humbled Himself to live in poverty. He came as a homely looking man, a man of sorrows who would suffer more than any sinner would have to suffer. God sent Jesus and He obediently came to give us all that belonged to Him. Jesus is not a superman, He is much more than that: He is an eternal God who took on the lowly form of a man to share His riches.

Jesus is Worthy to Rule as Almighty God - Christians, Three Gods, and the Trinity (Pt. 6)

Author: Larry W. Wilson

During his exile on Patmos, John had a vision of Heaven of events that I believe occurred in 1798. (See Chapter 5 in my book, [The Lamb's Book of Life](#)) The story begins when John saw a book in the Father's right hand sealed with seven seals. A mighty angel called out, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" Unfortunately, no one in Heaven or Earth was qualified to open the scroll. When John learned that no one was worthy to break the seals and open the book, he "wept and wept." He was brokenhearted because he understood the profound importance of the book.

We cannot examine everything that made John weep, but a few words about the role and importance of the book in the Father's hand might be helpful. The Father wrote a book before creation and sealed it with seven seals so that no created being could know what He had written. When no one was found worthy to break the seals and expose the contents of the book, John wept because he understood there was no way to exonerate the Father from Lucifer's lies and scurrilous charges. Long before Jesus created Earth, Lucifer led a rebellion against the Father by twisting many facts and using unanswerable questions. His lies were so clever and sophisticated that one third of the holy angels joined the rebellion and the Father cast them out of Heaven. When the scene in Revelation 5 occurred, John realized the angels in Heaven had waited thousands of years to have Lucifer's charges addressed. However, when the time came to exonerate the Father, no one was found worthy to receive the book, break the seals, and reveal what the Father had written.

John does not itemize what was needed to break the seals in Revelation 5, but the angels summarized the criteria in a song they sang: **"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."** (Revelation 5:9) John also reported that after Jesus received the book, the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures bowed down and worshiped Him. Their response indicates unanimous approval and the recognition that Jesus is deity.

John, Paul, and Daniel Prophecy the Same Event

About thirty-five years after Jesus ascended to Heaven, Paul made the following prediction: **"And He [the Father] made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment – to bring all things in Heaven and on Earth together under one head, even Christ."** (Ephesians 1:9,10, insertion and emphasis mine)

About 600 years before Paul made this prediction, Daniel saw the same event: **"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of**

Heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into His presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13,14, emphasis mine) This verse pinpoints two things. First, the Father gave Jesus sovereign power. Second, the Father relinquished his authority when he gave Jesus sovereign power.

By synthesizing the statements from John, Paul, and Daniel, I believe the Father recused Himself from the throne in 1798. This allowed Jesus to rule the universe independently and bring the sin problem to a close. When we consider the risk of transferring control of the universe to another person, we can understand why finding someone worthy to receive the sealed book was important! The Father wants the universe to see that Jesus is just as capable at ruling the universe as He is. The shifting of roles is part of a process that began in 1798 known as “the revelation of Jesus Christ.” The Father placed His character, governance, and exoneration in Jesus’ worthy hands when Jesus received the book. While John does not explain it, Paul wrote that Jesus’ sovereign authority is temporary. He wrote, **“Then the end will come, when He [Jesus, at the end of the 1,000 years] hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He [Jesus] has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For He [Jesus] must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For He [the Father] ‘has put everything under His [Jesus] feet.’ Now when it says that ‘everything has been put under Him [Jesus], it is clear that this does not include God [the Father] Himself, who put everything under Christ. When He [Jesus] has done this [e.g., destroyed the curse of sin and death itself], then the Son Himself will be made subject to Him [the Father] who put everything under Him, so that God [the Father] may be [above and over] all in all.”** (1 Corinthians 15:24-28, insertions and emphasis mine)

The Worthiness of Jesus Abolishes the One God Manifesting as Three Persons Doctrine

If the prevailing view of Christian monotheism is true – that there is one God manifesting Himself in three persons—Jesus’ advancement in Revelation 5 makes no sense. For example, what difference does it make if Jesus was found worthy to receive the book if the same God who wrote the book was the same God found worthy to open it? Said another way, if there is one God manifesting Himself in three persons, what is the point of God searching the universe to find someone worthy to receive the book with seven seals only to discover that no one, other than Himself, is worthy? The only way to eliminate internal conflict in Revelation 5 is this: Two separate and distinct Gods, each having His own will are involved. If this is the case, transferring sovereign power and the book sealed with seven seals to Jesus makes perfect sense. Moreover, Paul refers to two Gods by writing that at the end of sin’s drama, Jesus will transfer this sovereign power back to the Father so that Jesus will be subject to the Father once again.

Revelation 5 also abolishes the position that Jesus is a created being. The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures worshiped Him. No created being is to be worshiped. (Revelation

19:10) Daniel 7 abolishes a once “sufficient doctrine” that the Trinity is one God manifesting Himself in three persons. Instead, there are separate and distinct Gods with sovereign power temporarily transferred between them.

The Controversy over the Trinity

Christians have argued endlessly about the Godhead and the nature of the Trinity ever since Jesus ascended to Heaven. The best reason for the controversy is ignorance. Until light clearly shines, shadows are misleading! God has sealed the book of Daniel until the time of the end. (Daniel 12:4,9) The book of Revelation has many things to say about Jesus that previous generations could not have known or anticipated.

Given what I have learned about Jesus and the Godhead (however limited and incomplete), the following explanation is consistent with my understanding. When the Trinity formed, three equal, coeternal, distinct, and separate Gods came together to discuss the future. They decided to unite and function as one God to benefit the universe. If three separate, distinct, coeternal Gods ruled the universe, created beings would get confused and end up taking sides resulting in needless conflict and competition. So, three Gods decided to function as one God, but their decision required each of them to give up 2/3 of their rights and prerogatives so that $1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 = 1$.

The “Trinity” decided that one God, the God we now call “Jesus” would become the Creator of everything that exists. To accomplish this the Gods we call “the Father” and “the Holy Spirit” gave up their right to create so that only Jesus would serve as Creator. The Gods we call “Jesus” and “the Father” agreed to give up the power of omnipresence, so that only the Holy Spirit can be everywhere at once. The Gods we call “the Holy Spirit” and “Jesus” gave up their right to sit on the throne so the God we call “the Father” could rule as “Most High God.” Knowing that marriage is a 50/50 arrangement, please consider the enormous love and surrender involved when each member of the Trinity forfeited 2/3’s of His divine power and prerogatives to the others.

The surrender of their rights and prerogatives to each other explains why the Holy Spirit and Jesus do not know the future. Only the Father has foreknowledge and it was this exclusive power that enabled Him to write a complete history book of life before Jesus created Heaven and Earth. Jesus and the Holy Spirit do not know what the Father wrote in the Book of Life. When the Father, wrote the Book of Life, He included the life record of every angel that would live in Heaven and every person that would live on Earth. The information in His book is extremely sensitive because the Father foreknew who and who would not be saved. So, He sealed the book with seven seals so that no one could possibly learn what He foreknew until the drama with sin is completed. The Book of Life is not used to judge human beings. It is only opened at the end of the 1,000 years when the seventh seal is broken. (Revelation 20:12)

If anyone (angel or human) discovers what the Father wrote before sin’s drama is completed, the Father would never escape the charge that He predetermined who would be saved and who would be lost. When the contents of this Book are presented to the universe, the Father will

prove that He foreknew Lucifer's rebellion and the fall of Adam and Eve. He also foreknew the price that Jesus would pay to save sinners. He foreknew who would choose to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and receive salvation and who would not. Most of all, He will prove that although He perfectly knows the future, He does not control the choices His children can make. He permitted Lucifer and his followers to sin, He permitted Adam and Eve to sin, and He permits us to rebel against Him. All of God's children will have free will and the power of choice for eternity!

Jesus Found Worthy to Receive the Book

Once we properly understand the purpose for the Book of Life and its seven seals, our understanding of the scene in Revelation 5 will improve. Like John, we can now understand the call, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" Three qualifications made Jesus uniquely worthy to receive the book and the sovereign power that went with it:

First, Jesus was willing for the Father to send Him to Earth and He perfectly fulfilled the Father's will, even to the point of dying without any hope of resurrection. No greater example of perfect love and submission to the Father's will has ever been demonstrated and no greater love for sinners has ever been seen.

Second, Jesus stooped to the lowly position of becoming a man. He faced every temptation known to man. He faced even greater temptations to use divine power for personal advantage, and yet He never sinned. After the Jews condemned Jesus to death for blasphemy and the Roman soldiers nearly beat Him to death, Jesus could have exercised divine authority and ended the process to save sinners. This was a huge temptation, but Jesus chose to "press on" and die for sinners, including those who were abusing Him. No one else has ever faced such an overwhelming temptation.

Finally, while on the cross, the Father surprised Jesus. He placed the curse of sin on Jesus and this separated Him from Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:21) The Father did this because He wanted to test Jesus. He wanted to know if Jesus loved sinners enough to die without any hope of living again. If Jesus voluntarily gave up His life without any hope of resurrection, the Father could legitimately transfer His life to sinners as a gift. When Jesus became separated from the Father, He was crushed! He cried out, **"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** This was His ultimate test and Jesus refused to exercise divine power to save Himself from eternal death. Instead, He put complete confidence and faith in the Father saying, **"Into your hands I commit my spirit."** Ironically, after finding that Jesus was worthy, the Father placed complete confidence and faith in Jesus when He gave Him sovereign power and the book sealed with seven seals.

Given the nature and awesome accomplishments of Jesus, and given that Jesus is a perfect reflection of the Father, no one else in the universe comes close to revealing the love that the Father has for sinners. No one was more worthy to receive the book with seven seals or receive the Father's throne and sovereign power. Given the qualifications required to break the seals, no one can make a claim of nepotism! No one else in the universe comes close to the

accomplishments of Jesus. Therefore, because of His faith and love for the Father and sinners, Jesus was found worthy. The four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, and billions of angels rejoiced with praise and worship when He received the sealed book. The Father stepped aside, Jesus ascended the throne and His first action was to break the first seal.

Jesus Rules as Almighty God - Christians, Three Gods, and the Trinity (Pt. 7)

Author: Larry W. Wilson

God's love is a selfless principle that maintains a perfect balance between righteousness and justice, mercy and forgiveness. Decisions based on love can be very difficult. Some situations require infinite wisdom, patience, and persistence. The Bible is the best source for explaining love. For example, **"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."** (John 3:16,17, italics mine) After reading this verse, have you ever wondered why the Father, rather than Jesus, could not have died for us? If the Father's death would have produced a better result, He surely would have. He loves His children just as much as He loves Himself! However, the Father foresaw a better solution to saving sinners than giving up His own life!

The Father designed the plan of salvation before Creation. He foreknew the rise of sin so He created a plan with such a high price for salvation that no one could ever challenge the idea that saving undefiant sinners was unjust. Moreover, when the drama with sin is finally completed, no one can challenge the law that requires a future sinner to be executed on the day he sins. (Genesis 2:17)

Using His infinite wisdom, the Father decided to take what belonged to Jesus and transfer it to those who would live by faith. Simultaneously, the Father transfers everything that the curse of sin produces to Jesus. The Father chose to send Jesus to Earth and have Him nearly scourged to death before dying hopelessly on the cross. Through the Father's infinite love, He chose to crush the life out of His own heart. Which would be more painful for a loving parent: Dying so that his child could live or putting the child to death? Can you imagine the agony that Jephthah endured when he put his only daughter to death? (Judges 11) Many parents have said they would gladly give up their lives if it meant their deceased child could live. No earthly love matches the depth of parental love.

"Brotherly love" is also very intense. Jesus said to His disciples, **"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."** (John 15:13) There is a higher love than parental and brotherly love. The Father and the Son demonstrated divine love through their incredible mission and sacrifice to save sinners. Jesus willingly gave His life for His enemies (Romans 5:10) and the Father put His only child to death. Only deity, not humanity, took the Jesus' life at Calvary.

The plan of salvation includes several objectives. For example, the Father has revealed the depth of His love for His children by giving us Jesus. He killed His dearest and closest friend to save us! He sent Jesus to live as one of us to show the love that exists between Jesus and the Father. The Father also chose to use the plan of salvation to reveal that the ever humble Jesus really is an Almighty God just like Himself! Therefore, when the Father designed the plan of salvation He deliberately took steps that made His own suffering unfathomable and the

sufferings of Jesus unbearable. When we understand that the Father loves Jesus with all His heart, mind, and soul, giving us “His only Son” goes beyond comprehension.

The Father designed the plan of salvation to make Jesus an eternal hero. Jesus has sovereign power equal to the father. The Father lives in unapproachable light and will reign as Almighty God throughout eternity, but He wants everyone to know that Jesus is His equal even though Jesus lives in the humble form of a created being. Throughout eternity, Jesus will receive honor and worship wherever He goes. This adulation will not compete with the honor and worship which belongs to the Father because the Father is just as humble and selfless as Jesus. In character, they are identical. There is no jealousy. The Father is thrilled every time Jesus receives worship, honor, and praise.

The humility demonstrated by Jesus (who created the universe) when washing the dirty feet of the disciples in the upper room is the same humility the Father demonstrated toward Jesus. The hearts of the Father and Jesus are identical, filled with love for each other and for their neighbors. Their differences are in their roles, not in their deity. This is why the Father decreed before Heaven and Earth were created that all created beings must honor and worship the Creator as they honor and worship Him. Lucifer and his followers chose to rebel against this law. This decree is described as “the eternal gospel” in Revelation 14:6.

God is Love

One of the best arguments favoring the existence of three separate, equal, distinct, coeternal, Gods is the Biblical declaration: “God is love.” (1 John 4:8, 16) This declaration is far more profound than many people realize.

The Godhead lives and acts within the boundaries of love at all times. The Trinity is a perfect demonstration of “what love is and what love does.” The Bible has revealed the words, thoughts, and actions of the Godhead over a period of about seven thousand years. This is long enough for every possible situation to arise for God to demonstrate what love does and does not do. It also provides enough time for the curse of sin to mature so that everyone can see the results of sin. God has miraculously preserved the Bible through the ages because it is *the only book on Earth* that correctly reveals His ways, plans, character, and love. God wants everyone to know Him and His ways by studying His Word. He wants sinners to understand the principle of love because the two highest laws in the universe are laws of love. One day, a lawyer asked Jesus: “**‘Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?’ Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’**” (Matthew 22:36-39)

Love should not be confused with feelings or emotions. Love is not indulgence, lust, or an insatiable desire or addiction. Love is wise and patient. Love has firm boundaries. Love includes discipline. Love is always humble and fair. Love exalts righteousness and it always honors integrity and truth. Love requires endless study and intelligence and love grants everyone the power of choice, the freedom to be self-directed.

The boundaries of love are called laws. Sin occurs when a boundary is violated. For example, it is a sin to commit murder, to steal, to commit adultery, to lie, and to covet. Love does no harm to others because love originates from selflessness. On the other hand, selfishness causes harm and offenses. Selfishness destroys relationships with abusive words and actions. Hatred, murder, lying, cheating, stealing, sexual immorality, greed, and dishonesty are the fruits of selfishness. Lust (I want) is the opposite of love (I give).

Love is directly connected to the doctrine of the Trinity. If there is only one God (as monotheism teaches), and He is a self-proclaimed God of love, the first law of love is a contradiction in terms. How can a person love the Lord with all of his heart, mind, and soul when this behavior is demanded? If God demands love, how is He different from Hitler, Stalin, and other dictators? Dictators, kings, queens, and war lords operate on the premise that any attempt to depose, dethrone, or restrict their sovereign power is treason, and all traitors deserve death because traitors want to tear down the authority of THE authority. Therefore, if we wrongly attempt to apply the first law of love within the context of monotheism, we have a situation where God demands love. Lucifer used this logic to taunt the angels that were loyal to the Father saying, "Go ahead, break the first law of love and the penalty for sin (sudden death) will be yours."

The Christian version of monotheism, that is, one God manifesting Himself in three persons, does not change the first law of love, because there is still one God demanding love. This demand would be contrary to the nature of love because love is something that a free-will person must *choose* to give. Love can *only* be given, it cannot be coerced, demanded, or extracted. If God commands everyone to make Him first and foremost, because He has the highest throne, He is just a dictator.

A Covenant of Love

Previously, we considered how in the distant past, three Gods eternally gave up a portion of their rights and prerogatives to the others. Their union would eliminate any competition between them and it would keep "highly intelligent beings" from developing a loyalty for one particular God. Three Gods functioning as a union is why the Bible declares, "God is love" instead of "Gods are love."

They based their commitment to each other on two laws of love. The first law stipulated that each God would love the other two with all of his heart, mind and soul. The second covenant stipulated that each God would love "their" children (their neighbors) as they loved themselves. In this agreement, The Holy Spirit would see and hear everything occurring in the universe and He would report His observations to the other Gods each minute. The Holy Spirit would also serve as a divine conduit through which the Father and Jesus could communicate with their children. The attributes of the Godhead (love, joy, peace, happiness, purpose, and the fullness of life) are conveyed to angels and humans through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Father would sit on the throne as the sovereign *most high* God in charge of the universe. He alone would have the powers of foreknowledge and infinite wisdom. Jesus would speak for all three Gods. He would be called the "Word" and serve as the Creator. He would create each being that the Father wanted to experience life. When the time came and the Father wanted to save Adam and Eve, Jesus learned the Father had chosen Him to be their Redeemer.

If you can accept the idea that it takes three Gods to function as one God, guess what, the Trinity becomes a daily demonstration for eternity showing what love is. Each God loves and worships the other two with all of His heart, mind, and soul and all three love their neighbors as themselves! This means that each of the three God's would have died to save sinners, and this shows why the two highest laws in the universe are laws of love! *Three Gods live together in perfect peace and harmony with each other and this is only possible through humble submission to one another.* No union in the universe is stronger and more fulfilling than that experienced by the Trinity. They want their daily experience to be the daily experience of their children! This is why the angels and Adam and Eve were created in their image, after their likeness. Jesus gave Adam and Eve a powerful propensity for righteousness and natures that were totally selfless. They lived in an environment where love excelled until they sinned!

If we understand the Trinity consists of three Gods serving the universe as one God, the first law of love is no longer a selfish, self-seeking law. Instead, it represents a covenant that the Trinity lives by and people who wish to enter into their relationship of love can only do so if they abide by the same covenant. Incidentally, the Ten Commandments are called a covenant (Exodus 34:28) and they are stored in the Ark of the Covenant. (Revelation 11:19) The first four commandments define love for God and the remaining six commandments define love for others. The Ten Commandments are a covenant because God has promised to write these laws in the hearts and minds of non-defiant sinners (Hebrew 8:10) so that we can live within them and they can live within us!

Love kept the Father from dying for us. When I now read the phrase, "God is love," I understand the phrase to describe how the Trinity lives. The Godhead is a party of three and what a party it is! Love is the only way that three omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and coeternal Gods can submit to each other and serve the universe as one God; and love is the only way that God's children can live in harmony with them and with one another. Each God is selfless and His humble submission (worship) to the other two makes the Trinity possible. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have made a covenant with each other to live in perfect harmony for all eternity and they invite each of us to enter into their joy. This is why Jesus commanded, baptize my followers "in the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit!" (Matthew 28:19) If we are willing to become a part of their infinite love, eternal life will be joy-full.

The Holy Spirit is a Coeternal Member of the Trinity-Christians, Three Gods and the Trinity (Pt. 8)

Author: Larry W. Wilson

You may have noticed by now that this study on the Trinity has been more about resolving specific concepts presented in Scripture than merely offering a collection of “proof texts.” These concepts are encompassing and require more than a single God in the Godhead. Consider this axiom: “Truth is proven true by the harmony that comes from the sum of its parts.” This means that what may be considered truth within six “proof texts” may not be true when four more “proof texts” are added. Therefore, to resolve many apparent conflicts, this study on the Trinity includes several topics that many people do not ordinarily associate with a study of the Godhead. To complete this series on the Trinity, we need to examine the Holy Spirit. Is He an equal, separate, distinct, coeternal member of the Godhead or is He an *influence* that exists between the Father and Jesus? Please consider the following:

#1 The Holy Spirit Has a Will, He Can Speak, Hear, Think and Bring Glory to Jesus

Shortly before His death, Jesus told His disciples, **“But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you.”** (John 16:13,14) Clearly, Jesus described an intelligent being, a third party who can think, hear, speak on His own and independently carry out a mission of bringing glory to Jesus. Consider the breakdown:

1. **“He will not speak on His own . . .”** This statement indicates the Holy Spirit has a will. **“He will not . . .”** He can speak on His own and for Himself, but Jesus said the Holy Spirit will not do so. This is because when the members of the Godhead formed, each God surrendered Himself to the other two. They agreed at that time the role of the Holy Spirit would be to serve as a faithful conduit between the Godhead and the universe. In other words, the God we now call the Holy Spirit gave up 2/3 of His rights and prerogatives to glorify the other two Gods!
2. **“He will speak only what He hears . . .”** This phrase means the Holy Spirit is the Revealer of God’s will and truth, but the Holy Spirit only reveals as the Father and Jesus allow. He neither lags behind nor accelerates ahead. He stays in-sync with the Father and Jesus at all times.
3. Like the Father and Jesus, the Holy Spirit has intelligence and reasoning powers. Jesus said, **“He will bring glory to me . . .”** The Holy Spirit loves and exalts Jesus the same way the Father loves and exalts Jesus. (John 13:31,32; 17:1,5) Each selfless member of the Godhead exalts the other two above Himself. The Holy Spirit delights in bringing glory to Jesus in the same way the Father was delighted to give Jesus His throne in 1798.
4. **“He will guide you into all truth.”** This authority, which belongs to the Holy Spirit,

shows the Holy Spirit has a work which the Father and Jesus cannot do. The Holy Spirit guides the children of God into all truth as the Father or Jesus advances truth. The Holy Spirit is our critical link with the Godhead and through Him, we advance in our understanding of truth. In our first study, we learned that Jesus spoke the Father's testimony through Jesus' lips. The Father wanted the Jews to know that Jesus was His equal. During the past 2,000 years, the Holy Spirit has given a greater understanding of truth and soon, He will convey the testimony of Jesus through the lips of the 144,000. The Holy Spirit does this so that God's children might know **"what is yet to come."**

Given the specifications in John 16:13,14, Jesus indicated the Holy Spirit is a hearing, thinking, speaking, member of deity who has His own will. The Holy Spirit is not "an influence" or a "sweet fragrance" (as some people suggest) that exists between the Father and Jesus.

#2 The Holy Spirit Has a Distinct Role and Purpose

The second verse in the Bible specifically mentions the Holy Spirit: **"Now the Earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."** (Genesis 1:2) The Spirit of God was hovering over the waters prior to Creation because He was ready to *connect* the forthcoming children of God to the Father and to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit serves the whole universe as a two-way conduit. Through the Holy Spirit, the Father and Jesus send their happiness, righteousness, joy, peace, grace, and power to us (this transfer is also called the fruits of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22,23). We send our prayers, thoughts, fears, feelings, concerns, praise and whatever else may concern us through the Holy Spirit back to the Father and Jesus! This transfer is 100% efficient, nothing is lost. Paul wrote, **"The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will."** (Romans 8:26,27) Because the Holy Spirit also is a God, the Father and Jesus understand the mind of the Spirit perfectly. When we need comfort, they know it and send comfort to us through the indwelling Spirit! When we need faith, the Holy Spirit immediately informs the Father and Jesus and we are blessed with it. (Compare John 12:49 with Mark 13:11.) The Holy Spirit intimately knows us, our hearts, and our motives. He never tires of interceding on behalf of the saints. This is not the work of an *influence* that exists between two Gods. It is the work of an infinitely intelligent and divinely capable member of deity.

#3 The Holy Spirit Did Everything Possible to Bring the Antediluvians to Repentance

Jesus spoke to Noah before the flood and said, **"My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."** (Genesis 6:3) After the 120 years expired, the flood came and washed them all away. The flood was necessary because the antediluvians had blasphemed the Holy Spirit. They shut out His inner voice by choosing

the ways of wickedness instead of righteousness. They became engrossed and numbed by sin. They opposed righteousness and when Jesus saw that He could do nothing further with such hateful and violent people, He destroyed them. There is a simple explanation for the increase of wickedness: **"The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."** (1 Corinthians 2:14) If the Holy Spirit is grieved away by defiance, a God of love is forced to accept it because He will not violate a person's free will.

#4 Ananias and Sapphira Lied to the Holy Spirit

Because the Holy Spirit is an "all seeing" member of deity, He recognizes a lie when He hears it. In fact, the Holy Spirit killed Ananias and his wife for lying to Him! **"Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.'"** (Acts 5:3,4) Because the Holy Spirit is a member of deity, He can give life and He can take life. In fact, the Holy Spirit resurrected Jesus and gave Him life! **"And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you."** (Romans 8:11)

The Holy Spirit is often mentioned in the Bible in the possessive case, that is, the Holy Spirit appears to belong to someone. Remember, Jesus said in Genesis 6:3, **"My Spirit** will not always strive with man..." and Paul wrote in Romans 8:11, **"The Spirit of Him** of who raised Jesus from the dead..." The simple reason for this is the Holy Spirit serves the Father and Jesus. They tell the Spirit what to do and He (who hears and intelligently responds) implements their wishes. The Holy Spirit is submissive to their commands and this explains why possessive language is used.

#5 Blaspheming (Insulting) the Holy Spirit Is the Unpardonable Sin

Jesus said: **"And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come [throughout eternity]."** (Matthew 12:31,32)

The Holy Spirit is the only member of the Godhead that is omnipresent. This is why Jesus told His disciples, **"But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you."** (John 16:7) Even though the Spirit is unseen, He is everywhere, seeing everything at the same instant. David wrote, **"Where can I go [to hide] from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the Heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there."** (Psalm 139:7,8, insertion mine)

The Holy Spirit is the only member of deity that can live *within* each child of God at the same

instant. The Father and Jesus are physically limited but the Spirit is everywhere! Through the Holy Spirit, the Father and Jesus know everything occurring because the Spirit updates the Father and Jesus constantly. The Holy Spirit is our only connection with the Father and Jesus. If we defy the Spirit and shut Him out of our lives, we cannot connect with God and God cannot connect with us. If we continue to violate the efforts of the Holy Spirit by doing evil, He will leave us alone because He is not permitted to override a defiant will. People who commit the unpardonable sin are not drawn to God and have no interest in serving God, repenting of their sins, or glorifying God with their lives. This is why rejecting the Holy Spirit is eternally fatal, both in this age and in the age to come!

#6 The Holy Spirit Is A Member of the Trinity

The Holy Spirit is invisible (like the Father), but this does not reduce His importance or position within the Trinity. Remember, it takes three Gods to function as One unit. Each God performs functions the other two cannot do. This explains why Jesus commanded, **“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”** (Matthew 18:19) These three Gods are equal, separate, distinct, coeternal Gods who are eternally united in love. Man’s highest privilege is to enter into their relationship and become a member of their family.

#7 The Holy Spirit Will Soon Separate the Sheep From the Goats

The Bible points forward to a time when the whole world will experience a great display of Holy Spirit power. The prophet Joel gives us an Old Testament parallel of this phenomenon: **“And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on *all people*. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days.”** (Joel 2:28,29, italics mine) This coming manifestation of the Holy Spirit is necessary because before Jesus returns, the sheep and the goats must be separated. Jesus described the difference between the sheep and goats by saying, **“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”** (John 10:27) Paul wrote, **“those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”** (Romans 8:14) Currently, there are more than seven billion people living on Earth and those who are led by the Holy Spirit are sons of God. They listen to Jesus’ voice even though many of His sheep currently do not know that they are following Jesus. During the Great Tribulation, the 144,000 will proclaim Jesus’ voice (testimony) and the sheep will discover that they have been following Jesus all along! These people will worship the Creator and observe His Sabbath rest because they know the voice of the Holy Spirit! The interesting outcome of this process is that the Holy Spirit will decisively separate the goats from the sheep.

I could write more about the nature of the Holy Spirit, but I think the best way for anyone to determine the identity of the Holy Spirit is to open your Bible and study the topic of the Trinity. Allow the Spirit to show you from Scripture the nature of the Godhead. If you consider the topics presented in this series and are willing to let the Spirit guide you into all truth, you have nothing to fear.

Summary:

1. In the first segment, we learned:

- Jewish Monotheism teaches there is one God (Jehovah) and all other gods are false or imaginary.
- The Father sent Jesus to Earth so the Father could speak through Jesus' lips. The Father wanted to confront the Jews with the fact that they did not actually know Him.
- Jesus was crucified for blasphemy, speaking the exact words which the Father gave Him to speak.
- The Father confirmed that Jesus was His Son (His equal) on four occasions. 1) At Jesus' baptism. 2) On the mount of transfiguration. 3) In the temple, shortly before Jesus was crucified. 4) By tearing the temple veil from top to bottom. In addition to these manifestations, the Father worked many miracles through Jesus.

2. In the second segment we learned:

- The Father releases knowledge over time. Therefore, truth is always unfolding. "New light" can either supplement or abolish doctrines that were once thought to be *absolute* truth.
- The Father attempted to terminate the Jewish doctrine of monotheism through Jesus, but the Jews would not accept it. The Father wanted Israel to know the truth about Him, but the Jews would not accept it.
- The Father validated the deity of Jesus with many miracles, even His virgin birth. However, the miracles only hardened the hearts of the Jews. When the mind is unwilling to let go of idolatry and tradition, miracles do not matter.
- When the Father speaks, He either speaks through Jesus, to Jesus, or He exalts Jesus. He does not otherwise speak.
- The Father is invisible. No one has ever seen Him except Jesus (and the Holy Spirit). The Father lives in unapproachable light.

3. In the third segment we learned:

- Jesus is called "The Word" because the Father's testimony comes through Jesus' lips.
- The Father follows a predictable process. On or about the time of a prophetic fulfillment, the Father reveals His plans to people searching for truth.
- After Paul opened his mind to the deity of Jesus, he understood that God reveals mysteries over time and what he once thought was absolute truth had to be unlearned because of new

light.

- Jesus is the Creator of everything that exists. Everything He makes belongs to the Father with one exception—everyone that Jesus redeems belongs to Him.

- Jesus spoke to Israel in Old Testament times within the context of monotheism because He was the only God they knew. Therefore, Jesus used a singular personal pronoun in many statements such as, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

4. In the fourth segment we learned:

- Because Jesus is a member of deity and He died on the cross, we know that the price to save sinners required the death of a deity.

- If a perfect man could have saved sinners, Jesus the Creator, would have created someone to satisfy the Plan of Salvation.

- The Father required a *donor* who had these powers within Himself to legitimately transfer the powers of righteousness and eternal life to sinners.

- The Plan of Salvation is built on the premise that guilt and righteousness are transferable. Jesus had to successfully overcome every possible temptation before the Father would accept His sacrifice. Because Jesus overcame the world, the guilt of sinners can be legitimately transferred to Jesus and His righteousness can be transferred to sinners.

- Advocates for a “created Jesus” or “a perfect man” infinitely diminish the price paid for our salvation.

5. In the fifth segment we learned:

- The Father did not create Jesus.

- Jesus became a subject of the Father (the Son of God) when He voluntarily accepted the Father’s plan to save sinners.

- Jesus did not come to Earth on His own. The Father sent Jesus.

- Jesus is called the Father’s “only begotten son” to indicate the Father could not pay a higher price for sinners.

- There could be no greater anguish on the Father’s part than requiring Jesus to suffer all that was necessary for the salvation of sinners.

- Before Jesus could die for sinners, He had to be tempted as sinners are tempted. In addition, He had to reject the severe temptation of using divine power for safety or personal advantage.

- While Jesus was on the cross, the Father surprised Jesus. He caused Jesus to be crushed when the curse of sin was applied. Jesus cried out, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.”** The Father removed from Jesus any hope of resurrection to see (a) if Jesus loved sinners enough to donate His eternal life to them and cease to exist forever and (b) to see if Jesus would doubt the Father’s promise to resurrect Jesus and use His own divine power to prevent His death.

6. In the sixth segment we learned:

- The Jewish and Christian doctrine of monotheism (one God or one God manifesting Himself in three different persons) puts the Bible in a state of internal conflict. This is evident in Revelation 5.

- It makes no sense for the Father to write a book, seal it with seven seals, conduct a search throughout the universe for someone worthy to receive the book, only to find Himself worthy to receive the book He wrote.

- Jesus was found worthy to receive the book sealed with seven seals because He:

- Came to Earth and overcame every temptation.
- Lived a life that was in perfect compliance with the Father’s will.
- Was willing to die for sinners even when there was no hope of resurrection.
- Could have used divine authority at any time to end the cruel treatment that He suffered. - He could have come down off the cross if He wanted, but He chose to die without any hope of living again so that sinners could be given His power of righteousness and His eternal life.

- When the search was conducted, in the entire universe only Jesus was found worthy to sit on the throne and receive sovereign power. Jesus was found worthy because He has shown the universe the depth of the Father’s love for sinners.

- In 1798, the Father put everything in Heaven and on Earth under Jesus so that He could complete the sin problem in a way that no deficiencies could be found throughout eternity.

7. In the seventh segment we examined the following:

- If the Father’s death for sinners would have achieved the best possible outcome, the Father would have certainly come to Earth and died for sinners. He has the same love for sinners that Jesus has.

- If the Father had come to Earth and died for sinners, what response would He have a billion years from now if someone sinned? How could the Father implement His “sudden death” law and avoid the accusation of being unfair? How could the Father avoid the criticism, “He gave His life to save sinners long ago, why not now?”

- The Father, according to infinite wisdom and sovereign authority created a plan of salvation that would only need to be implemented once. This plan includes many new revelations about

the nature of God's love and government. It also includes hundreds of object lessons that will endure for all eternity.

- To function as one God, three Gods gave up 2/3 of themselves. Their selfless behavior each day will be an eternal example of what love is and how it functions.
- The commandment "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind and soul" can only be fulfilled through selflessness, living with the Trinity as they live in the Trinity.
- Even though Jesus and the Holy Spirit direct us to worship the Father, the Father does not consider it blasphemy when/if we worship all three together because they are equals and they function as one God.
- The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have made a covenant of love with each other for all eternity. Their covenant guarantees that eternal life will be happy and safe, free from the power of sin.

8. In the final segment on the Holy Spirit, we examined the following:

- The Holy Spirit is a member of deity, He is an equal, distinct, separate, coeternal member of the Godhead.
- The work of the Holy Spirit is that of a two-way conduit from the Father and Jesus **to** all creation and **from** all creation.
- If it were not for the ministry of the Holy Spirit, no one could know God, walk with God, or enjoy the love of God.
- If we continually insult (blaspheme) the Holy Spirit and continue to defy the Holy Spirit, He will give up because He will not violate our free will.
- Jesus commanded that His disciples be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit because these three make up the Godhead and it is the privilege of every believer to enter into their happiness, joy, and eternal goodness!
- The Trinity consists of three eternal, wonderful, selfless Gods perfectly united in purpose, plan, and action. They function as one God to benefit their children and it is their selfless surrender to each other that defines what love is and is not!

I know this study has been a "long winded" one, but the topic is huge. I believe this topic has been controversial for centuries because it was not time for the truth about the Trinity to be revealed. A few proof texts will not resolve the many issues that are involved. A proper understanding of the Trinity requires a comprehensive understanding of many topics. We have only examined a few of them.

I hope you will now read the Bible with "a new set of eyes" and that you will also find a much greater appreciation for the phrase, "God is love." In the name of the Father, the Son, and the

Holy Spirit, three equal, distinct, separate, coeternal Gods, this study is concluded.