Answering Objections

by Lynnford Beachy

"The heart of the righteous studieth to answer…"
(Proverbs 15:28)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
(2 Timothy 2:15)

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."
(Proverbs 18:13).

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was written by Lynnford Beachy
and published by
Present Truth Ministries.

First Printing
October 2012

This book is a companion to our book

Understanding the Personality of God

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Introduction

This is a companion book to the book entitled, *Understanding the Personality of God*. In that book we examined what the Bible says about God, His Son, and His Holy Spirit, as well as the death of Christ. We have seen that the doctrine of the trinity (the idea that God is composed of three persons) is not compatible with the biblical evidence. Yet, there are Bible verses that are often used to support the idea of the trinity. In our studies we have examined some of these verses, but there are several more. In this book we would like to examine all of the texts that are most commonly used to support the trinity and see if they really say what trinitarians would have us believe.

I recently watched a video presentation by a man with the unfortunate and difficult task of trying to prove the trinity from the Bible. This man stated, "If all you had was the Old Testament, I am going to go on record as saying, You would not emerge from the study of the Old Testament as a trinitarian." He said all you would have are "hints" and "suggestions" concerning the plurality of God (David Asscherick, video series entitled, "The Unknown God," part 2 of 5).

If the trinity is actually a true doctrine, this is a startling statement. It would mean that all the great men of the Old Testament lived and died without any knowledge that God was composed of three persons. The list of men would include King David, whom God said was "a man after his own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). It would include Daniel, who was thrown into the lion's den and was miraculously saved, as well as Moses "whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10). This list would also include Enoch, who "was translated that he should not see death" (Hebrews 11:5). The list would also include Elijah, who was taken by "a chariot of fire" and "went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2:11). There is no indication that any of these men thought that God is a trinity.

If these men could live like they lived, and even be translated into heaven without seeing death, even though they did not believe in the trinity, how has it become such a "sacred cow" among Christians? This theory has become so revered that a few days ago a man told me, "Trying to understand the trinity will make you lose your mind, but denying it will make you lose your soul." Many people actually believe that if you do not believe in the trinity you will go to hell. Yet, the Bible record demonstrates that the three men whom we know to have already gone to heaven (Enoch, Elijah and Moses – Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5; 2 Kings 2:11; Luke 9:28-30; Jude 1:9) were all non-trinitarian.

The admission that the Old Testament does not contain the doctrine of the trinity is not isolated to this one preacher. Here are some examples of what many authors say about the trinity in the Bible.

"Careful reading of The Old Testament shows no indication of the trinity itself…" (*An Introduction to the Christian Faith*, Oxford, England: Lynx Communications, 1992).

"The Old Testament does not plainly and directly teach The Trinity, …" (Myer Pearlman, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible*, Missouri, USA: Gospel Publishing House, 1981).

"The doctrine of The Holy Trinity is not taught in The Old Testament" (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, p. 306).

"For nowhere in the Old Testament do we find any clear indication of a Third Person. Mention is often made of the Spirit of the Lord, but there is nothing to show that the Spirit was viewed as distinct from Jahweh Himself" (George Joyce, "The Blessed Trinity," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 15, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912. Online at www.newadvent.org/cathen/15047a.htm).

"Exegetes and theologians today are in agreement that the Hebrew Bible [Old Testament] does not contain a doctrine of the Trinity, even though it was customary in past dogmatic tracts on the Trinity to cite texts like Genesis 1:26, 'Let us make humanity in our image, after our likeness' (see also Gn. 3:22, 11:7; Is. 6:23) as proof of plurality in God. Although the Hebrew Bible depicts God as the father of Israel and employs personifications of God such as Word (davar), Spirit (ruah), Wisdom (hokhmah), and Presence (shekhinah), it would go beyond the intention and spirit of the Old Testament to correlate these notions with later trinitarian doctrine" (Mircea Eliade, "Trinity," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 15, p. 53-57).

Not only do most theologians agree that the Old Testament does not contain the doctrine of the trinity, many will admit that the New Testament also omits this doctrine. *The Encyclopedia of Religion* continues, "Further, exegetes and theologians agree that the New Testament also does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Trinity. God the Father is source of all that is (Pantokrator) and also the father of Jesus Christ; 'Father' is not a title for the first person of the Trinity but a synonym for God. Early liturgical and creedal formulas speak of God as 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'…" (*Ibid.*)

"Trinity, in Christian doctrine, the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three persons in one Godhead. Neither the word Trinity nor the explicit doctrine appears in the New Testament, nor did Jesus and his followers intend to contradict the Shema in the Hebrew Scriptures: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4)." (*Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, article: "Trinity," Online at, www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/605512/Trinity.)

"The doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the Bible" (Prof. Shirley C. Guthrie Jr., *Christian Doctrine*, p. 80).

There are a multitude of quotations from many theologians stating that both the Old and New Testaments do not contain an explicit doctrine of the trinity. Instead this doctrine came into mainstream Christianity many years after the Bible was written. The Catholic church states, "The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church. The Church studied this mystery with great care and, after four centuries of clarification, decided to state the doctrine in this way: in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, p. 11).

"The Church began to formulate its doctrine of The Trinity in the fourth cen-

tury" (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, Eerdmans Publishing, 1996, p. 82).

"The Bible does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity. Neither the word 'trinity' itself nor such language as 'one-in-three,' 'three-in-one,' one 'essence' (or 'substance'), and three 'persons' is biblical language. The language of the doctrine is the language of the ancient church taken from classical Greek philosophy" (Prof. Shirley C. Guthrie Jr., *Christian Doctrine,* p. 76, 77).

"But many doctrines are accepted by evangelicals as being clearly taught in the Scripture for which there are no proof texts. The doctrine of the Trinity furnishes the best example of this. It is fair to say that the Bible does not clearly teach the doctrine of the Trinity. In fact, there is not even one proof text, if by proof text we mean a verse or passage that 'clearly' states that there is one God who exists in three persons" (Prof. Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 89).

Keep in mind that the authors of the quotations above all believe in the trinity but are compelled to admit that it is not taught in the Bible. We are not going to take their word for it. We would like to examine the texts used to support the trinity and see if they do just that. As we study these verses let us come to them seeking to find out what they actually say rather than to see if we can fit our opinions into the verses. Make sure you catch that distinction. Many people come to the Bible seeking to prove a preconceived idea. Yet, that is a dangerous way to approach the Bible. God wants us to come to Him for wisdom and knowledge (James 1:5), and His most complete revelation of these things is found in the Bible. If we want to know what God says about Himself we cannot come to Him with our preconceived ideas and try to cram them into the Bible, but rather we must inquire "What does God want to tell me in the verses I read in the Bible? What do the verses actually say?" With this in mind, let us read the supposed "proof texts" for the trinity.

The Old Testament

Genesis 1:1, 26 and Elohim

The Bible begins by saying, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. … And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:1; 26).

Some people suppose that we can find the Trinity doctrine in these texts. They make this claim because the Hebrew word *elohim*, that was translated "God," is plural, and they believe the plural pronouns in Genesis 1:26 help to support the Trinity doctrine as well.

The Hebrew word *elohim* is plural, but it never indicates plurality when referring to the true God. Every time *elohim* is used referring to the true God it has a singular meaning. *Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon* calls it "the plural of majesty" and the *Brown-Driver's Brigg's Hebrew Lexicon* says that when it refers to the true God it is "plural intensive" with a "singular meaning."

Furthermore, the word *elohim* is used in the Bible in places where it could not possibly be referring to a plural being. For example, God said to Moses, "See, I have made thee a **god** [*elohim*] to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." (Exodus 7:1) Was God saying that He was going to turn Moses into a trinity? Obviously not! God would not have us believe that Moses is a plural being even though He used the plural word *elohim* to describe him. For other examples read Exodus 4:16; 1 Samuel 5:7; 1 Kings 11:5, 33; 18:27, etc.

As indisputable evidence that *elohim* has a singular meaning when referring to the true God, please consider this: whenever New Testament writers quoted from the Old Testament they used the singular Greek word theos to denote the true God as a translation of the word *elohim*. This is also true of the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint, which was translated around 200 years before Christ came to earth. This proves, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that elohim has a singular meaning when referring to the true God. Keep in mind that all of these translators and authors were very familiar with the Hebrew language of the Old Testament. If *elohim* really indicated a plurality in the true God, then the New Testament writers and the Septuagint translators would have used the plural form of *theos* (θεοι, θεοις or θεους) when speaking of God. Instead, they used the singular every time, even though they used the plural form often in the Old Testament and eight times in the New Testament when referring to men or false gods. (You can read these for yourself in John 10:34, & 35; Acts 7:40; 14:11; & 19:26; 1 Corinthians 8:5; and Galatians 4:8.) This demonstrates that the New Testament writers and the translators of the Septuagint did not recognize a plural meaning in the word *elohim* when referring to the true God. It

is careless for any theologian today to think they know more about an ancient Hebrew word than the ancient Hebrews themselves who lived at the time the Bible was written and was first translated into another language.

Regarding the plural pronouns in Genesis 1:26, the pronouns are plural in the original Hebrew, forcing it to be translated, "God said, let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness." Those who claim this verse teaches a trinity point out that *elohim* is plural and the pronouns are plural, therefore there must be a plurality in God. If we are to accept this explanation we would have to translate it, "GODS said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness." This translation would do injustice to the true meaning of *elohim*, and it would have two or more Gods speaking in unison, saying, "Let us make man in our image." Is that what God is trying to tell us? Did several Gods create man, or was there just one?

Those who promote the idea that Gods said, "Let us make man," run into a big problem in the next verse, because all of a sudden the pronouns switch to singular, both in Hebrew and in English, while the plural *elohim* is still used. Why was there a change? The next verse says, "So **God** [*elohim*] made man in HIS own image, in the image of **God** [*elohim*] created HE him." If we are expected to believe that Gods are speaking in verse 26, to be consistent we must believe that Gods are being referred to in verse 27, but instead of plural pronouns the Bible changed to singular pronouns as if only one person was referred to.

Now, there is a very simple explanation for this. The use of plural pronouns after a singular noun does not indicate that the singular noun should really be plural. For example, let's suppose the president said to the attorney general, "Let us make a law." This would not indicate that there are two presidents just because he used a plural pronoun. The plural applies to the two who will be involved in making the law rather than to the president. In like manner, the "us" and "our" in Genesis 1:26 applies to the Two who were involved in the creation of the world rather than to the one who was speaking.

The Bible says "God… created all things by Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 3:9) It is obvious that the God in this verse is someone other than Jesus Christ. And according to Hebrews 1:2, God, the Father, created all things by His Son.

Now, we can know for sure who is speaking in Genesis 1:26, and to whom He is speaking. God, the Father, said to His Son, "let us make man in our image." Remember, Christ is "the express image" of the Father, so anyone created in the Father's image is automatically created in His Son's image. The pronouns switched to singular in verse 27 to give proper credit to the one who created all things. Consistently, in every place that anyone is given credit for creating the world, it is the Father who created everything, but He did this creating by or through Jesus Christ. (Read Hebrews 1:1, 2; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:15, 16; John 1:1-3; Revelation 4:9-11).

The New Testament used the Greek word *theos*, in the singular form, to refer to the God of heaven over one thousand times. In each case this singular word refers to one person, and one person only. Also, every time Jesus referred to God, He used singular pronouns, which were translated, He, Him, His, Thy, Thine, and Thee. Every time Jesus included Himself along with God, He used plural pronouns, we, us, and our (John 14:23; 17:11, 21; etc.).

The use of plural pronouns in connection with God is very rare in the

Bible. The Hebrew word elohim is used 2,606 times in the Old Testament, most of which refer to the true God. Out of all these cases there are only four places where plural pronouns are used in connection with the true God. They are: Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8. An examination of each of these verses in context reveals that none of them require a plural meaning in God Himself. All can be understood in a sense that a single Person (*Elohim*) was speaking to His divine Son.

So, to the best of my knowledge, God never referred to Himself using plural pronouns, or nouns with a literal plural meaning. Many theologians have come to the same conclusion. Here are a few comments on this point.

"The fanciful idea that Elohim referred to the Trinity of persons in the Godhead hardly finds now a supporter among scholars. It is either what the grammarians call the plural of majesty, or it denotes the fullness of divine strength, the sum of the powers displayed by God" (William Smith, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Peloubet, MacDonald Pub. Co., 1948, p. 220).

"Elohim must rather be explained as an intensive plural, denoting greatness and majesty" (*The American Journal of Semitic Language and Literature*, 1905, Vol. XXI, p. 208).

"It is exegesis of a mischievous if pious sort that would find the doctrine of the Trinity in the plural form elohim [God]" ("God," *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*).

"Early dogmaticians were of the opinion that so essential a doctrine as that of the Trinity could not have been unknown to the men of the Old Testament… No modern theologian… can longer maintain such a view. Only an inaccurate exegesis which overlooks the more immediate grounds of interpretation can see references to the Trinity in the plural form of the divine name Elohim, the use of the plural in Genesis 1:26 or such liturgical phrases as three members of the Aaronic blessing of Numbers 6:24-26 and the Trisagion of Isaiah 6:3" (*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. 12, p. 18).

The plural pronouns and the word *elohim* fall far short of even hinting at the idea that God is a trinity. The only way you could find a trinity in those texts is if you have the preconceived idea of a trinity before reading them, and this is a faulty method of arriving at truth.

Genesis 1:2

Trinitarians have had a hard time finding a third person in the Old Testament, so if there is the slightest possibility of a third individual in an Old Testament text, you can be sure someone is going to use it to try to prove the trinity. Genesis 1:2 is no exception. This verse says, "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2).

Here we learn that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. This text does not say, "the Holy Spirit" moved upon the face of the waters. I realize that with a non-trinitarian mindset it would mean the same thing if it did, but some trinitiarians think that "the Spirit of your Father" is different from "the Holy Spirit." The former is understood to be the Father's own personal spirit, and the latter is sometimes thought to be a separate distinct person, sometimes thought to also have his own personal spirit. Yet, Genesis 1:2 mentions "the Spirit of God" as if it is God's own Spirit rather than a separate individual.

Yet, the nail in the coffin for the possibility of this verse proving the Holy Spirit to be a separate person is when you

read Psalm 33:6, 9. Here it says, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the **breath** [*ruach* - Spirit] of his mouth. … For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalms 33:6, 9). The Hebrew word ruach, that was translated "breath" in this verse, is the same Hebrew word that was translated "Spirit" in Genesis 1:2. Here we find that "the word of the Lord" is used synonymously with "the Spirit of his mouth." This is clearly speaking of God's literal word that created the heavens. Jesus said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). In Psalm 33:6 God's word is called "the Spirit of his mouth." In Genesis 1:2 it says "the Spirit of God" moved on the waters and the next words are: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). The context is clear that God was creating the earth and it is in this context that God's Spirit was moving upon the waters. The Spirit of God in this text is referring to His word as demonstrated in Psalm 33:6, which tells us it was "the Spirit of his mouth."

Please don't get me wrong, God's Spirit is much more than just the literal word of God. In the book *Understanding the Personality of God* we saw that God's Spirit is His "own self" (John 17:5), not just His words. (Please contact us to request your copy of the book *Understanding the Personality of God*.) Yet, in Genesis 1:2 the term "the Spirit of God" refers to God's word that was active in creating the world. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God" (Hebrews 11:3).

Genesis 18:1-3

Sometimes Genesis 18:1-3 is used in an attempt to prove the trinity. These texts say, "And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant." Some people claim that the "three men" who appeared unto Abraham were the supposed three members of the trinity.

However, there are some serious problems with this claim. First of all, it is impossible for any of these three individuals to be God, the Father, for the Bible says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). The Bible says that the Father dwells "in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Timothy 6:16). God told Moses, "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exodus 33:20). Several prophets in the Bible saw at least faint representations of the Father in vision, but no sinful man has ever been able to actually look at the Father and live to tell the story. Because of this we can be absolutely certain that God, the Father, was not one of the "three men" who appeared to Abraham.

So, who appeared to Abraham? The Bible says that "the LORD appeared unto him." Whenever the King James Version of the Bible uses the word LORD with all capital letters it signifies that the Hebrew name of God, Yahweh, was written in the original text. Yahweh appeared unto Moses. As we have already seen, the person referred to here is not God, the Father, demonstrating that there is someone else who uses this name.

God told Moses, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the

way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him" (Exodus 23:20, 21). Here, God told Moses that an Angel would go before the children of Israel. This was no literal angel. God said, "my name is in him." Paul informed us that the "spiritual Rock that followed them… was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4).

We are also told that Jesus is "so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Hebrews 1:4). Jesus Christ received a name from His Father by inheritance. This must be a name that His Father also has, and this name is Yahweh. Jesus Christ used this name in Genesis 18, and it was He who appeared to Abraham, not as a trinity, but as one single individual, and there were two literal angels with Him. The Bible says, "And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD" (Genesis 18:22). Two of the three went toward Sodom, and only one stayed behind to talk with Abraham. There is only one Person referred to as "the LORD" in this verse, and He is the Son of God. We know that only two of the men went toward Sodom and that they were angels, for when they arrived, the Bible says, "And there came two angels to Sodom" (Genesis 19:1).

Genesis 18 definitely does not prove or even hint at the idea that God is a trinity of three persons in one God. The Son of God and two angels is not a trinity.

Deuteronomy 6:4 and Echad

Oddly, one of the most monotheistic verses in the Bible is used by some trinitarians in an attempt to prove a plurality in God. This verse is Deuteronomy 6:4, which says, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is **one** [*echad*] Lord." This text is quoted by devout Jews at least twice a day and they are strictly monotheistic. They see nothing in this verse to imply that God is more than one person. Yet, this verse is used by some trinitarians to support the idea of a plural God.

The word in question is the Hebrew word *echad*, which was translated "one." The Hebrews see this as a word that denotes complete singularity, while some trinitarians see it as a word that denotes plurality in a "compound unity," such as three in one. Some trinitarians claim that *echad* represents "unified oneness" as opposed to the Hebrew word, *yachid* which, they say, represents "numeric oneness." Some trinitarians claim that if Moses wanted to indicate that God is numerically one he would have used the Hebrew word *yachid* instead of *echad*. Plugging in the plurality idea into Deuteronomy 6:4 would make it read, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our [Gods] are [a unified group] Lord." Let us examine how *echad* and *yachid* are used in the Bible so we can understand what God is trying to tell us in Deuteronomy 6:4.

Echad

Echad is the Hebrew word most commonly used to describe something that is one. Almost every time you find the English word "one" in the Old Testament it was translated from the Hebrew word *echad*. *Echad* was used 952 times in the Old Testament. It was translated "one" 687 times. Every language has a word to signify "one" in the sense of counting. In Spanish it is "uno," in German it is "ein," in Latin it is "unum," in Hebrew it is "echad." When you go to www.translate.google.com and type "one" in the English side and select Hebrew on the translated side it will translate it as *echad*. The reason for this is that *echad*

simply means "one." *The New American Standard Hebrew Lexicon* defines it as, "a primary cardinal number; one." *The Brown-Driver-Brigg's Hebrew Lexicon* says, "one (number)."

There are trinitarian commentaries and lexicons that contain definitions of *echad* suited to fit their preconceived idea that God is a plural God made up of a compound unity, but that does not make these definitions true. There is a saying among Bible students that says, "Context is king." This means that the context of how a word is used in the Bible is more valuable than any man-made definition of that word. When writers of the Hebrew Bible wanted to distinguish something as "one," as opposed to "two" or "three," they used the word echad. Let us look at a few examples.

When Esau was tricked out of his father's blessing he complained to his father, "Hast thou but **one** [*echad*] blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept" (Genesis 27:38). Here we find that *echad* literally means "one," not "two" or more.

When Joseph's brothers came to him for food they said, "We are all **one** [*echad*] man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies" (Genesis 42:11). Surely these brothers were not saying that they were the sons of a group of men, but rather one and only one. They did not have to use the word *yachid* to clarify that this "one" man was "*only* one" man. This idea was naturally inherent in their use of the word *echad*.

After Joseph accused them of being spies he said, "Send **one** [*echad*] of you, and let him fetch your brother" (Genesis 42:16). Joseph was not suggesting to send a group of men back for their brother, but only one.

Joseph's brothers said to him, "We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; **one** [*echad*] is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan" (Genesis 42:32). When they said, "one is not" they were talking about Joseph, pretending that he had died. Joseph was the only one of the twelve that was missing, and they used *echad* to explain this.

When God explained to Moses how to build the Ark of the Covenant, He said, "And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And make **one** [*echad*] cherub on the one end, and the **other** [*echad*] cherub on the other end: even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof" (Exodus 25:18, 19). This is a simple math problem, 1+1=2. There are two total cherubims, and one of them is called *echad*.

When the Bible describes the daily sacrifices of Israel it says, "Now this is that which thou shalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the first year day by day continually. The **one** [*echad*] lamb thou shalt offer in the morning; and the other lamb thou shalt offer at even" (Exodus 29:38, 39). Again, one is literally one, and two is literally two. *Echad* is the Hebrew word for one.

When Moses finished building the altar and dedicated it, the Bible says, "And his [Nahshon's] offering was **one** [*echad*] silver charger, the weight thereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, **one** [*echad*] silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; **both** of them were full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering" (Numbers 7:13). Again we see a simple math equation, one charger plus one bowl equals "both of them." *Echad* is not a compound unit here either. The bowl and charger are single items, just

as the sacrifices mentioned above are single items.

Solomon wrote, "Two are better than **one** [*echad*]; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the **one** [*echad*] will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is **alone** [*echad*] when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can **one** [*echad*] be warm alone? And if **one** [*echad*] prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). It is very clear that Solomon was making a distinction between one person and two persons by using the word *echad*. Notice that the word *echad* is also used here for "alone." *Echad* definitely carries the idea of absolute singularity. Trying to insert a "compound unity" definition in this verse would render it meaningless.

Another text that clearly shows the singularity of *echad* is Deuteronomy 17:6, which says, "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of **one** [*echad*] witness he shall not be put to death." *Echad* could not possibly mean more than one in this verse, since it is set in contrast to two and three.

There are well over six hundred similar examples, and for the sake of conserving space and not wearying you further, we will confine it to the few listed here. The word *echad* has a plural form that Moses could have used if he had intended for us to believe God is a unified group. We find the plural form of *echad* in Genesis 29:20, which says, "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a **few** [*echad* in its plural form] days, for the love he had to her." Moses could easily have explained that God is a compound unit or group of Gods if he wanted us to believe this, but He simply said, "The LORD our God is one LORD." This comes just two chapters after he said, "Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; **there is none else beside him**" (Deuteronomy 4:35), and just one chapter later God said, "Thou shalt have **none other gods before me**" (Deuteronomy 5:7).

The context requires that we take the word "one" in Deuteronomy 6:4 to mean "one" in its absolute singular sense rather than a unit or group. Despite the fact that even a brief Bible study on the Hebrew word *echad* reveals that it literally means "one," a theology professor wrote that in Deuteronomy 6:4 Moses "employed the plural 'echad (one among others in a joined or shared oneness)" (Woodrow Whidden, *The Trinity*, coauthored by Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John Reeve, Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002). This statement is not true at all. There is a plural form of *echad* as we saw in Genesis 29:20, but Moses used the singular form in Deuteronomy 6:4. To suggest that Moses was trying to indicate that the one God of the Bible is really "one among others" would mean that there could be dozens of Gods. It is sad when people take a word and try to make it mean the opposite of what was intended by the author. In the same paragraph as the above statement, the author says, *yachid* "means 'one' in the sense of 'only,' or 'alone'" (*Ibid.*) Yet, *echad* carries this meaning as well.

Echad is Absolutely Singular

Echad was translated "alone" or "only" several times in the Bible. The Bible says, "Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom **alone** [*echad*] God hath

chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God" (1 Chronicles 29:1).

"Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him **alone** [*echad*], and blessed him, and increased him" (Isaiah 51:2).

"Geber the son of Uri was in the country of Gilead, in the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and he was the **only** [*echad*] officer which was in the land" (1 Kings 4:19).

"Thus saith the Lord GOD; An evil, an **only** [*echad*] evil, behold, is come" (Ezekiel 7:5).

Echad is a word that carries strict singularity along with the idea of alone and only. It is not necessary for God to use *yachid* to indicate His singularity. The fact is, there are several other verses that add strict modifiers to indicate the absolute singularity of God, some of which are in close proximity to Deuteronomy 6:4. (See Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; 5:7; Isaiah 44:8; 45:5, 14, 18, 21, 22; 46:9; Joel 2:27; Mark 12:29-34; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6, etc.) If, when the Bible says, "the LORD is one LORD" it really means "the LORD is a united group of LORDs" then all the other verses that add modifiers to indicate "only one" would have to be reinterpreted. The fact is, Moses had words available to him to signify unity if that is what He wanted to say. He could have used the word *yachad*, which means, "to be united" (Genesis 49:6), but he did not use it because he did not want us to think God is a group of united persons.

Many Trinitarians seek to find a plural meaning for *echad* by quoting Numbers 13:23, which says, "And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with **one** [*echad*] cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and they brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs." Some Trinitarians assert that because the word *echad* is used here, referring to a cluster of grapes, that the word *echad* means "one made up of parts, a unit or a group."

If the above verse would have said, "**one** [*echad*] cluster of grapes" when in reality it meant that there were several clusters of grapes, then the argument would hold some validity. If the verse would have said, "**one** [*echad*] grape," when in reality it was referring to a whole cluster of grapes, then we would know that the word *echad* means more than just one. Yet, the verse mentions only one "cluster of grapes." The noun that *echad* refers to in this verse is what is a unit or group, not the word *echad*.

Echad is used for "ONE cluster of grapes" (Numbers 13:23), "ONE company" (1 Samuel 13:17), "ONE troop" (2 Samuel 2:25), "ONE tribe" (1 Kings 11:13), "ONE nation" (1 Chronicles 17:21). In each case the plurality exists in the noun rather than in the adjective "one."

Another verse used to attempt to show a compound unity in the word *echad* is Genesis 1:5, which says, "And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the **first** [*echad*] day." It is argued that since a day is composed of two parts, the dark and light portions, that the word *echad* has the meaning of compound unity, or one composed of parts. Again, this argument is unsound. *Echad* still means one in this verse. The compound portion of the statement, "first day" is not "one," but "day." The following verses speak of "the second day," "the third day," "the fourth day," etc. Is it going to be argued

that "second" and "third" are also compound unity words just because they are followed by the word "day"? I can say, "one egg" or "one dozen eggs." The meaning of "one" in these statements is exactly the same in both cases. I could also say, "two eggs" or "two dozen eggs." Any compound unity in a statement that uses the word "one" is to be found in the word following "one" rather than in "one" itself.

The primary verse that Trinitarians refer to for support for their assertion that *echad* means more than one is Genesis 2:24, where it says, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be **one** [*echad*] flesh." Trinitarians sometimes use this verse to try to prove that *echad* does not mean one. However, the verse did not say that a man and a woman would become one human, nor did it say that they would become one person nor one being. Though the man and the woman would become one flesh, they would still be two persons, two beings, and two humans. Neither would they be joined together to become one body of flesh. Rather, they are to become one family.

In seeking for an understanding of the term "one flesh," we must not conjecture about the meaning of the word "one," but rather we should seek for the meaning of the word "flesh" as it is used in this verse. Even in this verse, one still means one, and only one.

The verse is not trying to indicate that there are "two fleshes," but one flesh. We find in the Bible an explanation of one flesh to show that it signifies a close family relationship. Joseph's brothers said of him, "Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content" (Genesis 37:27). Paul called his Jewish brethren, "my flesh" (Romans 11:14) to indicate their close blood relationship. The Bible even translates the Hebrew word בשׂר (*basar*) that was translated "flesh" in Genesis 2:24 as "kin" in Leviticus 18:6 and 25:49. *The New American Standard Bible* translates it "blood relative." With this understanding for "flesh" it is clear that the expression "one flesh" in Genesis 2:24 means that the two married people are to be considered as closely related as "blood relatives." They become one family, not two families, but one. One still means one in this verse. Any compound unity resides in flesh rather than "one."

One Means One

The Hebrew word *echad* functions exactly the same in Hebrew as our English word "one." I could say, "My wife, children, and I make one family." The word "family" indicates more than one within it, but the word "one" still means one. If you offer to pay me "one hundred dollars" for a day's labor, it would be wrong for me to expect to receive two hundred or more dollars just because the word, "hundred," that follows "one" indicates plurality within it. If I came to you the next day and you agreed to buy my wristwatch for "one dollar," it would be illogical for me to expect you to pay me three dollars. It would not help my case for me to claim, "You used the word 'one' in a plural sense yesterday, so I expected that you would give me at least two dollars for my watch because one is plural." It is easy to see how illogical my position would be if I followed this line of reasoning. If I were to try to take you to court to sue you for the extra money I feel entitled to, the judge would dismiss my case immediately because it is based on a false premise.

The above argument is very easy to dismiss as illogical. Yet, when the same

type of flimsy argument is used to support the trinity, by the use of the word *echad*, many people accept it as gospel truth. Even theologians grasp onto this reasoning and repeat it in their works, until it is so often repeated that it takes on the appearance of fact. We must not rest content with man-made theories that have no basis in reality to support our belief in a doctrine. The fact that trinitarians have to go to such lengths to seek for support of the trinity is virtually proof that it is not true. When a person needs to grasp at straws to support their position it is a good indication that their position is not worth holding up.

The Hebrew word *echad* in its singular form, as in Deuteronomy 6:4, means one and only one in every case. There is not even one example of *echad* in its singular form meaning more than one, even though it is used over 900 times in the Bible. When God inspired Moses to say, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is **one** [*echad*] LORD," He meant just that. There is one, and only one, "LORD our God," and not a unity of three gods.

In case the evidence examined is not enough to settle the matter, Jesus gave us a divine commentary on this verse that we can be certain is truthful. Jesus quoted this verse in Mark 12. A Jewish leader approached Him and asked, "Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question" (Mark 12:28-34).

Notice the exchange here. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4, and then the scribe commented on this verse, "…there is one God; and there is none other but he…" Here we find that this Jew understood Deuteronomy 6:4 to mean, "There is one God; and none other but he." In case trinitarians are uncertain whether *echad* indicates exclusive singularity this Jew used very precise and exclusive language. Three statements indicate singularity. He said, "There is one God" and "there is none other" and "he." This Jewish leader understood that God is a singular individual being and none other but He. When we compare this verse with John 8:54 we find an interesting connection. Here Jesus was dialoguing with the Jewish leaders when He said, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God." When a Jew says "God" they are referring to the Person Jesus identified as His Father, and this verse demonstrates that Jesus knew that the Jews had this understanding. In Mark 12:32 it is certain that the scribe understood Deuteronomy 6:4 to be referring exclusively to God, the Father, as the one and only God, beside whom "there is none other."

When Jesus heard this, the Bible says, "Jesus saw that he answered discreetly [or wisely]." Jesus recognized that this man answered well, and then

Jesus said, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Jesus did not correct this man for his understanding, but instead complimented him for his good answer. Here is divine approval for the understanding that *echad* literally means one and only one in Deuteronomy 6:4.

In contrast to Jesus Christ's commentary on Deuteronomy 6:4, notice what some commentators say about it:

"This does not mean Jehovah is one God, …" (*Keil & Delitzsch OT Commentary* on Deuteronomy 6:4).

"The three-fold mention of the Divine names, and the plural number of the word translated God, seem plainly to intimate a Trinity of persons, even in this express declaration of the unity of the Godhead" (*Matthew Henry Commentary* on Deuteronomy 6:4).

"One in Three, and Three in One. Here are three words answering the three persons" (*John Trapp's Commentary* on Deuteronomy 6:4).

It is amazing what some people can read into the Bible that is not there. There is no way that Moses or any of his contemporaries would have understood Deuteronomy 6:4 to have reference to a trinity or any more than just one Person. The only way a person could find that theory in this text is if they already had the preconceived idea before reading it. This is something that could not have happened until the Catholic Church formulated the doctrine in the fourth century AD, just as prophesied in Daniel 11:36-39.

The New Testament has just as strong language to signify the singularity of God as is found in the Old Testament. Jesus said, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Jesus called His Father "the only true God," and Paul wrote, "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that **there is none other God but one**. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But **to us there is but one God, the Father**, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

Yachid

Trinitarians would have us believe that if Moses had wanted us to believe God is only one numerically single individual that he would have used the word *yachid* instead of *echad*. Yet, this is definitely not the case. We have already seen that *echad* is equivalent to our English word "one." *Yachid* means, "only, only one, solitary, one, unique, only begotten son" (*Brown-Driver-Brigg's Hebrew Lexicon*). *Yachid* is only used 12 times in the Bible, 8 of which refer to only begotten children. The remaining 4 instances are used to mean "solitary" or "lonely" in a negative sense. It is much more likely that if Moses had wanted to indicate that God is one singular individual he would have used *echad* rather than *yachid*, and that is precisely what he did.

In any language the word for the numeral "one" is widely used. We find the English word "one" in the Old Testament over 1,000 times. The majority of those times it was translated from the Hebrew word *echad*. *Yachid*, on the other hand, is only used 12 times and most often refers to only begotten children. The fact that this word is not used in reference to God, the Father, is not surprising at all. To argue that since this word is never used for God then He must be a plural being does not make sense. To argue from the lack of evidence is not a wise premise. The

fact is, there are many verses that employ very exclusive singular terms for the Father, such as "one God," "none other," "none else," "beside me there is no God," etc. It is not necessary to conclude that since God did not use a particular word to indicate His singularity that He must not be a single Person. There are lots of single items or persons in the Bible that are not described by the use of *yachid*. Are we to conclude that they are not singular because the obscure word we want God to use is missing? If God, the Father, wanted to indicate that He is "only begotten" or "lonely," then we could expect Him to use *yachid*. Certainly we would not expect God, the Father, to want to convey these ideas about Himself, so we should expect that He would not use *yachid* to define Himself.

There is absolutely no biblical basis to claim that since *echad* is used instead of *yachid* to define God's singularity that He must be more than one Person. The biblical evidence is of more value to discover the truth than any man-made commentary or dictionary definition. The facts are clear, "There is but one God, the Father" (1 Corinthians 8:6).

Isaiah 6:3 - Holy, Holy, Holy

There is a verse in Isaiah that is sometimes used to support the trinity doctrine. Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne and there were Seraphim [angelic beings] with six wings, "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). It is claimed by some trinitarians that the three times "holy" was repeated praise was ascribed to each of the three persons of the trinity. Yet, this is not a necessary conclusion. It must be admitted that they may have just been zealous in their worship of "the only true God" and were overwhelmed with His holiness sufficiently to draw from their lips three expressions of holiness for emphasis. In fact, this is not an isolated case where a word was repeated three times.

Jeremiah reprimanded the Jews when he wrote, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these" (Jeremiah 7:4). Surely, none would suppose that the Jewish temple was composed of three temples in one just because the term was used three times in a row.

In another place Jeremiah wrote, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD" (Jeremiah 22:29). Jeremiah was certainly only talking about one earth, but he repeated the word "earth" three times for emphasis.

Ezekiel wrote concerning the Jewish government, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him" (Ezekiel 21:27). Ezekiel was not referring to the kingdom being overturned three times, but he repeated it three times to emphasize the certainty of this prophecy.

When King David's son died, the Bible says, "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Samuel 18:33). David was overwhelmed with emotion and repeated the term, "my son" several times, not to indicate that he was referring to several sons, but to express the magnitude of his emotions.

If we are to conclude that when the angelic beings exclaimed, "holy, holy, holy," that they were referring to three separate persons, then to be consistent we would have to apply this logic to all

the texts mentioned above. Yet, that would be absurd. If it is unsound logic in one place, it is unsound logic in another. There is nothing in the context that would require us to conclude that the angelic beings were praising three persons.

Actually, we can be certain to whom these praises were ascribed. The thrice repeated "holy" is found one other place in scripture, and the context shows us who was being worshiped by this phrase.

John wrote, "And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. … and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts [living creatures YLT] full of eyes before and behind. … And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. … And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, … And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne" (Revelation 4:8-5:7).

Here we find that the one who was addressed by the term "Holy, holy, holy" is "the Lord God Almighty," and is "him that sat on the throne." We can also see from this that the one sitting on the throne is distinct and separate from the Lamb who approaches the throne and takes a book from His hand. The Lamb is Jesus Christ, and the one on the throne is God, His Father. We see this theme repeated consistently through the book of Revelation. John wrote, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Revelation 5:13). "Him that sitteth upon the throne" is God, the Father.

John wrote, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9, 10). John saw the New Jerusalem and wrote, "And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Revelation 21:22). "The Lord God Almighty" is "him that sat on the throne," and is the one addressed by the term "holy, holy, holy."

There is no biblical basis to suppose that the angelic beings in Isaiah's vision were praising a trinity by repeating the word "holy" three times. It is an example of the lengths trinitarians are compelled to go in grasping at straws to support their unbiblical position and finding support where there is none.

The fact that Jesus is God's literal Son is the cornerstone of Christ's church (Matthew 16:13-18). Those who seek

biblical support for falsehoods will someday discover the error of thier ways. God said, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place" (Isaiah 28:16, 17). I pray that you will cling to the Son of God who is the precious cornerstone, and not make lies about God and His Son a refuge.

Isaiah 9:6

Sometimes Isaiah 9:6 is used in an attempt to prove the trinity. Yet, Isaiah 9:6 only mentions one individual, the Son of God. It says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Because the Son of God is called "the everlasting Father" some trinitarians claim that this supports the trinity doctrine. However, if we are to believe that the Son of God is also the Father in the trinity, then how does this support the trinity? If Jesus is the Father, then who is the Son, and if He is both Father and Son, then how can there be a trinity, for the trinity claims three persons?

The title, "everlasting father," is not given to Christ because He is His own Father, but rather because He is the Father of the children whom His Father has given him. Isaiah 8:18 mentions this, when Jesus said, through Isaiah, "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion" (Isaiah 8:18). We know that this verse refers to Christ because it is applied to him in Hebrews 2:13. Christ is the Father of the redeemed, "the author and finisher of" their faith (Hebrews 12:2).

I am the son of my earthly father. Yet, at the same time, I am the father of my son. If someone were to come to me and call me a father, I would not assume they are thinking that I am my own father. I would know they are referring to me as a father of my son. Surely, we can expect no less of God. When He inspired Isaiah to refer to Christ as a "father," He was not trying to indicate that Christ was the Father of Himself. Furthermore, the term Holy Spirit is not used at all in Isaiah 9:6, thus making it impossible for this verse to prove that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all one being. The Bible clearly makes a distinction between the Father and His Son, portraying them as two separate beings. (Daniel 7:9, 13; Revelation 5:1, 7; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Zechariah 6:12, 13; Proverbs 30:4, etc.).

Jesus said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God's love is so deep and so broad that He sent His only begotten Son to die for our sins. He did not send Himself, He did not send a friend, He sent His only begotten Son. When we see this love it breaks our hearts and changes our lives. Any deviation from the Bible on the sonship of Christ is a deviation from our ability to love God with all our hearts. We must be very careful not to deny the Son of God, for in doing that we deny the Father also. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" (1 John 2:22, 23). Jude warned of men who are "denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 1:4). Do not let an unusual use of the term "Father" allow you to deny that Jesus is the Son of God.

Another word in this text that is used by some to deny the sonship of Christ is "everlasting." Yet none need go to the extreme of denying the sonship of Christ because of this word. *Brown-Driver-Brigg's Hebrew Lexicon* says one of the meanings of the Hebrew word עד (*ad*) that was translated "everlasting" is "for ever (of future time)." We find this word used in this way several times in the Bible.

Solomon wrote, "The king that faithfully judgeth the poor, his throne shall be established *for ever* [עד]" (Proverbs 29:14). He also wrote, "The lip of truth shall be established *for ever* [עד]: but a lying tongue is but for a moment" (Proverbs 12:19).

David wrote, "Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them *for ever* [עד] and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass" (Psalms 148:3-6). It is clear that the word everlasting does not mean "without beginning," but rather, "without end."

The Bible says, "He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the *everlasting* [עד] mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting" (Habakkuk 3:6). The mountains had a beginning, yet they are called "everlasting mountains." Everlasting means "for ever (of future time)." God has promised us "everlasting life." This does not mean that we had no beginning, but that we will have no end. Jesus Christ is called "everlasting" even though His Father "hath given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26). The life He received from His Father is everlasting life. He laid this life down for us at the cross (John 10:11), but now, Jesus is "alive for evermore" (Revelation 1:18). Christ is called "everlasting," which is appropriate, since He will last forever, and He is called "Father" because He is father to the children His Father gave to Him. Jesus said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

Notice also that Isaiah 9:6 says that "His name shall be called… The mighty God". Some may use this phrase to mean that Christ is the supreme God. This would be a good argument if the verse had referred to Christ as the Almighty God; however, it uses the term mighty God. We read of mighty men, but never of almighty men. It certainly is appropriate to refer to the Son as mighty, for He is powerful. In fact, Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). It is also appropriate to refer to Him as God, for the Almighty God Himself refers to His Son as God in Hebrews 1:8, 9. Therefore the terms everlasting Father and the mighty God can rightly apply to the Son of God, without the slightest hint that God is a trinity.

Isaiah 48:16

Another text that is sometimes used to support the trinity is Isaiah 48:16, which says, "Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the

beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me." Here, it is claimed, that "the Lord GOD" is the Father, "his Spirit" is the Holy Spirit, and "me" is Jesus. It is interesting that in this supposed proof text for the trinity "the Lord GOD" is the Father only, disproving the trinity. Again we find that "His Spirit" somehow must be distinguished from the Father's own Spirit" in order to find support for the trinity, but there is no basis to support this claim. "His Spirit" is the Father's Spirit in this text. Yet, as it is written in the KJV it could be taken to mean that the Father and His Spirit both sent Jesus. However, in *Young's Literal Translation* it says, "And now the Lord Jehovah hath sent me, and His Spirit." This agrees with most other translations of this passage. *The Bible in Basic English* says, "the Lord God has sent me, and given me his spirit."

There is nothing in this text that requires three persons to be involved. God sent His Son into the world and gave Him His Spirit without measure (John 3:34). In so doing He sent both His Son and His Spirit into the world. Jesus said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10). God's Spirit is His "own self" (John 17:5), not a separate person. This is why Jesus could say that His Father dwells in Him.

If God expected people for the first 4,000 years of this world's history to believe that He is a trinity, He did a very poor job of explaining it in the Old Testament. Worse than doing a poor job, He just avoided it altogether. Even the supposed "hints" of the trinity in the Old Testament really gave no hints to the world that God is a trinity. If God's people were expected to rely on such flimsy hints to the trinity, then they would be left to believe almost anything, for there is more evidence in the Bible for just about any theory a man may wish to believe.

God said, "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD" (Jeremiah 9:23, 24). God wanted people in Old Testament times to understand and know Him, and He gave sufficient information in the Old Testament for people of that time to accomplish this. The information God provided did not include the trinity doctrine. God's people at that time were able to know God enough to form strong relationships with Him and live holy lives without the trinity. The trinity is not a vital part of the Christian religion. In fact it is detrimental! To deny that Jesus is truly the Son of God and that He actually died, is not helpful in establishing a close personal relationship with God.

I pray that you will seek to know the only true God and His Son, Jesus Christ, so that you can have eternal life (John 17:3).

Micah 5:2

Some people think that Micah 5:2 proves that Jesus was not begotten by His Father before anything was created. This text says, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting"

(Micah 5:2). We know that this text is referring to Jesus because it was quoted in Matthew 2:6 to prove that He would be born in Bethlehem.

This text says of Jesus His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Trinitarians sometimes quote this to support the idea that Jesus is without a beginning. Yet, a more literal translation of this phrase is His "origin is from of old, from ancient days" (*English Standard Version*). The Hebrew word מוצאה (*motsawaw*) that was translated "goings forth" means, "origin" (*Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon*). Strong's defines it as "a family descent" (*Strong's Hebrew Dictionary*). One Bible version translated this word as "family tree" (*The Message Bible*). The Hebrew literally says that His "origin" was from the "days of eternity" (margin). The origin or family descent of Jesus is from the days of eternity.

Instead of this verse teaching that Jesus had no beginning, it actually tells us when Jesus had a beginning. His origin of family descent as the Son of God is from the days of eternity, or from before time as we know it. This verse is literally saying that Jesus Christ was born before our concept of time was created. The Bible says of Christ, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:15-17). Even time as we know it, including the sun and moon, were created by Jesus Christ. There were succession of events in the days of eternity, but the calculation of time as we know it did not exist in eternity when Christ was begotten.

Jesus Christ was born before all creation. He is truly the firstborn, and the image of the invisible God. God "created all things by Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:9). This excludes Jesus from being any part of creation. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God. He is "the Son of the Father, in truth and love" (2 John 1:3).

We have examined all of the most common verses in the Old Testament that are used to try to support the trinity doctrine and have found them lacking in many ways. None of them explain that God is a trinity. Nowhere in the Old Testament does it say anything similar to "one God in three persons." Furthermore, none of the verses we examined actually say what trinitarians would wish us to believe that they say. If all you had to learn about God was the Old Testament, it is extremely unlikely that after studying it you would conclude that God is a trinity. The only way you could come to that conclusion is if someone first implanted that idea in your head and then convinced you to think that the Old Testament proof texts actually support the theory of the trinity. It is irresponsible and reckless Bible study that would find the trinity doctrine in the Old Testament.

The New Testament

In the first part of this book we examined all of the Old Testament texts that are most commonly used to support the trinity and we have seen that the trinity is not taught in the Old Testament. Even most trinitarian theologians will admit this fact. Yet, many seem confident that the New Testament reveals that God is a trinity.

In this chapter we will examine all of the New Testament evidence that is often used to prove that God is a trinity.

I agree with the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on this question, which says, "Neither the word Trinity nor the explicit doctrine appears in the New Testament, nor did Jesus and his followers intend to contradict the Shema in the Hebrew Scriptures: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord' (Deuteronomy 6:4)." (*Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, article: Trinity, Online at, www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/605512/Trinity.)

We will not examine verses trinitarians use to establish that Jesus is God since we agree with God, the Father who said to His Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Hebrews 1:8, 9). Jesus is God by nature, as well as by the exalted position His Father gave to Him (Philippians 2:9; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28). I am human because my father is human. Jesus is God because His Father is God. We will examine verses that are used in an attempt to prove that Jesus is "the Most High God" or "the only true God." He certainly could not be the Most High God while His Father is "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" (Ephesians 1:17).

Matthew 1:23

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

As noted above, Jesus is God by nature, and when He was here physically 2,000 years ago, or when His Spirit lives in our hearts, God is truly with us. Not only is the Son of God with us when He is in our hearts, but His Father is also with us in Christ, for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). If we have the Son of God in our hearts we cannot help but have "God with us." Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). Jesus is the only way to have God with us. Whether the word "God" in Matthew 1:23 refers to the Father or His Son is immaterial. It could refer to either of them without the slightest hint that God is a trinity.

Matthew 3:16, 17

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon

him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The above reference is used in an attempt to prove the trinity. The argument goes like this, "The Father speaks from heaven, the Son is on earth, and the Holy Spirit descends like a dove, therefore all three must be separate persons that together make one God." There are elements in this text that could be interpreted in this way, but it is not necessary from the text.

There is generally no question about the Father's position as the God of heaven, and this text demonstrates this fact. God refers to His Son as "my beloved Son." This does not require us to conclude that the Son is somehow part of a trinity, but rather that Jesus is God's own Son. The declaration of the Father that Jesus is His Son should not be interpreted to mean that Jesus is "God the Son, the second person of the trinity." God could easily have made this declaration if He wanted us to believe it, but instead He simply said, "This is my beloved Son." This does not contradict any of the texts we have read in our studies on the personality of God that state that Jesus is literally "the only begotten Son of God" who was "given" life by His Father (John 3:18; 5:26, etc.).

The question arises from the fact that the Spirit of God descended from the Father in the form of a dove. This is the key element of the text that is interpreted to mean that God is a trinity. Yet, the Bible says it was "the Spirit of God" that descended rather than "God the Holy Spirit." The Spirit is mentioned as the property of Someone, it is God, the Father's, own Spirit that descended like a dove.

If you presupposed that the Spirit of God was really a separate and distinct person other than God, the Father, then certainly one would expect that this verse refers to that third person taking the form of a dove. What if the Spirit of God descended in the forms of two doves, would you then conclude that there are two Spirits of God? If a visible manifestation of the Spirit of God means that the Holy Spirit is a distinct and separate individual from the Father, then what do we do when we read of 120 cloven tongues of fire in Acts chapter two? Here we read, "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them [120 in all - verse 1:15]" (Acts 2:3). If one visible manifestation of the Spirit of God is one distinct person, then 120 visible manifestations of the Spirit of God must be 120 distinct persons. If the logic is sound in one text, it must be in all cases. Yet, we know that the Holy Spirit is not 120 persons. God is not made up of 122 people. Instead, God is one person who has a Spirit, just as truly as every living being has a spirit. God is able to send His Spirit anywhere He likes and it can appear in any form He wants.

The 120 visible manifestations of the Spirit of God were not intended to prove that God's Spirit is 120 people, but rather they were given as a sign to those present that the Spirit of God was poured out upon those individuals. When Peter explained what happened he quoted God saying, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:…" Peter did not think that the cloven tongues represented 120 spirits, but rather one Spirit, the Spirit of God. God said, "I will pour out of my Spirit." This does not sound like He was planning to send a separate individual to represent Him, but that He would share His own Spirit with others. Peter further explained, "Therefore [Jesus] being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33). If the 120 visible manifestations of the Spirit of God were designed to prove that the Holy Spirit is not

God the Father's own personal Spirit but a distinct individual, then Peter failed to get the point. He maintained that the Holy Spirit is the Father's own Spirit that He gave to His Son who then shed it upon the disciples. Jesus said the Holy Spirit "proceedeth from the Father" (John 15:26).

When Jesus was baptized and the Spirit of God descended in the form of a dove the man who baptized him did not conclude that the Holy Spirit is a separate individual. John the Baptist said, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:32-34).

Here John testified that the visible manifestation of the Spirit of God was intended to prove that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and that Jesus is the Son of God. If the events at Christ's baptism were designed to prove that God is a trinity, John failed to get the message. He still maintained that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and that Jesus is the Son of God. Interestingly, John called the Holy Spirit "it" in this text.

The bottom line is that even those who witnessed the events at Christ's baptism came away from the experience without the understanding that God is a trinity. They still understood that God is the Father and Jesus is the Son of God and the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of God." It is irresponsible for us to conclude that God is a trinity from Christ's baptism. The events there fall far short of proving the trinity doctrine.

Matthew 12:31, 32

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Some people take these verses as an indication that God is a trinity. Some think that we can blaspheme against God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, and be forgiven, but that a third person called the Holy Ghost is so highly exalted that if men blaspheme against him, they can never be forgiven. Yet, how many persons are mentioned in this verse? Two: the Son and the Holy Ghost.

To some it is surprising to realize that the Father is not mentioned by name in this text. The same is true in the other two accounts of this conversation. Mark's account reads, "Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation" (Mark 3:28, 29). Luke wrote, "And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven" (Luke 12:10). The Father is not specifically mentioned in any of these texts. After examining all of these accounts we only find two persons mentioned: the Son and the Holy Spirit. There is no hint of a trinity here.

Although the Father is not specifically mentioned by name, He is not missing from the text, for Jesus said, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). The Holy

Spirit proceeds from the Father because it is His own Spirit. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is blaspheming "the Spirit of your Father" (Matthew 10:20), because it is His own Spirit.

Jesus was not talking about a sudden word or action against the Holy Ghost, but a continual rejection of its promptings upon the heart. The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is when a person has stubbornly ignored the gentle convictions of God's Spirit so long and persistently that God's Spirit can no longer reach him. When a man reaches the point where he has blasphemed the Holy Spirit it is not because God has given up on him, but because he has stopped his ears from hearing God's instruction so long that no matter how hard God tries to reach him, he can no longer hear God's pleading upon his heart.

The Pharaoh of Moses' day had reached that point. His heart had been so hardened that He refused to do what the Lord instructed (Exodus 8:32). God said, "Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness" (Psalms 95:8). Once a man's heart is hardened against hearing God's Spirit speak to him, he has committed the "sin unto death" spoken of by John. (See 1 John 5:16.)

The Bible says, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). God's Spirit is what seals us, or prepares us for the day when Christ will come to redeem His people. If we continually reject the only avenue by which God can work in our lives, then there is nothing more that God can do for us. That is why there is no forgiveness for the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Not that God is unwilling to forgive, but that the person who does this is unwilling to repent and be forgiven.

Matthew 28:19

Jesus was talking to His disciples when He said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20). Did Jesus want His disciples to recite this formula at baptisms and teach people that God is a trinity?

Peter, who was a disciple of Jesus, was obviously present when Jesus gave this command. If we want to know what Jesus meant by this command, we can trust Peter to give us the proper understanding. Let us turn to the text of Scripture where this command of Jesus was obeyed for the first time. In Acts chapter two Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Here Peter instructed these people to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, rather than in three separate names. But, supposing Peter temporarily forgot the command of Jesus. Let us find more evidence.

In Acts chapter 10, Peter "commanded [Cornelius and his brethren] to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). From these verses it is plain that Peter must have understood the command of Jesus differently than most Trinitarians understand it today. However, maybe Peter was alone in his understanding of this command.

When Peter and John came to Samaria they found a group of people who had been "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16). Obviously, Peter was not alone in his understanding of the command of Jesus.

What about Paul? Keep in mind that Paul said of the gospel he preached, "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12). How did Jesus teach Paul to baptize?

When Paul visited Ephesus he met certain brethren there who had only been baptized by John's baptism. Paul instructed them about Christ, and "when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5).

There is no record in the Bible of anyone baptizing in three separate names of three individual persons. Now, there are three possibilities that could explain this. 1) The disciples were in direct rebellion against Jesus and purposely disobeyed His commandment. 2) The disciples understood the command of Jesus differently than most Trinitarians understand it today. 3) Jesus never gave the command to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The most reasonable of these possibilities is choice number two. The disciples obviously understood the command of Jesus differently than most Trinitarians understand it today. The word baptize does not always mean, "to submerse in literal water."

Let us look at it in another way. Jesus commissioned us to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (πνευμα - pneuma). Was Jesus, by making this commission, trying to teach the idea of a trinity? If so, He would have been contradicting other statements He made, and many statements made by other Bible writers. There is nothing in the verse that says there are three persons in the Godhead. There is nothing in the verse that says who is God. The word "God" is completely missing from the verse. We learn elsewhere in the Bible that the "one God" of the Bible is the Father. Paul wrote, "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Corinthians 8:6). The Bible uses the phrase, "God the Father" thirteen times, but it never says, "God the Son," or "God the Holy Spirit."

Notice also that the verse says we are to baptize "in the name of…" Why is it singular if there are supposed to be three persons? The word name in the Bible often refers to a person's character. Jacob's name was changed to Israel because his character had changed. If we believe this verse to be referring to actual names of three individuals, as most Trinitarians suppose, then it would be impossible to fulfill the command. The text says to baptize "in the name of…" Simply reciting the statement, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" is not fulfilling the command. To baptize someone in the name of a person we must know the person's name. It would be possible for us to baptize in the literal name of the Father, for we know His name: Yahweh or Jehovah. It would also be possible for us to baptize in the literal name of the Son, for we know His name: Jesus or Yahshua in Hebrew. But it is not possible for us to baptize someone in the literal name of the Holy Spirit, for nobody knows that name, if it exists.

The Father anointed His Son with His own Spirit. God said to His Son, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Hebrews 1:9). "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:34). As plainly shown, the Father has given His Son His Spirit. What type of

spirit did He give? Surely, it is a Holy Spirit. The Bible mentions several different types of spirit. We read in the Bible about "foul spirit," "evil spirit," "unclean spirit," "dumb spirit," "excellent spirit," "humble spirit," "wounded spirit," "broken spirit," "haughty spirit," "faithful spirit," and "good spirit." All these spirits are distinguishable by the adjective that describes them. We know that God, the Father, has a spirit (Matthew 10:20), and can that spirit be anything else, or anything less, than Holy? The word "Holy" is an adjective in every case, whether in English or in Greek. "Holy Spirit" is not a name, but a description of the Spirit of God.

Jesus was not giving a specific formula of words for the preacher to recite at a baptism. We know this because:

1) There is no record in the Bible of anyone using that formula at a baptism.

2) All the recorded examples of people baptizing after this command was given show that it was done in the name of Jesus. (See Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5.)

3) The word name is singular, indicating that it has reference to the character rather than to the proper names of individuals.

4) It would not be possible to literally baptize in the proper name of the Holy Spirit, because we have not been given that name, if such a name exists.

Once we realize that Christ was commissioning His disciples to baptize into the character of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, it is easier for us to understand His words. Several times in the Bible the word baptize refers to something other than literally immersing in water. For example:

Long after Christ's literal baptism in water He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50). Here it is obvious that Jesus was not referring to being literally immersed in water, but rather to an experience He would encounter. This experience was to be so intense that it could be described by using the word baptize, which literally means, "to immerse, submerge; to make overwhelmed" (*Strong's Greek Dictionary*).

Jesus used the word baptize in the same way in the following verses: He said to James and John who had asked for high positions in heaven, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matthew 20:22, 23).

In these verses Jesus used the word baptize to signify passing through an overwhelming experience. Paul used the word in this way when he wrote, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Being baptized into Christ is more than just being immersed in water, but rather indicates a complete dedication to Christ.

We could look at Christ's words in Matthew 28:19 in this way: "Go ye, therefore, and disciple all the nations, Immersing them into the name [character] of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19 Rotherham Version). This command is closely connected with the command to teach. Christ wants His disciples to understand the truth about God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit of God.

Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the

name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Right before and immediately following His command to baptize, Jesus told us to teach all nations. What are we to teach them? Jesus said, "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." We are to teach people the same things that Jesus taught when He was here. Did Jesus ever teach that God is a trinity? Who is God, according to Jesus? Jesus said His Father is "the Lord of heaven and earth" (Luke 10:21), "greater than all" (John 10:29), and "the only true God" (John 17:3).

When talking with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus told her, "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:22-24). Jesus identified God as His Father, and referred to Him using the singular pronoun "Him," and the singular Greek word θεος (*Theos*—God). According to Jesus, God is His Father.

He also said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29). Here Jesus spoke of God as someone other than Himself, as the one who sent Him into the world. Unquestionably, Jesus was referring to His Father.

Jesus said to His accusers, "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham" (John 8:40). He continued, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me" (John 8:42). He also stated, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God" (John 8:54). Jesus recognized that the God of the Jews is His Father. He never offered any correction to the Jews on this point, but rather reenforced their understanding by every one of His statements about God.

Jesus admonished, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). Again, Jesus speaks of God as someone other than Himself. In His final prayer with His disciples, Jesus said to His Father, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Jesus made it abundantly clear that there is only one God, who is His Father. Jesus did not just call Him "God" not even "true God"; but "<u>the only true God</u>." This leaves no room for anyone else being the true God. Nor does this allow for Jesus Himself to be part of "the only true God." He speaks of Himself as separate and distinct from the only true God. Notice also that His language completely leaves out any necessity for knowing a third being. There are only two Persons that it is necessary to know, God, the Father, and His only begotten Son.

After His resurrection, His understanding about who God is did not change. He said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).

Consistently, throughout His life, Jesus taught that God is His Father, and nobody else. Forty days after His resurrection Jesus made a statement that many take to mean something opposite

of what He taught His whole life. Jesus told His disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Some people take these words as evidence that Jesus was teaching that God is not one Person, but three. Yet, this would make Jesus' teaching in His last words on earth, something contrary to what He taught His whole life. If we are to identify who God is in this verse, by comparing it with other Scriptures, we would have to conclude that God is "the Father" in this verse.

If Jesus was trying to teach us that God is a trinity of three persons in Matthew 28:19, what are we to conclude from this? Did Jesus change His mind about who God is? Did He surprise His disciples with a new concept about God in His last conversation with them? If so, His disciples did not seem to get the message. Inseparably linked with Jesus' command concerning baptism is His command to teach people "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." We are to teach people the same thing that Jesus taught. Jesus taught, without exception, that God is His Father. To take Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19 to mean something completely opposite of His teaching throughout His life is to disobey His command to teach people as He taught.

In Acts 2:38 we see the principles of the great commission demonstrated. On the day of Pentecost Peter proclaimed, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:38). The Father calls or draws (John 6:44) us to Christ, we are literally baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and the Father gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide us in our Christian lives.

Baptism represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It only makes sense to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, for He is the one who died, not the Father or a third person called the Holy Spirit.

Some have enquired, "If Jesus did not want us to think that the Holy Spirit is a separate person, why did He mention the Holy Spirit in this commission?" This is a good question. In Peter's instruction he mentions repentance towards God, baptism in the name of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus mentioned all three because it is imperitive that His disciples understand what He taught about God, the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. If Jesus left out the Holy Spirit in His commission, then people would likely have been left without the knowledge that Christ lives in us through His Spirit. People could be left without knowing that there is a Holy Spirit. This would be terrible! There were some disciples in the Bible who were left in this condition.

When Paul was in Ephesus he met some brethren and asked them, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts 19:2). Paul taught them about the Holy Spirit, and "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). It is interesting that even though Paul taught these disciples specifically about the Holy Spirit as the element they were missing, he still baptized them in the name of Jesus Christ

rather than in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Jesus wants His church to benefit from the entire gospel, including the rich gift of His Spirit. It would be dangerous to leave people without the knowledge of the wonderful gift of God's Spirit.

Matthew 28:19 certainly does not prove a trinity, nor does it prove that the Holy Spirit is a separate being from the Father and His Son. If we are to find proof of these doctrines in the Bible we must look elsewhere.

John 1:1-3

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3).

Here Jesus is called "God," yet there is a clear distinction between Him and "God" whom He was with. The God who Jesus was with is God, the Father. Jesus was not the same "God" He was with, but rather, Jesus was God in the sense of being divine just like His Father. The Father is God, so, necessarily, His Son is God by nature. Biblical Greek Scholars generally agree that the second time the word "God" is used in John 1:1, it is used as a "qualitative noun" to describe the qualities of "the Word." Harner says that nouns "with an anarthrous [no article] predicate preceding the verb, are primarily qualitative in meaning" (*The Journal of Biblical Literature*, Philip B. Harner, article "Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1.") "The clause could be translated, 'the same nature as God.' This would be one way of representing John's thought, which is, as I understand it, that ho logos ['the word'], no less than ho theos ['the God'], had the nature of theos." (*ibid.*)

I am human because my father is human. Jesus is God because His Father is God. That is what John was emphasizing when he stated, "the Word was God."

John 5:17, 18

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

Some have used these texts in an attempt to prove that Jesus claimed to be the supreme God, equal to the Father in every respect. Yet, to come to this conclusion one must ignore the immediate context. The very next verse records Jesus' reply to this charge. "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise… For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son… For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man… I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:19, 22, 26, 27, 30).

In response to the accusation that claiming to be the Son of God made Jesus equal to His Father, Jesus said that He could do nothing of Himself, that His Father committed judgment unto Him, gave Him life, and gave Him authority. Jesus directly refuted the charge that He was exactly equal to His Father.

A person completely equal to the Most High God could not receive authority and life from Him.

Please don't misunderstand. Jesus is equal to His Father in many respects. Jesus is exactly equal to the Father by nature. I am human because my parents are human. Jesus is God because His Father is God. In addition to sharing the same nature as His Father, God highly exalted Jesus and gave Him authority over the entire universe. Jesus has been given an exalted position, He has been made equal to the Father. The Father put all things under Jesus, except for Himself (1 Corinthians 15:27). The Father is still "greater than" Jesus in authority (John 14:28).

A reading of the Bible reveals clear distinctions between the Father and Son. The following is a partial list showing the authority of the Father:

- **He's the one who sent His Son.**
  "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14).

- **He's the one who gave His Son a work to do.**
  Jesus said, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

- **He's the one who commanded His Son what to say and speak.**
  Jesus said, "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49).

- **He's the one who gave His Son power over all flesh.**
  Jesus said, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2).

- **He's the one who gave authority to His Son.**
  Jesus said that His Father, "hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (John 5:27).

- **He's the one who told His Son to sit on His right hand.**
  "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" (Hebrews 1:13).

- **He's the one who anointed His Son.**
  "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Hebrews 1:9).

- **He's the one who gave His Spirit to His Son.**
  "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:34).

- **He's the one who gave to His Son to have life in Himself.**
  "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26).

- **He's the one who gave His Son all power in heaven and earth.**
  "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18).

- **He's the one who highly exalted His Son.**
  "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him…" (Philippians 2:9).

- **He's the one who gave His Son a name which is above every name.**
  "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9).

- **He's the one who has given all things into His Son's hand.**
  "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35).
- **He's the one who committed all judgment unto His Son.**
  "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22).
- **He's the one to whom Christ will be subject for all eternity.**
  "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:28).
- **He's the one who is the head of Christ.**
  "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3).
- **He's the one who is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
  "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Ephesians 1:17).

In no case do we find that the opposite is true. The Son never sent the Father anywhere. He never gave the Father a work to do, or commanded what He should speak. The Son never gave power or authority to His Father. The Son never anointed His Father. He never gave life to His Father. The Father has never, and will never be subject to His Son. The Son is not the head of the Father, nor is He His God. It is acknowledged by most that the Father holds the highest rank. The continual attempt of trinitarians to make the Son absolutely equal to the Father is virtually proof that He is not. They never seek to prove the Father is equal to the Son. It is true that Jesus is equal to His Father in many respects, including nature, but in each of the aspects mentioned in the verses above, the Father holds the highest position. In fact, He is the only being in the Bible given the titles, "most High" or "the Highest" (Mark 5:7; Luke 1:32).

How many most Highs can you have? If there is more than one most High, then you have just eliminated the most High, because now you have a committee of most Highs. There can only be one most High.

Paul wrote, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3). In explaining heirarchy, Paul stopped when he came to God. Why? He could not go any higher! The Father is the most high God, and is the head of Christ.

Jesus never claimed to be equal in every respect to His Father. Instead, He made it very clear that His Father is greater than He. Jesus said, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). He also said, "My Father,… is greater than all" (John 10:29).

John 8:58

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

Many trinitarians use this as conclusive evidence that Christ is the Most High God because He used the term "I AM" in reference to Himself. Is this the case? The Bible says that Jesus is "the Son of the Highest" (Luke 1:32). The devils are even aware of this fact. One day a possessed man came up to Jesus and said, "Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?" (Mark 5:7). Jesus is the Son

of the Most High God, not the Most High God Himself.

Let's look at Exodus, the only place that the term "I AM" is used in the Old Testament. Moses saw a strange phenomenon as he beheld a bush burning but not being consumed. The Bible says, "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed" (Exodus 3:2). Who appeared to Moses? "The angel of the Lord." Who is that? As Moses drew near to the bush the angel of the Lord said, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). We read of a similar occurrence with Joshua when he was about to surround Jericho.

"And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so" (Joshua 5:13-15).

Here the Captain of the Lord's host appeared to Joshua and told him to loose the shoes from off his feet, because the ground where he was standing was holy. We know this was not an angel, because an angel would not accept worship. John began to worship an angel and the angel said, "See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Revelation 19:10). We know that the Captain of the Lord's host who appeared to Joshua was not God, the Father, for "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). Another reason this could not be the Father is that this person identified Himself as the "captain of the host of the Lord" rather than "the Lord" Himself. The only One left who this could possibly be is Jesus Christ.

Christ appeared to Joshua and told him to take the shoes off of his feet, for the ground whereon he stood was holy. Christ is often referred to as "the angel of the Lord." The word "angel" means messenger, and does not always refer to the class of beings known as angels. Jesus is not a literal angel, but He is the foremost messenger for God. God told Moses, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in Him" (Exodus 23:20, 21). We also read, "And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them" (Exodus 14:19). Christ was the One who went before the children of Israel. Paul wrote about Israel that they "did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4).

So we see that the only time the term "I AM" is used in the Old Testament as a name, it refers to Christ. How then can one say that because He used the same

term in the New Testament that He was claiming to be the Most High God?

Some have argued that the term "I AM" means "eternal existence" or "without beginning." But this is not the proper definition of the term. The Hebrew word is היהא - *hayah* in the imperfect tense, which means:

1) to be, become, come to pass, exist, happen, fall out
1a) (Qal)
1a1a) to happen, fall out, occur, take place, come about, come to pass
1a1b) to come about, come to pass
1a2) to come into being, become
1a2a) to arise, appear, come
1a2b) to become
1a2b1) to become
1a2b2) to become like
1a2b3) to be instituted, be established
1a3) to be
1a3a) to exist, be in existence
1a3b) to abide, remain, continue (with word of place or time)
1a3c) to stand, lie, be in, be at, be situated (with word of locality)
1a3d) to accompany, be with
1b) (Niphal)
1b1) to occur, come to pass, be done, be brought about
1b2) to be done, be finished, be gone
(*Brown-Driver-Brigg's Hebrew Lexicon*).

The word *hayah* has several meanings, one of which is "to come into being." The word itself does not require an eternal existence in the past without beginning. However, it is used in the imperfect tense here, which can apply to past, present and future. Some have concluded from this that "I AM" means "without beginning." But, let us see how this word is used in the exact same tense elsewhere in the Bible.

The first time this word is used is Genesis 1:2, which says, "And the earth was [*hayah* in the perfect tense] without form, and void;…" Here *hayah* is used in the perfect tense referring to a completed action in the past. The earth was without form, but it no longer is without form. That condition is past. The next verse says, "And God said, Let there be [*hayah* in the imperfect tense] light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). Here *hayah* is used in the imprefect tense (just as in Exodus 3:14) to express a condition that is ongoing. The light began on day one, but it continues to this day. Here we find that *hayah* in the imperfect form does not indicate "without beginning." In fact, to the contrary; in this case it indicates a beginning.

Hayah in the imperfect tense is used of humans as well. God said, "And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be [*hayah* in the imperfect form] my people." (Leviticus 26:12; See also Genesis 9:26; 41:40; Judges 11:9; Ruth 2:13; 2 Samuel 15:34.)

Jesus is the I AM of Exodus 3:14 and John 8:58, but that does not mean He did not receive life from His Father, as He himself testified, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26). Nor does His use of the term indicate that He is the Most High God. The Scriptures refer to Jesus as the "Son of the Most High God," "the Son of the Highest" (Mark 5:7; Luke 1:32). The Father is the only being who is called "the most High," "the Highest," "above all," etc.

Please do not let man-made theories keep you from acknowledging God, the

Father, as the only most high God and Jesus Christ as His beloved Son.

The Miracles of Jesus

When Jesus was here He raised the dead, healed the sick, controlled the weather, etc. Jesus pointed to these miracles as evidence that He was sent by God. When John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus to find out if He was the Messiah, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11:4, 5).

Some have concluded, since Jesus was able to perform miracles, that He possessed almighty power when He was on earth as a human. There is no doubt that Jesus possesses all power now, for He said after His resurrection, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). But the time-period in question is during Christ's life on earth as a human. If He had almighty power as a human, the reality of His suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross would be in question. (Please see the chapters on the death of Christ in our book, *Understanding the Personality of God*, for a thorough explanation of this point.)

Does the ability to work miracles prove that a person possesses almighty power? Peter said, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). Here Peter said that the working of miracles proved that God was with Him rather than proving that He had almighty power. Jesus verified this when He said, "…the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10).

If the ability to perform miracles proves that a person is almighty, we would have to conclude that many people in the Bible were almighty. God healed lepars through Jesus. He did the same through Elisha (2 Kings 5:9-14). God raised the dead through Jesus. He did the same through Elisha (2 Kings 4:32). God opened the eyes of the blind through Jesus. God closed and opened the eyes of a whole army through Elisha (2 Kings 6:18-20). God controlled the weather through Jesus. God stopped it from raining for 3 ½ years, and then started the rain through Elijah (James 5:17, 18). These are just a few examples of God working miracles through others. Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12). Jesus was not promising to convey almighty power on His disciples, but rather to work miracles through them.

The working of miracles does not prove that the one who physically spoke or performed the miracle is almighty. It is certainly true that Jesus had more authority than any human while He was here. The Father had commanded the angels to worship Him while He was on this earth (Hebrews 1:6). He could command that something be done, and they would obey His command (Matthew 8:5-10; 4:3). Yet, Jesus acknowledged that this authority was contingent upon His Father's approval. When Peter began to fight for Him, Jesus said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:53).

All the miracles Jesus performed while He was on earth were performed

by the power of God through His angels.

John 10:17

Many Christians believe that when Jesus was on earth He was omniscient (all knowing), omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (having the ability to be all places at once), and immortal. These misconceptions keep people from being able to appreciate the magnitude of Christ's sacrifice and suffering in our behalf. If Christ possessed these divine qualities while He was upon this earth, He could not have experienced surprise, terror, or any concern for His future outcome. It would reduce His emotional turmoil to merely reciting words of a play, pretending to be distressed.

Some have been confused by Jesus' statement: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might *take* **2983** it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have *power* to lay it down, and I have *power* to *take* **2983** it again. This commandment have I *received* **2983** of my Father" (John 10:17, 18).*

The Greek word λαμβανω - *lambano* that was translated "I might take," (with *Strong's* number 2983), can mean take, but also means "to receive (what is given), to gain, get, obtain, to get back" (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*). Please notice that this word is also used in verse 18 but is translated "received." Christ laid down His life that He might receive it again. The Greek word εξουσιαν - *exousia* that was translated "power" can mean power, but also means "authority, permission" (*ibid.*) Christ had permission to lay down His life so that He could receive it again from His Father.

The KJV translation is not completely accurate in this case. Notice some other translations of this statement: "I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to receive it again. This is the command which I received from my Father" (*Twentieth Century NT*). "Authority, have I, to lay it down, and, authority, have I, again, to receive it: This commandment, received I, from my Father" (*1902 Rotherham Bible*). "I am authorized to lay it down, and I am authorized to receive it back again. This is the command I received from my Father" (*1912 Weymouth NT Translation*). "Authority I have to lay down her, and authority I have again to receive her; this the command I received from the Father of me" (*1865 Diaglot NT*).

The above translations are correct in the way they render the words "authority" and "receive." Jesus was not stating that He could raise Himself from the dead. The prophecy in Psalm 88:8 was true of Him, which says, "I am shut up, and cannot come forth."

John 10:30

Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." This has caused many to be confused into thinking that Jesus is the Father, or is somehow joined to Him in a way that makes the Father and Son a compound being. This faulty conclusion need not be reached. It is helpful to read the context. Jesus said, "I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man,

* The small Strong's number in this verse represents a Greek word in the original text.

makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John 10:30-36).

Jesus' response to this charge of blasphemy was twofold. First, He addressed their use of the word "God." He explained that the word "god" can have a broad meaning, even to include humans.* He basically said, "Don't be so touchy about the word 'God,' even humans are called 'god.'"

After disarming them regarding the use of the word "God," Jesus denied the charge of claiming to *be* God, pointing out that His claim was merely to be "the Son of God." The Jews evidently understood His words, because when He was finally charged for blasphemy and condemned to death, the accusation was that He claimed to be the Son of God.

When brought before Caiaphas, the Bible says, "Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God" (Matthew 26:63). Luke's account says, "Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth" (Luke 22:70, 71). After this, Jesus was brought before Pilate and, when Pilate said he could find no fault in Him, "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7).

The jeering crowd at Christ's crucifixion said, "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God" (Matthew 27:43). Naturally, the strongest accusations about Christ would come from those who condemned Him to death. If they could have legitimately accused Him of claiming to be "God" they

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* In the Bible, the word "god" has several different meanings. In a very limited sense, men are called gods. Both the Greek word *theos* and the Hebrew word *elohim*, which are most often translated "god," are used in reference to men. (See Exodus 7:1; Psalm 82:6; John 10:34.) When the word "god" is used in that sense, then there are hundreds and thousands of gods.

In a less limited sense, angels are called gods. David wrote about man, "For thou hast made him a little lower than the ***angels*** [*elohim*]" (Psalms 8:5). The word "angels" in this verse comes from the Hebrew word *elohim*. The way *elohim* is used here it denotes a type of being that is higher than man, but it is still used in a limited sense, and with this definition there would still be many gods.

In reference to Christ, the word "god" is used in a much less limited sense, to denote His nature as being on the same level as His Father—something that cannot be said about any other being in the universe. The Bible says that Christ was "in the form of God" (Philippians 2:6). But even when the word "god" is used of Christ, it is used in a limited sense, because Christ has a God who is "the head of Christ," "above all," and "greater than" He (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 4:6; and John 14:28). When the word "god" is used in its absolute and unlimited sense, there is only one person to whom it can apply, God, the Father, alone. Jesus said that His Father is "the only true God" (John 17:3). Paul said, "there is none other God but one... God, the Father" (1 Corinthians 8:4, 6).

would have. Yet, they all said that His claim was that He is the Son of God. This is exactly who Jesus said He is (Matthew 26:63, 64; Luke 22:70, 71). Jesus never claimed to be God. The one time He was accused of such a claim, He flatly denied this charge.

John 14:9

"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"

Some people have seen a hint of the trinity in this verse. They seem to read it this way, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; because I am the Father." Yet, this is an impossible interpretation of this verse. Jesus said, "And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape" (John 5:37). Jesus had said that his hearers had never literally seen the Father, so when He told His disciples that they have "seen the Father" He was not speaking in a literal sense. Instead, they had seen the Father's character manifested in His life. Jesus clarified his meaning in the very next verse: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works" (John 14:10). Here Jesus explained that when people saw the works of Jesus and heard His words, they were seeing the Father because the Father was the one doing the works in Jesus.

This is similar to what Paul said when he wrote, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Here Paul claimed that the life people saw in him was not his life, but the life of the Son of God. He was saying, "If there is anything good in me, it is not me doing it, but Jesus who lives in me." Paul also wrote, "that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Corinthians 4:11).

If Christ's life is fully manifested in my life, it would be appropriate for me to say, "If you have seen me you have seen Christ, because Christ is living in me." This is essentially the same thing Jesus was saying about His Father. He manifested the life of the Father more fully than anyone had done, and since He knew it was His Father doing the works and giving Him the words to say, He was giving credit to whom credit was due. He was not in any way trying to convince His disciples that He is part of a "three in one" God.

John 14:15, 16

Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever" (John 14:15, 16).

The purpose of the gift of the Comforter is that He may abide with the disciples forever. This was excellent news to the disciples, for they were sad to hear of Christ's soon departure. Jesus continued His discourse, stating that He would send "the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:17).

Jesus said that the world could not receive the Spirit of truth, because it did not see him nor know him. The world does not see that this gift is available to them, nor does it know the Person who is the Comforter.

Immediately following this explanation Jesus said something startling. He told His disciples, "but ye know him." How could the disciples know the promised "Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit" (v. 26),* if Jesus had not yet prayed for the gift, and it evidently had not yet been given? John stated, "the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39).

Jesus explained, "…ye know him; for [or because] he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:17). Who was dwelling with the disciples? Jesus Christ! Jesus explained that soon this Person who was dwelling with them would be in them. It certainly would be better for the Comforter to dwell in the disciples rather than dwelling outside of them. That is exactly what Jesus said a short time later. In the same discourse, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth; It is *expedient* [profitable] for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7).

Jesus said that His disciples would be better off if He left them, went to His Father, and sent the Comforter to dwell in them. He also pointed out that the coming of the Comforter depended upon His departure, and glorification. As long as Christ was living on the earth as a man, it was not possible for this promised Comforter to come to live in the disciples.

Jesus did not end His conversation in verse 17. In the next verse He said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:18). This sheds a great deal of light on the subject. It explains why the Comforter could not come until after Christ went away and was glorified, for Christ said that He, Himself, would come back to His disciples to comfort them.

Let's continue reading Christ's discourse to see how He reinforced this point. He said, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:19, 20). A few moments earlier Jesus had said to His disciples that the Comforter "shall be in you." Now, Jesus says that when the Comforter comes, "*Ye shall know that* ***I*** *am in you*." Jesus assured His disciples that He would not send someone else to comfort them, but that He would come Himself to be their Comforter. Isn't that beautiful! The disciples had become close friends of Christ; so close that John felt comfortable leaning on His bosom. It was a comfort to them when Christ was near. Now Jesus tells them some wonderful news. He tells them that after He goes to His Father, He would come back to them as the Comforter, and they would know that it was He who was dwelling in them—they would recognize that the same Person who was dwelling with them was now in them, by His Spirit.

Next, Jesus said something that caused one of His disciples to inquire of Him how this could take place. Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved

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* Every time in the Bible where you find the term, "Holy Ghost," it should have been translated "Holy Spirit." Sometimes the translators of the Bible chose to translate πνευμα αγιον (*pneuma hagion*) into "Holy Ghost," and other times they translated the same phrase as "Holy Spirit" (Luke 11:13). Holy Spirit is the most accurate translation.

of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:21-23).

Many people believe that in John 14, Jesus was trying to teach His disciples that God is a trinity, that the Holy Spirit is a third member of the God family. Yet, when Jesus was asked to explain Himself He did not say, anything similar to "God is a trinity of persons." Instead, Jesus made it abundantly clear that after He left the world, He would come back to make His abode in the hearts of His disciples. Not only would He return, but His Father would come with Him, so that both of Them would live in the hearts of His children; not physically, but by God's Spirit. In this way, the disciples could have intimate communion and fellowship with both the Father and His Son. John emphasized this when he wrote, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

At the beginning of Christ's discourse at the last supper He said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:1, 2). If the coming of the Comforter was more than both the Father and the Son, He would have told us. If God was made up of three persons, He would have told us. If the only true God was more than only the Father, Jesus would have told us. Instead, at the end of this discourse He said that His Father is "the only true God" (John 17:3).

If Jesus wanted us to believe that God is a trinity, He did a very poor job of explaining it. He had many opportunities to explain that God is a trinity, yet He never did. Not only did He fail to tell us God is a trinity, He made statements over and over again that are not in harmony with the doctrine of the trinity. If He wanted us to believe that God is a trinity, He made many statements that would serve only to confuse rather than to clarify. But "God is not the author of confusion" (1 Corinthians 14:33). Jesus wants us to believe that "there is one God; and there is none other but he," "God the Father," who is "the only true God" (Mark 12:32; John 6:27; 17:3).

John expressed the lovely truth of God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, living in us in several other verses. He wrote, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9). In 1 John 2:22, 23 he wrote, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but). he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." It is truly a blessing to have personal fellowship with both the Father and His Son, and I am very thankful that God has made this available to us.

John 16:13-15

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall

receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

These texts are probably the strongest in the Bible to suggest that the Holy Spirit is a separate person from the Father and Son because it is personified by saying, he shall "speak" what "he shall hear." Yet, these texts do not require a conclusion that contradicts the rest of the testimony of Scripture on the Holy Spirit. In the immediate context of this statement are several statements by Jesus that contradict the idea that the Holy Spirit is a separate person from the Father and Son. Jesus began His discourse on this subject in John 14 at the last supper. When asked to explain Himself regarding the Comforter Jesus answered, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). Jesus explained that the Comforter is the indwelling presence of both the Father and the Son.

Later in this discourse Jesus said, "He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father" (John 15:23, 24). In this discourse Jesus repeatedly spoke of both Himself and His Father. Then, He spoke of the Holy Spirit in this way, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). Here the Comforter is said to proceed from the Father. The word "proceedeth" is in the present tense both in English and in the original Greek, which indicates an action that is ongoing. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father in a continual, ongoing process. This shows that the Father is the source of the Holy Spirit. It is His own personal Spirit, which He gave to His Son, who also shares it with us.

The gender of the original Greek words in John 15:26 is interesting. "But when the **Comforter** [masculine] is come, **whom** [masculine] I will send unto you from the Father, even the **Spirit** [neuter] of truth, **which** [neuter] proceedeth from the Father, **he** [masculine] shall testify of me" (John 15:26). The phrase, "even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father" is a parenthetical thought included in this verse as an explanation of the identity of the Comforter. This explanation includes a neuter pronoun referring to the Holy Spirit ("which" instead of "whom.") This may seem insignificant since John was just following the rules of Greek grammar that dictate that a pronoun must agree with its antecedent ("Spirit" in this case) in number and gender. Yet, there are times when Bible writers broke the rules of Greek grammar when speaking of actual persons.

John wrote, "And I looked, and, lo, a **Lamb** [αρνιον - neuter] stood on the mount Sion, and with **him** [αυτου - masculine] an hundred forty and four thousand, having **his** [αυτου - masculine] Father's name written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1). Here John broke the rules of Greek grammar and referred to the Lamb using masculine pronouns even though the word "Lamb" is neuter in Greek.

John was not the only Bible writer to break the rules of Greek grammar to demonstrate the literal personality of the one represented by a pronoun. Mark wrote, "And he took the **damsel** [παιδιου - neuter] by the hand, and said unto **her** [αυτη - feminine], Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Dam-

sel, I say unto thee, arise" (Mark 5:41). For more examples like these, read Matthew 2:13, 14, 20, 21; Luke 1:59, 80; 2:21.

There was biblical precedent for John to have broken the rules of Greek grammar when referring to the Holy Spirit to give it personality by using masculine pronouns in reference to it. But he never did this! (There are places where it may appear that masculine pronouns refer to the neuter word Spirit, but in every case they actually refer to the masculine word 'Comforter.') In all places where John was actually using pronouns to refer to the Spirit, he used neuter pronouns even when masculine pronouns were used for the masculine word Comforter in the immediate context. The same is true for all of the other NT Bible writers. It would appear that none of these men understood the Holy Spirit to be an actual separate person from the Father and Son.

A few verses later Jesus said, "And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:3). Again, Jesus reinforced the truth that those who rebel against God rebel against both the Father and the Son. Jesus spoke as if He had no knowledge of any third divine person.

A couple verses later Jesus said, "But now I go my way to him that sent me;… I go to my Father" (John 16:5, 10). Jesus knew that He would be leaving soon and would be reunited with His Father who sent Him. He did not expect to be reunited with any third divine person called the Holy Spirit. Christ's words while He was here indicate that He did not believe God to be a trinity of persons.

In the immediate context before John 16:13, Jesus explained that the Comforter is the indwelling presence of both the Father and the Son (John 14:23). He later said, "…my Father is greater than I" (John 14:28), a truth incompatible with the trinity doctrine. In this discourse Jesus repeatedly spoke of both Himself and His Father (John 15:23, 24; 16:3, 5). Then, He spoke of the Holy Spirit in this way, "…the Comforter... proceedeth from the Father" (John 15:26). Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit as the personal possession of God, the Father (His own Spirit), which He gave to His Son who also shares it with us. Because the Spirit is the spiritual presence of both the Father and Son apart from their physical presence, it is natural for it to be personified. This can be done to demonstrate that the Spirit is more than just an impersonal force. Jesus referred to Himself as "he," "him," etc. (John 5:19, 20). It is reasonable that in John 16:13 Jesus was emphasizing the personality of the Holy Spirit as opposed to an impersonal force, rather than trying to convince His hearers that the Holy Spirit is a literal third divine person. This understanding harmonizes with the large amount of non-trinitarian statements Jesus made in the immediate context of John 16:13. It is dangerous to come to a conclusion that disagrees with the context. Context is king!

A few verses later, Jesus said, "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God" (John 16:27-30).

Here Jesus informed His disciples that He was sent by His Father and soon

would return to His Father. He did not mention returning to a third person. It may be argued that the Holy Spirit is a Spirit being that is in every place at once, and therefore wherever Jesus would go He would be with the Holy Spirit. Yet, the following verse disqualifies that argument. Jesus said, "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me" (John 16:32). Here Jesus claimed that even when He was left alone by humans there was someone with Him, and the one with Him was His Father. Jesus knew that His Father was physically in heaven (Matthew 7:21; 10:32), yet He claimed that His Father was with Him and even living inside of Him (John 14:10). Jesus claimed that the Spirit living in Him and dwelling with Him was not some third divine person but rather His Father.

Right after saying these words, Jesus "lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father… this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). This verse is completely incompatible with the idea that God is made up of a trinity of persons. Jesus said that life eternal is dependent upon knowing only two persons, the Father and His Son. If the Holy Spirit is a third divine person, it is not necessary to know him, and Jesus spoke as if even He did not know him.

In His closing prayer after this discourse Jesus said, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are… That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:11, 21-23).

Here Jesus spoke of the oneness we can have with Him and His Father, and He left out any mention of the Holy Spirit as a third person participating in this oneness.

The immediate context of Christ's words in John 16:13 demonstrate over and over again that Jesus did not believe that the Holy Spirit is a third separate person. This fact demands that we must understand John 16:13 in a way that harmonizes with the truth that the Father and the Son are the only divine persons involved in our salvation. Throughout His ministry Jesus taught that God is His Father and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father rather than a separate individual. As an example, when Jesus was accused of casting out devils by the prince of the devils, He said, "…if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you" (Matthew 12:28). Luke recorded this statement, "…if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you" (Luke 11:20).

Here we find that Jesus used the term "the Spirit of God" interchangeably with "the finger of God." Jesus understood the Spirit of God to be an extension of the Father that "proceedeth from the Father" (John 15:26).

If the only testimony we had from the Bible was John 16:13 it could possibly be concluded that Jesus was teaching that the Holy Spirit is a third separate individual from the Father and the Son. But, we have the benefit of the immedi-

ate context of these words, and we are forced to interpret these words in a way that is in harmony with the rest of Scripture, which clearly indicates that the Holy Spirit is the personal spiritual presence of the Father and Son.

Acts 5:3, 4

"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

Many Trinitarians use these verses as conclusive evidence that the Holy Spirit is a third separate person, or being, called God the Holy Spirit, but that is not what these verses say. According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30). The Holy Spirit is called "the Spirit of your Father." Please compare the following verses as evidence of this fact: "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matthew 10:20). Mark wrote, "for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost" (Mark 13:11). "The Holy Ghost" is "the Spirit of your Father."

Jesus said as much when He explained, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, the Father, which proceeds from Him, through His Son Jesus Christ, to us. Paul wrote, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus 3:5, 6). When we receive the Spirit of the Father coming to us through His Son, we receive the added benefit of receiving the Spirit of His Son as well. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6). Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

On the day of Pentecost Peter taught the same truth when he preached, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:32, 33). Jesus said, "…your heavenly Father [shall] give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him" (Luke 11:13).

When we realize that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father coming to us through His Son, Acts 5:3, 4 makes perfect sense. Please read it again and see for yourself.

The word holy is an adjective, providing us with a description of God's Spirit. God has a Spirit, and His Spirit is holy. To lie to God's Spirit is to lie to God. That is because His Spirit is Himself, not another person. If I were to lie to your spirit, you would not suppose that I lied to someone other than yourself. Let us be just as reasonable with the Scriptures when they refer to God's Spirit.

Acts 13:2

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

Some have argued that since the Holy Spirit can speak to people, it proves it is a third separate individual. Yet, since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father, then certainly He can speak to His people by His own Spirit. Bible texts that demonstrate the personality of the Holy Spirit do not prove the Holy Spirit to be a separate individual, but rather demonstrate that it is more than just a force; it is the actual personal Spirit of God.

I have seen many trinitarian presentations where much time and energy are expended to prove the personality of the Holy Spirit by showing instances where it is grieved, where it can speak, forbid, etc. The presenters triumphantly proclaim that because of this, the Holy Spirit must be a distinct and separate person from the Father and Son. Yet, what about Daniel 7:15, which says, "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me." Daniel's spirit was grieved. Does that mean that someone separate and distinct from Daniel was grieved? Certainly not! When Daniel's spirit was grieved, Daniel was grieved. There is no reason to conclude that when God's Spirit is grieved, speaks, forbids, is lied to, etc., that His Spirit must be someone other than Himself.

God has the unique ability to project His Spirit to be in all places at the same time. David wrote, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me" (Psalms 139:7-10). In this way He can live in me and in a man in China at the same time. Because of this unique ability God's Spirit is sometimes spoken of in a way that could be misinterpreted to mean that His Spirit is separate from Himself. Just because God's Spirit is omnipresent does not mean that it is a separate individual.

Paul said, "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers" (Acts 28:25). Peter wrote, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). The apostles understood that the Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit, which spoke to and through the prophets. Yet, they did not understand the Spirit to be a separate individual. Notice what Peter wrote: "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11). Here we find that Peter used the terms "Holy Ghost" and "the Spirit of Christ" interchangeably.

Paul wrote in a similar manner when he wrote, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:9-11). Paul interchanged the terms "Spirit of God," "Spirit of Christ," "Christ," "Spirit of him," and "his Spirit." Paul understood that when Christ is in you, the Spirit of His Father is in you, just as Jesus said to His Father, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17:23).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Father in Christ living in us. This is why the terms can be interchanged. The ability of the Spirit to speak, guide and direct His church does not indicate that the Spirit is a separate individual, but rather it demonstrates the mode in which God Himself directs the affairs of His church by His Holy Spirit.

Romans 9:5

"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

Some have used this verse in an attempt to prove that Jesus is "the most High." But, that is not what the text says. It says that Christ is blessed by God over all. God blessed Him more than He blessed anyone else. It is true that the location of the commas in this text lend support to the idea that Christ is the most High God. Yet, there were no commas in the original Greek manuscripts, and this interpretation would put this text in opposition to many other Bible verses. The Bible says that there is "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:6). The Father is called, "the highest" (Luke 1:32), and "the most High God" (Mark 5:7). Jesus said, "My Father,… is greater than all" (John 10:29), and "my Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). God, the Father, is above all, including the Son of God. Any interpretation of Romans 9:5 must be in harmony with these other texts.

Jesus is above all except for His Father. Paul wrote, "Then cometh the end, when he [Jesus] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

God, the Father, has put all things under the feet of His Son. Yet, the Father did not put Himself under His Son. A similar thing happened when Pharaoh put all of his kingdom under Joseph, and said to him, "Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou" (Genesis 41:40). The Father is above all in the absolute sense, because He is even above His Son. Jesus is next in authority to His Father, and is above everything else.

Paul wrote, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,… set [Jesus] at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:17-22). Truly, God blessed His Son over all others. Jesus Christ is "over all God blessed for ever" (Romans 9:5 without the commas that were added by men).

There is no reason to read Romans 9:5 and arrive at a conclusion that contradicts the rest of Scripture.

2 Corinthians 13:14

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

This text is sometimes called "the apostolic benediction," and is used in an attempt to prove that God is made up of three persons. However, let's examine the facts. Who is God in this verse? Most would agree that the only Person referred to as God in this verse is God, the Father. Paul obviously did not write this to promote the idea that God is made up of three persons but, instead, that God is only one Person. This agrees with Paul's previous letter to the Corinthians, when he wrote, "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Corinthians 8:6). According to Paul, the "one God" of the Bible is God, the Father, alone. The "one Lord" is Jesus Christ. If the "one God" is the Father, and the "one Lord" is Jesus Christ in this verse, who is the Holy Spirit? Jesus said it is the Spirit of the Father (Matthew 10:20; Luke 11:13; John 15:26).

Some say that the term "the communion of the Holy Ghost" proves that the Holy Ghost must be a separate individual from the Father and Son. The argument has been made that you cannot have communion with anyone but a person. You cannot have communion with a table, or with a chair, etc. This is true, but the text does not say, "communion with the Holy Ghost," but rather, "the communion of the Holy Ghost."

Paul also wrote, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the **fellowship** [κοινωνια - *koinonia* - 'communion'] of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Philippians 3:10). Here Paul used the very same Greek word that he used in 2 Corinthians 13:14. He said that he wished to know the fellowship or the communion of Christ's sufferings. To have fellowship means we partake of something. We are to partake of God's Spirit and the sufferings of Christ.

There is a difference between having fellowship "of" and fellowship "with" something or someone. You can have the fellowship "of" His sufferings, even though His sufferings is not a person, but you cannot have fellowship "with" His sufferings.

John explains to us who we are to have fellowship "with." He says, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our **fellowship** [κοινωνια - *koinonia* - 'communion'] is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). Surely, if John had been acquainted with a third god, he would want us to have fellowship with him as well, but there is no mention of another person. John further states, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9). "Both" means two, and only two.

So, we are to have the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and be partakers of the Holy Spirit of God. There is only one God in this verse, the Father, and there are only two persons mentioned, the Father and Son. There is no trinity in 2 Corinthians 13:14. If we want to find evidence for the trinity in the Bible, we must look elsewhere.

Ironically, this text is held up as "the apostolic benediction" as if this was the commonly used ending of a letter from the apostles. But it is only used once. There is a phrase much more commonly used by the apostles, and it reads like this, "Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:3). A phrase very similar to this is used to begin 15 out of the 21 apostolic letters. In each of these

greetings only two persons are mentioned, the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

The fact that the trinity must be supported by grasping at such flimsy straws as 2 Corinthians 13:14 does not recommend it very highly. If God wanted us to believe that He is a trinity of three persons, He could have easily explained it in the Bible, but He never did. Instead, men have formulated theories and creeds to define God by using language that is foreign to the Bible. It would be far better for us to let God's word speak for itself, and leave the definition of "God" the way God left it in His word.

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

Ephesians 4:30

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

Some maintain that since the Holy Spirit of God can be grieved that it must be a separate person. This is not a necessary, nor logical conclusion. Daniel wrote, "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me" (Daniel 7:15). Daniel's spirit was grieved, yet I doubt anyone would be willing to suggest that Daniel's spirit was a person separate and distinct from Daniel.

Ephesians 4:30 actually demonstrates that the Holy Spirit belongs to a Person. The text says, "…the holy Spirit of God." The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, it is God's own Spirit. The translators chose to render πνευμα το αγιον in this verse as "holy Spirit" with a lowercase "holy," even though this exact Greek phrase is used 18 other times in the NT and was always translated, "the Holy Ghost." This verse demonstrates that the term "Holy Ghost" is not a name of a person, but a description of the Spirit of God. The English word "Ghost" is a poor translation of the Greek word πνευμα. "Spirit" is a much better translation that avoids the unbiblical idea of a disembodied ghost of a dead person. The Bible says, "The dead know not any thing" (Ecclesiastes 9:6). The word "holy" is an adjective to describe God's Spirit.

Just as the troubled spirit of Daniel was not a separate person, the holy Spirit of God is not a separate person from God.

Philippians 2:6

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

This text demonstrates the divinity of Christ by stating that He was in the form of God. This proves that Jesus is equal to His Father by nature. The remainder of the text is used by some in an attempt to prove that Jesus is exactly equal to His Father in every respect. Yet, the following verses show that He is not exactly equal in every respect. Two verses later we read, "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Here we learn that Jesus died, but if He was exactly equal to His Father in every respect this couldn't happen, because the Father cannot die (1 Timothy 6:16). This shows an inequality of the Son to the Father.

The next verse says, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name" (Philippians 2:9). Here the Father highly exalted His Son and gave Him an excellent name, something that could not happen if they were equal in every re-

spect. (For a more detailed explanation of this, please read the answer to John 5:17, 18.)

So what does it mean when it says that Jesus "thought it not robbery to be equal with God"? The English Standard Version reads, "…did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped." Jesus did not seek to become equal with His Father. He did not desire a higher position, but instead humbled Himself to become a man and die for the sins of us all. Satan has the opposite desire. He said, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:14).

Philippians 2:6 shows the humility of Christ and His contentment to accept the position given to Him by His Father. Jesus Christ is equal by nature to His Father, but He is not absolutely equal in authority. Jesus said, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

Colossians 2:9

"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

This is taken by some to prove that Jesus is the Most High God, completely equal to His Father. Yet, a few verses earlier we read, "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell" (Colossians 1:19). Here we find that the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ at the Father's choice, showing the Father to be greater in authority than His Son.

The word "Godhead" is used here and in two other verses in the Bible as follows, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device" (Acts 17:28, 29).

Some have been trained to believe that the word "Godhead" is some kind of family name that includes a group of three persons, yet when we read the Bible to see how the term is used we find that "his" and "him" are associated with the word Godhead. We also read, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3).

God, the Father, is the head, and consequently He is the Godhead. There is no case in the Bible where both the Father and Son are referred to collectively as "he," "him," or "his." The Godhead is spoken of as a single person, and there is no indication in the Bible that the Godhead is more than one person.

Yet, if that is the case, why does the Bible say that in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead? We have already seen that this fullness dwells in Christ as a result of God's decision. The Bible says, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19). Jesus said, "the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John 14:10). The fullness of the Godhead, or the fullness of the Father, dwells in Christ.

This should not be a surprise, for the Bible says that you can "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:19). If we

can be filled with all the fullness of God, then we should not be surprised to read that Jesus is filled with all the fullness of the Godhead (the Father). John the Baptist said of Him, "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:34). The Son of God has been given the Spirit of the Father without measure and, consequently, has the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him.

Colossians 2:9 in no way proves that Jesus is the Most High God, nor that the word "Godhead" is a title that includes Him.

Hebrews 7:1-3

"For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually."

Some have used this verse in an attempt to prove that Jesus is without "descent" or "beginning of days," yet they seem to overlook some very crucial elements of this text.

Whatever this verse says about Christ it also says about Melchisedec. Melchisedec was an ordinary human who was a priest and a king. If this verse proves Christ had no beginning, then it also proves the same of Melchisedec.

Was Paul trying to teach some strange new doctrine concerning Melchisedec? If you read the context you find that Paul was demonstrating the superiority of the priesthood of Christ to the Levitical priesthood. This was his whole purpose for bringing up the geneology of Melchisidec. Levitical priests were required to prove that their geneology traced back to Levi, yet Melchisidec was exempt from this requirement. There is no biblical data that shows Melchisidec's geneology. This is the point that Paul was making when he stated that Melchisedec was without father, mother, or descent.

A few verses later, Paul wrote of Melchisidec, "But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better." (Hebrews 7:6, 7). Here Paul speaks of Melchisidec's descent. Melchisidec had a literal descent but it was not recorded in Scripture and it certainly did not come from Levi. According to Paul, Levi's descent was inferior to Melchisidec's, thus showing that Christ's priesthood is superior to Levi.

This is the burden of Paul's writing in Hebrews 7. He was in no way indicating that Melchisidec, or Christ was without a literal father, mother, descent, or beginning of days. Instead Paul stated that neither Melchisidec nor Christ could trace their lineage to Levi.

If we take Paul's writing here literally and conclude that neither Christ nor Melchisidec had a father, then we place Paul here in contradiction to himself, to Jesus Christ, and to the rest of the testimony of Scripture about Christ's Father. If Paul was trying to teach in Hebrews chapter 7 that Jesus had no Father, then His whole first chapter is rendered meaningless. In Hebrews chapter 1 Paul uses the entire chapter to prove the reality of Christ as the Son of God and God as His Father.

Sadly, when trinitarians use Hebrews chapter 7 to try to prove that Jesus is "without beginning of days," they

only focus on that one phrase, when it just as thoroughly proves that Jesus is "without father." The fact is, it proves neither. Jesus literally has a Father, and He literally had a beginning when He was "brought forth" "before the hills" (Proverbs 8:24, 25). What He didn't have is a Levitical descent.

1 John 5:7

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

This is one of the favorite verses used to support the theory that God is composed of three separate persons. This verse says that "there are three that bear record in heaven." The question must be asked, "three what?" Trinitarians and Tritheists assume that "there are three [persons, beings, or even three Gods]," but that is not what the verse says. It just says "there are three."

When we read the next verse we find a very similar statement. It says, "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one" (1 John 5:8). Again we read of three, but instead of bearing "record in heaven," they "bear witness in earth." The words "record" and "witness" come from the same Greek word in the very same form, and should be translated alike.

Verse 8 says, "there are three that bear witness in earth." Again, we must ask "three what?" Are there three persons? three beings? three Gods? From the context we find that it can be none of these. These three are said to be "the Spirit, and the water, and the blood." Verse six explains what these are where it says, "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 John 5:6).

From this verse we find that two of the three, the water and the blood, cannot possibly be persons, yet they bear record in the earth. John brought this up in the context of proving that Jesus is the Son of God. The previous verse says, "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:5). A few verses later John wrote, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son" (1 John 5:10).

John informed us that the Spirit, the water, and the blood bear record to help prove his point that Jesus is the Son of God. When John the Baptist saw the Spirit of God descending in the form of a dove at Christ's baptism, this bore record to him that Jesus is the Son of God. He recounted it this way, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:32-34). Here is one way the Spirit bore record that Jesus is the Son of God. It is also given to guide us into all truth by bearing witness to our spirit. (John 16:13; Romans 8:16).

The water bore the same record, for it was at Christ's water baptism that He was first publicly declared to be the Son of God. When Christ's blood was shed at Calvary it also testified that He is the Son of God. The Bible says about Christ's death, "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared

greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54).

Here we find that the Spirit, the water, and the blood all testify on earth to the fact that Jesus is truly the Son of God, yet this is done even though they are not three persons. If the three that bear witness on the earth are not separate individual persons, then there is no guarantee that the three that bear witness in heaven are separate persons. Also, verse eight helps us to understand how the three in heaven are one. Verse eight says, "these three agree in one," or in other words, the record that they bear is in agreement. So it is not the three, the water, the blood, and the Spirit, that are one, but the three records that are one. This is also true about the previous verse: the record of the Father, the Word and the Spirit is the same record. They all bear record that Jesus is the Son of God, and their record is in agreement.

How does the Father bear record in heaven? If a heavenly being wished to have direct access to the Father, who is sitting upon a throne, the Father would personally bear record that Jesus is the Son of God. The Son of God also bears record in the same way, He personally sits on a throne in heaven. And the Holy Spirit bears record in heaven the same way that it bears record in the earth, it bears record with our spirit. In heaven this same Spirit can bear witness to a heavenly being even if he is not physically standing before the throne of God. And these three records are in perfect agreement.

Trinitarians seem to read 1 John 5:7 inserting three words in the text like this: "For there are three Persons that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three Persons are one God." But that is not what the text says. First John 5:7* does not prove that there are three persons in one God. The only way we can find a trinity in this verse is to add three words to the Bible. If we wish to find evidence from the Bible that God is composed of three persons we must look elsewhere.

1 John 5:20

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

This verse is sometimes quoted as containing conclusive evidence of a trinity and of the supreme Deity of Christ. It is claimed that he is called "the true God and eternal life."

The term "true God" is used three times in the New Testament. It would help us to examine the other two uses in

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* First John 5:7 is in very few translations of the Bible due to its questionable nature. "It is now generally held that this passage, called the Gomma Johanneum, is a gloss that crept into the text of the Old Latin and Vulgate at an early date, but found its way into the Greek text only in the 15th and 16th centuries" (*A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1951, page 1186).

Clarke says, "Out of one hundred and thirteen manuscripts, the text is wanting in one hundred and twelve. It occurs in no MS. before the tenth century. And the first place the text occurs in Greek, is in the Greek translation of the acts of the Council of Lateran, held A. D. 1215" (*Clarke's Commentary* on 1 John 5, and remarks at close of chapter).

order to get a better understanding of what John was trying to say.

Paul wrote, "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:9, 10). In this verse it is obvious that the term "true God" is applied to the Father alone. Let us read the remaining verse on this point.

"These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:… And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:1, 3).

This text sheds the most light on the subject because it puts a limitation on the term "true God." According to Jesus there is only one "true God," the One He referred to as "Father." This means that Christ could not be referred to as "the true God," and if He were it would contradict Christ's own words recorded by John. Since John is the author of the other text in question, it is very unlikely he would have directly contradicted what he wrote earlier.

Furthermore, the Greek word αληθινον that was translated true "contrasts realities with their semblances" (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*). The same Greek word is used in Hebrews 8:2, shedding light on this subject. The writer of Hebrews contrasted the sanctuary on earth, which Moses was commanded to build, with the sanctuary in heaven, by using the same Greek word. Of Christ, he wrote, "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8:2). The tabernacle on earth was not a false tabernacle, nor was it the original—it was a likeness of the original in heaven spoken of in the book of Revelation and elsewhere. The original tabernacle is distinguished from its likeness by using the word "true."

With this understanding in mind, we realize that Christ is not the original or "true" God—He is "the image of God," "the image of the invisible God," and "the express image of his person" (2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3). An image is never the original, but always a likeness or duplication of the original. Christ is the Son of God and, therefore, the express image of His Father. It would be incorrect to say that the Father is the image of His Son because the Father is the original. In like manner, it would be incorrect to refer to Christ as the true or original God, since He is the image of the true God.

As we go back to 1 John 5:20 we find that God, the Father, is the subject of the verse. John says Jesus came to give "us an understanding, that we may know him that is true," then he says, "This is the true God, and eternal life." This concept is the same concept brought out in John 17:3. Jesus said, "…this is life eternal, that they might know… the only true God, and Jesus Christ…" (John 17:3).

The Greek grammar of 1 John 5:20 could make the term "true God" apply to either the Father or the Son and, based upon the testimony of Scripture, it must refer to the Father alone. Notice what Robertson has to say about this verse: "Grammatically ουτος may refer to Jesus Christ or to 'the True One.' It is a bit tautological to refer it to God, but that is probably correct, God in Christ, at any rate" (*Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures* on 1 John 5:20).

One theologian wrote, "A person must be strongly wedded to a theory who can read this verse and not see the distinction

therein contained between the true God and the Son of God. 'We are in him that is true.' How? 'In his Son Jesus Christ.' The distinction between Christ and the true God is most clearly shown by the Saviour's own words in John 17:3: 'That they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent'" (Joseph Harvey Waggoner, *The Atonement*, page 168).

Jesus is never called "the true God." There are verses in the Bible that refer to Christ as "God," but this is not one of them. (See John 1:1; Hebrews 1:8, etc.)

Revelation 1:4, 5

"John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ,…"

Some have thought that this is a greeting from the trinity, reasoning that the one on the throne is the Father, the Holy Spirit is before His throne, and Jesus Christ completes the trinity. But the Holy Spirit is not specifically mentioned here. Instead we read of "the seven spirits which are before his throne." This is a strange statement if viewed from a trinitarian perspective. If it is referring to the Holy Spirit, why is it called "seven Spirits," and why is it said to be before God's throne instead of being on the throne?

These questions have baffled trinitarian Bible commentators who seem to be divided into two main categories: those who believe this has reference to the Holy Spirit, and those who believe it refers to God's angels.

Some hold that Isaiah 11:2 provides proof that God's Spirit is spoken of in a multifaceted manner, thus explaining how His Spirit can be called "the seven spirits."

There is aslo Biblical data to support the idea that the term "seven spirits" refers to God's angels. John wrote, "And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God **sent forth** into all the earth" (Revelation 5:6). The seven eyes are the seven Spirits of God that are sent forth into all the earth.

The writer of Hebrews states: "But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, **sent forth** to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:13, 14). The angels of God are ministering spirits sent forth to minister. The number seven represents completeness, and could refer to the complete host of heavenly angels.

The seven Spirits are before the throne of God. John also saw that "all the angels stood round about the throne" (Revelation 7:11). John "heard the voice of many angels round about the throne… and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Revelation 5:11). Many angels are round about God's throne. The seven Spirits that are before God's throne have been interpreted by some to be the multitude of angels; ministering spirits sent forth into all the earth.

The seven Spirits are also called "the seven eyes" of the Lord. Zechariah wrote concerning the eyes of the Lord: "For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven [referring to Zechariah 3:9]; they are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth" (Zechariah 4:10). In the

immediate context of this statement Zechariah was given a vision of two olive trees that empty golden oil out of themselves into the seven candlesticks, which "are the seven churches" (Revelation 1:20). An angel told Zechariah that the two olive trees, "are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Zechariah 4:14). These are the two anointed angels represented by the two angels on the Ark of the Covenant that cover the mercy seat (Exodus 25:18-22). The seven eyes that run to and fro through the whole earth can refer to the host of heavenly angels.

We see the same language used in the second book of Chronicles: "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chronicles 16:9). A guardian angel protects each one of us. God said, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Psalms 91:11).

Keep in mind that with this view, the angels are not literally God's only set of eyes. He does not rely upon them to observe all things that happen on the earth. He knows everything already, but He has given His angels a work to do, which includes observing what happens on this earth and helping those in need.

Some trinitarians have objected to viewing the "seven Spirits" as angels because grace and peace are said to come from them. They also figure it would be unusual for John to mention the Father, the Son and angels without mentioning the Holy Spirit. A big part of this concern is their preconceived idea that God is a trinity. John was not hampered by this idea, so he was not inhibited from including the angels. Paul did the same thing when he wrote, "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (1 Timothy 5:21). Paul had no problem including the angels to the exclusion of a supposed third person of the trinity. Paul could not have imagined any slight toward the third person, since the trinity had not yet been invented.

The trinity doctrine was formulated nearly four centuries later by the Catholic church (*Handbook for Today's Catholic*, page 16). For a thorough history of this doctrine as well as an explanation of why knowing the truth about God is important, please contact us and request the books entitled, *God's Love on Trial*, and *The Formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity.*

Regardless of what view is taken on "the seven spirits which are before" God's throne, Revelation 1:4 certainly does not prove that God is a trinity.

Conclusion

We have examined all of the verses most commonly used to prove that God is a trinity of persons, and found that none of them actually prove this doctrine. There are more verses that are cited in support of the trinity doctrine, but none as compelling as the ones we have already studied. If God wants us to believe that He is a trinity, it is up to Him to tell us. But instead He told us that "there is one God; and there is none other but he," "God the Father," who is "the only true God" (Mark 12:32; John 6:27; 17:3). I choose to believe God rather than men. I pray that you will do the same. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4).

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