One True God
ONE TRUE GOD

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WORD OF THANKS

Thank God for guiding me for the past many years in writing this book.

My grateful thanks to:

The editors and proof-readers who have put much effort into polishing and checking the English.

The designer who has spent much time on designing, and those who arranged for printing the book.

Last but not least, the IA TJC Review Board who have taken the time to ascertain the soundness of the doctrine.
HRISTIANS are fighting many losing battles. One such battle is over who God really is? Some denominations commenting on Jesus tend to belittle Him as a demi-god who is created.

For many, who simply follow the crowd, Jesus is only one of the three entities in the Godhead. They do not know exactly what the scripture has said about Him.

For others, Jesus is one of the two persons in the Godhead - binitarianism - different from the Holy Spirit.

Still others build their faith in God from the church they go to. It makes no significant difference to them whether Jesus is God Himself or just another important historical figure.

Some believe that God has to be accepted by faith. But allow the real meaning of the truth based on an understanding of it in the Bible to become irrelevant.

Who is God? Who is Jesus? Are they the same God and if so, what evidence does the Bible have? To a certain extent, the answers, which this book provides, to these questions are crucial to our comprehension of God. Without a proper understanding of God, we will soon, in confusion, lose the war of drawing near to Him.

The Department of Literary Ministry
Author’s Preface
AUTHOR’S PREFACE

Hat the apostles taught and preached in their times in consensus have now become, we find, a mass of unresolved confusion. More seriously, it is the doctrinal issues on God that have been thrown into dubiety.

If we were to regain the apostolic understanding, we must humbly receive the biblical teachings about God, of which our belief must be brought abreast.

I attempt to surface the significance of and point out the principles in studying the one true God, and reinstate that there is only one God. The nature of God is documented from both New Testament (NT) and Old Testament (OT) sources. I examine the three functions of one God (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit), and the name of God – Jesus. The conclusion of the Bible is that Jesus is Jehovah (Lord) and the Holy Spirit.

The sections on the divinity and manhood of Jesus should bring new insights into the most debated and confused aspects of Godhead throughout the ages. It is to my extreme delight and veneration for God that the book of Revelation has been a perfect summary of the teachings on Godhead.
I also explain difficult passages and list down the cracks and confusing ideas of Trinity, with relevant biblical supports to correct these misconceptions.

I certainly do not, in any way, claim to have the authority of the doctrine, though this being the case. I am more than willing to be taught and open to correction.

May all readers read this book with prayerful hearts.

May God bless you!

FF Chong
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Chapter One

The Basic Principles
Introduction

to Chapter One

There are points to note on embarking the study of One True God. The purpose of this exercise is to help form the framework and to follow exactly what the Bible teaches about God.
THE BASIC PRINCIPLES

RAYING for divine guidance is essential in searching the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit gives capacity to know the things that God has freely given to us (1 Cor 2:12).

1. It is equally important to compare spiritual things with spiritual, to prevent exceeding the boundary of the Bible. Without exception, this principle holds true to the study of “One True God”.

2. God became incarnate discloses that Jesus is fully God and yet fully man. Rm 1:3f demonstrates the complete humanity and deity of Christ simultaneously (cf 1 Tim 3:16).

3. When God is referred to as the Father and the Son, it pertains to the functional aspect of God. Most importantly, it refers to the duality of Jesus; that is the distinction between the spiritual and the physical, not the existence of many entities in the Godhead.

4. Any passage that concerns Jesus – His role as God or His role as a man or both – should be read in the light of His dualistic nature, with an understanding that His role as a man is ephemerel.

5. A pluralistic God is sometimes misconceived from the Scriptures. This is because of the misconception of the
Hebrew text. Frequently plural in the Hebrew language denotes the majestic or royal status of God.

6. God is infinite (omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient) and is thus capable of disclosing numerous forms at the same time. When Jesus says He is on earth and at the same time He is in heaven (Jn 3:13), we must accept it by faith and not question the actual course of such a miraculous deed. It is, quite simply, beyond our comprehension. By relating the almightiness of God to such a manifestation will surely reinforce our conviction that He is the only one God.

7. Every theophany is intended with one or more purposes.

8. The apostolic church did not have the concept of Trinity. It was a theological concept which was to arise first from the Catholic Church and later adopted by other Christian movements. The apostles were from Jewish backgrounds and, as such, were strictly monotheistic.

9. We steadfastly believe that Jesus is the mystery of God. To be knit in His love and to be in Him are requisite for knowing God (Col 2: 2f; 1 Jn 4:12f). To know the mystery, we must begin from knowing who Jesus is, His work on earth and the words proceeding from His own mouth about His deity.

10. God is the actual author of the doctrine of “One True God”. We may disagree on the meaning of a certain part of it, but our trust lies in the Bible itself. Through its penulti-
mate authority, the Holy Spirit gives us the answer and corrects whatever misconceptions we may have.

11. No one can claim that he knows God in full. If we have taken all the necessary steps to know Him, and yet incomprehension still exists, the attitude should then be to trust that we have not received what we contemplate to know (cf 1 Cor 4:7; Acts 17:11). The faith to know that everything we have, is from God would assuage the pains of not being able to comprehend this doctrine fully.

12. Apart from seriously relying on the Holy Spirit in prayer, searching is itself a form of active reliance on God and His word (Acts 17:11). It is needful to know how an idea in the OT is used in the NT, is looked into with a different insight, may vary within itself and is developed into a totally new spiritual perspective.

13. The personification of God in certain passages of the Bible does not teach that there are various entities in God. For example, Proverbs chapter eight describes the entirety of Wisdom. The writer styles it in such a way that wisdom is personified (Prov 8:12). He does not indicate that God created Jesus (Prov 8:22f). It is clearly a passage about God possessing wisdom.

14. One of the unique features of God’s speech is His monologue - God spoke to Himself and included Himself to be both the subject and the object of the message at the same time (cf Zech 2:9ff; 4:9; cf Heb 1:9).
Chapter Two

About God
Introduction
to Chapter Two

The word “God” has invited different interpretations to its intended meaning. God is almost unthinkable to some, beyond reach to others and unknown to many. Except for He Himself, there is nothing that fully reveals Him.
ABOUT GOD

OD’s self-disclosure occurs in three ways. The first is in nature (Rm 1:20). The creation of the universe reveals His attributes, eternal power and nature. The divine works in man and his life prove undeniably His own existence.

**ROMANS 1:19f**

*What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.*

The other is in the human conscience which is the inclination to seek for God. The conscience - not superstition nor fanaticism - is a seeking spirit given to look for the Creator. Though man has been severed from Him after the Fall, his seeking spirit senses that there is a God and drives him to bridge the ever-widening separation from Him (cf Rm 1:22f). Although this is the case, yet man is drifting further away from Him when he refuses to take the conscience-directed path (cf Rm 1:28): sins have seared his conscience.

The last is in history. History has brought man to search for meaning in life. Man’s future is uncertain. He uses his past to decide what he will do in the future. This is especially so with those who believe in God. The past can be a warning or
encouragement to steer them forward accordingly in life (cf 1 Cor 10: 11ff).

1 CORINTHIANS 10:11

Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.

Unlike fairy tales, the history of salvation provides clear signals to what God had done for His people and will do for us. This includes His plans, His deeds and deliverance of His chosen people. The prophetic elements inherent in the biblical history tell us He is there and in control of His creation.

The Bible is the foundation for us to know God. Its accounts are not only descriptions of the past, but also applicable to our lives. The ancient saints’ encounter with Him was the result of knowing His truth, which declares who He is. We can experience their encounter, if the same truth given to them is received and practised upon, accompanied by the capacity to understand what the Bible teaches (Col 1:9f).

**Summary**

God makes Himself known in three ways:

- In nature (Rm 1:20).
- In human conscience (Rm 1:19).
- In history (1 Cor 10:13).
Chapter Three

The Nature of God
Introduction to Chapter Three

The encounter of the physical with the Divine is always challenging and meaningful. However, this does not bring a fuller understanding of who God is. To understand His divine nature would certainly enhance our convictions about and knowledge of Him.
THE NATURE OF GOD

ROM Genesis to Revelation, the Bible discloses consistently that God is Spirit (cf Gen 1:2; Rev 22:17). The Hebrew word for Spirit is “Ruwach” which also means wind, breath and life. The Greek word “Pneuma” for Spirit means breath, blast, breeze, soul. Being a Spirit, He is incorporeal. Luke and Matthew explain “a spirit does not have bones” (Lk 24:39) and the Spirit of God does not have “flesh and blood” (cf Mt 16:17). Jesus in disclosing that God is Spirit, reminded the Samaritan woman to worship Him in spirit and in truth (Jn 4:24).

God is not a partial spirit and He is invisible (Col 1:15; 1 Tim 1:17; Heb 11:27). “You cannot see my face, for no man can see Me and live” (Ex 33:20); “No man has seen God at any time” (Jn 1:18; 1 Jn 4:12) and “no one can see God” (1 Tim 6:16).

1 TIMOTHY 1:17

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Though there are Bible passages that describe God as having eyes, arms, feet and the like, they do not speak of His actual essence. By using intelligible terms to describe Him, we then can talk about His relationship with His creatures. So when
God said that His right hand spanned the heavens, He referred to His great power. It does not mean physically a gigantic hand stretched across the heaven (Is 48:13; cf 2 Pet 3:7).

The first aspect of His infinity is omnipresence or immanence. He is free to choose to be in various places simultaneously. He fills all in all (Eph 1:23; Col 3:11). The OT declares His omnipresence: “The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool” (Is 66:1; cf Acts 7:49). “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea; even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me” (Ps 139:7ff).

At this juncture, perhaps, “God is in heaven” requires an explanation. Firstly, it teaches that He is transcendent. Secondly, it teaches about His supremacy, for no one can see Him and live in the fullness of His glory and power (Ex 33:20). Lastly, it portrays a vision that He is with the angels. So, when God forsook His throne and became incarnate, He did not nullify His omnipresence. The underlying teaching is that He had an important mission to accomplish; He demon-


Omniscience (cf Prov 15:3) is another aspect of His infinity, which belongs solely to Him (1 Tim 1:17). He had fully foreseen the future (cf Acts 2:23) even prior to the foundation of the world (cf Eph 1:4ff). Examples include the betrayal of Jesus by Judas (Ps 41:9; cf Mt 26:23; Lk 22:21), the slaughter of babies by Herod (Jer 31:15; cf Mt 2:18) and the like. He knows every individual’s movements, thoughts, paths and words (Ps 139:1ff). The inner being of each is exposed before Him (cf Acts 17:27ff). He pervades every facet of human existence.

God’s declaration of being the Almighty (Gen 17:1; 35:11) discloses His omnipotence (cf Rm 11:36). He is the King of kings, and the Lord of lords (1 Tim 6:15). He reigns forever (Rev 19:6). By Him the universe came into existence and He put what was chaotic in order (Gen 1:2f). This makes a strict distinction between God and the created beings. It obviously reflects the absolute minuteness of man (cf Rm 13:1).

Transcendence is another aspect of His infinity. God does not depend on an object for His existence. He is self-existing. All things came into existence through Him (Col 1:15ff; Is 40:12ff). Man’s existence and continuous survival are clearly dependent upon the independent God, whose existence is
basic within Himself, and the environment He created.

His independent existence brings to light that He is the first and the last of all things (Is 44:6). The word “first” denotes the remotest past and “last” the everlasting future. They are the two eternities. He, in the space and time continuum, has no beginning and will have no end. As far as eternity is concerned, all created beings are mortal, except Him (Is 9:6; 1 Tim 1:17).

Summary
God is Spirit (cf Gen 1:2; Jn 4:24; Rev 22:17) and is invisible (1 Tim 6:16). The Bible tells us that He is infinite. His infinity includes:

- His omnipresence – He is free to choose to be in various places at the same time.
- His omniscience (cf Prov 15:3; 1 Tim 1:17) – He fully foresees the future (cf Acts 2:23).
- His omnipotence- by Him the universe came into existence.
- His Self-existence – He does not depend on an object
Chapter Four

God is One
Introduction to Chapter Four

The infinite God is one. This was the central message preached at the assembly of Israel: “The Lord is our God and the Lord is one” (Deut 6:4). He demanded His people to pledge exclusive allegiance to Him. It was a command that all must hear and a reminder that they had witnessed the creative power, mercy and deliverance of God (Deut 4:32ff). “The Lord is God in heaven above and on earth and below and there is no other” (Deut 4:39). Their very existence depended entirely upon knowing that God is One, and it is this absolute reverence which they must have for Him, by which He would be with them continuously (cf Is 45:14).
for His existence.

**GOD IS ONE**

OLOMON’S benediction at the dedication of the temple further elaborates that it was the intention of the Lord to let all the peoples of the earth know “He is God; there is no one else” (1 Kgs 8:60). To Him every knee would bow and every tongue swear allegiance (Is 45:21ff; cf Phil 2:10).

“God is One” confirmed that with His supreme power He created the heaven and earth (Is 45:5ff). It brought to remembrance Israel’s sins, the sufferings they had gone through and the defilement by the Babylonian idols (Is 46:1ff). In realising that God had delivered them (Is 46:9), they would witness His purpose established and all His pleasure accomplished for them (Is 46:10).

A further example is in Joel. The prophet uncovered the invasion of the locusts in a metaphorical strain of incomparable devastation and destruction under the picture of an army. Pointing out that they were the harbinger of God’s impending judgement, he beckoned the repentance of Israel. He promised that their obedience to the Sovereign’s commands would bring them handsome reward. Such a warning was to disclose “God is One; there is no one else” (Joel 2:27).

To ensure that God remains known throughout all ages, the
Spirit moved Zechariah to prophesy “God is one” (Zech 14:9). Both the OT believers and today’s Christians must believe in this absolute truth. In complying with this teaching of the OT, Jesus reiterated this command in His discourse with the Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes (Mk 12:29, 32; Deut 6:4; 4:35).

Coming to the NT, the apostles expounded this very teaching. In particular, being monotheistic and coming from a Jewish background, Paul stresses that God remains one, in spite of His incarnation to play the mediatorial role (Gal 3:20; cf Heb 7:25), to bring man to Himself, for salvation.

James, in the Spirit’s inspiration, reveals that even the greatest accuser, deceiver and liar – Satan – could not deny, in fear and trembling, (Jas 2:19) that God is one. The Christian religion has always been strictly monotheistic.

**Summary**

“God is always One”. This truth is consistent throughout the Bible. It means:

- His people must pledge exclusive allegiance to Him.
- “He is God; there is no one else”.
- With His supreme power He created the heaven and earth.
Chapter Five

The name of God

The titles of God

The name “Jesus”
Introduction to Chapter Five

Why does God have so many names if He is one? Viewing from the very first chapter of Genesis, there is a designation disclosed to represent who He was. As we go on to the next few chapters, there are obviously various titles rendered to Him, with a specific purpose attached to each.
• His people must obey His commands.

THE NAME OF GOD

The Titles of God [Generic names]

The designations used in the OT scriptures are not His names. They are merely titles. Some originated from man. For example, on fleeing away from the presence of her mistress Sarai, Hagar met the angel of the Lord. After the angel comforted her, she called the name of the Lord as “Thou art a God who sees”; for she remained alive there after seeing Him (Gen 16:13).

However, there are many generic names which God did reveal. Each one provides a dramatic introduction to an aspect of His attribute.

El, Eloah, Elah and Elohim

“El” is the term for “gods” or God (cf Gen 31:32; Ex 12:12) and means “strong and mighty”. “El” and “Eloah” (which derives from El) always refer to deity. “Elah” (Dan 2:18) is the Aramaic form of “Eloah”. “Elohim” is the plural form of “El”. Specifically, it is a term that excludes polytheism. In the Genesis context, it gives the notion that God created all things (Gen 1:1). His creative power distinguishes Him from the false gods.

Though the title “Elohim” is plural, it does not denote the
different personages in God. Most Hebrew scholars confirm that it is conventional for them to use the plural form of “El” to indicate the majestic status of God. Frequently, “Elohim” is also adopted to represent false or pagan gods (Judg 8:33), diviners (1 Sam 28:13) and leaders, such as rulers and governors (Ps 82).

**El Elyon**

It is translated to mean “God Most High” or “The Most High God”. At times, it appears in combination with “Yahweh” (cf Nu 24:16; Ps 7:17; 18:13).

**El Shaddai**

“God Almighty” is its meaning (Ex 6:2f). It looks into the divine power as opposed to natural constraints. The birth of Isaac, for example, demonstrates the omnipotence of God (cf 2 Cor 6:18; Rev 1:8; 4:8).

**Jehovah/Yahweh**

They both mean the Lord, the self-existing One: “I AM WHO I AM”. “Jehovah” has always been regarded as the equivalence of “Yahweh”. In fact, “Jehovah” is the reconstruction of the tetragramaton (Greek for 4 letters), which is spelled with the four Hebrew consonants YHWH. It is connected with the Hebrew word “eyheh” or “haya”, which also means “to be”. In other words, it is used to denote the pro-active presence of the Lord among His people.
Many scholars pronounce “YHWH” Yahweh or Yahvey, but no one can be certain of its accurate pronunciation. It is sometimes rendered “Yah” in the Hebrew (Is 38:11).

Superstitiously, the Hebrew avoided saying it out, for fear of blaspheming against the Lord. They regarded it as sacred and it was not to be called upon in less than complete reverence and holiness. Later, “Adonai” substituted it (Gen 15:2).

“Yahweh” is commonly used. It appears at least 6800 times. Its usage began in the time of Abraham (Gen 12:8; 13:4; 26:25). Jesus adopted the essence of this title to ascertain His deity.

Whenever the chosen people of God relied on the name of the Lord - Jehovah or Yahweh - for salvation, they in reality called upon the generic name denoting “there is only One who is capable of self-existing”. This is especially so in the conversation between God and Moses: “I am the God of your father - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Ex 3:6). “Yahweh” could not have been a new name of God, as it had already appeared in Genesis (Gen 12:8; 13:4; 14:22; 26:25). He was revealing its inner meaning, the full content of this generic name; the name itself carried certain connotations (Ex 3:12ff). It was a promise that He would deliver His people, and His enduring presence would abide with them. By this very attribute, they had to accept that He was everlasting, supreme in power to deliver, and worship
EXODUS 3:12ff
So He said, “I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain”. Then Moses said to God, “Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, “The God of your fathers has sent me to you”, and they say to me, “What is His name?” what shall I say to them. And God said to Moses, “I am Who I Am”. And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “I Am has sent me to you”.”

It was also a title to distinguish God from other gods (Is 42:8). Such a distinction was necessary because, on many occasions, the ignorance and stupidity of the Israelites and their contact with pagans led them to adopt foreign practices and titles.

This is called syncretism. Their wayward religion mixed up their pure faith with heathen beliefs. In the book of Hosea, for example, the people of Israel addressed Baal “Master”. So, it was essential to call Yahweh by another title; “husband” was adopted, to distinguish the Lord God from Baal (Hos 2:16).

ISAIAH 42:8
I am the Lord, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to graven images.

“And I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name, Lord, I did not make myself
known to them” (Ex 6:3). God had no intention to make His name known in the OT. Even when prophet Isaiah was moved by the Holy Spirit to explain His name, he could only describe it but not say it out (Is 9:6).

These titles at times are used interchangeably, in spite of there being no absolute substitution of one for the other:

“O Lord (Yahweh), the God (Elohim) of my master Abra-
ham, please grant me success today...” (Gen 24:12).

“...Because the Lord (Yahweh) your God (Elohim) caused it to happened to me””(Gen 27:20).

“You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord
(Yahweh) your God (Elohim), am a jealous God (El)...”
(Deut 5:9).

“I will give thanks to the Lord (Yahweh) according to His righteousness, and will sing praises to the name of the Lord Most High (El Elyon)” (Ps 7:17).
“The Lord (Yahweh) also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High (El Elyon) uttered His voice, hailstones and coals of fire” (Ps 18:13).

If they are names, then God would have many names. The people of God in the OT would not have to, from generation to generation, enquire after His name (Gen 3:9,29; Judg 13:18: Prov 30:4).

**Summary**

None of the titles, such as Elohim, El Elyon, El Shaddai or Yahweh was a complete revelation of His character, personality or attribute. Each of them merely told a part of it. Though some received a particular meaning each, which became the generic names, they were not His real names. God merely revealed progressively more of His nature in history by the use of them.
The Name “Jesus”

God revealed His name - Jesus - in the last days: “Therefore my people shall know my name” (Is 52:6; cf Ps 22:22; Heb 2:12). To the Hebrew, the name of a person summarises his complete nature and character (cf Gen 27:36). It may derive from his birth (cf Gen 5:29). It is not a mere title or label. To know God’s name is to know Him in totality. The name “Jesus” is the culmination of all the titles. “And the Lord will become King over all the earth; on that day the Lord will be one and His name one” (Zec 14:9).

Jesus possessed the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col 1:19; 2:9). On two separate occasions, He declared that He came in His Father’s name (Jn 5:43; 10:25). He revealed the mystery that His Father’s name and His were the same, in His prayer: “I have manifested Your name to the men whom you have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word”, “Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are” and “And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (Jn 17:6,11, 26).

The full character of God was disclosed through the works
which Jesus and His disciples performed in His name (cf Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22). Examples include healing (Acts 3:1ff), exorcising (Acts 19:13ff) and forgiving sins (Acts 22:16).

Whenever the disciples asked of anything from the Father, they did so in the name of Jesus (Jn 15:16; 14:13f; 16:23). Examples include asking for the Holy Spirit from the Father (Jn14:26). In this name, we have both the Father and the Son: “Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also” (1 Jn 2:22f; 4:15; cf Jn 5:23). We become justified by faith through Jesus, who is the Father in the flesh (Jn 1:1,14; 1 Tim 3:16).

**NOTE:**

The name “Jesus” is the most exalted name ever made known to the world. It is the name of the Most High.

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**JOHN 15:16**

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in my name He may give you.

**1 TIMOTHY 3:16**

God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.

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John says explicitly that by believing in the name of Jesus, we may know that we have eternal life (1 Jn 5:13); this is a commandment (1 Jn 3:23). Through the name of Jesus, we come to know God better (Jn 1:18; 8:19; cf 14:9).
(Is 35:4ff; cf Lk 7:19ff) - the only name given amongst us by which we must be saved and protected (Acts 4:12; Jn 17:11ff).

**Summary**

“Jesus” is the everlasting name of God. The full character of God was disclosed through the works which Jesus and His disciples performed in His name. Through the name of Jesus, we come to know God better. The only name given amongst us by which we must be saved.
Chapter Six

Father, Son and The Holy Spirit

Father

God is the Father

God as the Father of Christ

Son

Son of Man

Son of God

The Only Begotten Son

Holy Spirit
Introduction to Chapter Six

If Jesus is the name of God, then what are the titles Father, Son and the Holy Spirit for? They represent the roles Jesus plays. In each, He takes up a mode of existence, which is designated with a purpose. God would not put up unnecessary manifestations to create confusion. For example, when He appeared to Abraham with two of His angels, it was to test Abraham’s hospitality. Each theophany always accorded fittingly with the milieux in which the people were. In a similar vein, being the only One righteous, Jesus’ incarnation was essential to accomplish the task of shedding blood for the redemption of the world (Acts 20:28; cf Heb 9:22).
The above prove that “Jesus” is the name of God, the Father

FATHER, SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

N attempt at this level to focus on the meaning, usage and teaching of each of the three titles would certainly provide the platform for the study of the three functions of God in the succeeding chapter.

Father
This was a very complicated word in the OT. It had various meanings. The most common one being the physical father or paternal grandfather of an offspring. The father, being the head of the house, was responsible for the family unit and the upbringing of the children (cf Deut 1:31). He was the overseer of the deeds and actions, as well as the well-being of the family.

In another context, it was a title of honour for the leaders (cf Judg 17:10; 18:19) or prophets (2 Kgs 2:12; 6:21; 13:14). It also indicated the close relationship between a master or teacher and a novice or student (cf Prov 4:20; 7:1ff; 22:17ff); it showed the respect of a servant for the master; the head or founder of a tribe or group of people. It could similarly mean the initiator or originator (cf Gen 4:21).

God is the Father
In the OT the word “Father” referred to the one supreme
God (cf Is 9:6). It was expressively designated in His covenant relationship with Israel (Is 63:16; 64:8; Jer 3:19f; cf Hos 11:1). It gave the unique sense of God being the originator and initiator of the covenant. Israel was constantly being reminded that God was their Father. They had to honour Him as Father (Mal 1:6) in their existence (Mal 2:10), which was dependent upon Him (Deut 32:6).

**MALACHI 2:10**

*Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?…*

In the NT the supreme God is also the Father of the believers (1 Pet 1:17; Jn 6:27). By being in Christ and receiving the Holy Spirit (Rm 8:15ff), God becomes their “Abba Father” (Gal 4:6). In turn, they become the partakers of His divine nature and He loves them (cf Jn 3:3ff; cf 2 Pet 1:4; 1 Jn 1:1f).

**God as the Father of Christ**

Some prophetic psalms foretell God as the Father of Christ (Ps 2:7; 89:26). However, “Father” here bears a very different meaning from the normal understanding. The Lord Jesus Himself was very careful to maintain an unalterable distinction between God as His Father and God as the Father of the believers: “…I ascended to the Father and your Father, and My God and your God” (cf Jn 20:17).

The Father-Son relationship between Jesus and God is one
between His humanity (His incarnation) and His deity (The Father or God). “I AM HE who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me” (Jn 8:18). “I AM HE” refers to God Himself (Is 43:13 – more will be discussed in chapter eight) and yet Jesus was saying that He was the Father who witnessed for Himself.

Jesus comforting His disciples further illustrates this relationship: “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; From now on you know Him and have seen Him” (Jn 14:7). Philip, failing to understand the words, asked for the disclosure of Jesus’ Father (Jn 14:8). In reply Jesus distinctively revealed that He was the Father in the flesh: “if you have seen me you have seen the Father”. Jesus has disclosed His deity by His incarnation and His works (Jn 14:10; cf Jn 10:38). The complete mystery of God is in Christ Jesus and is Christ Himself (Col 2:2).

**Summary**

- By the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit, God becomes the “Abba Father” of the believers.
- God as the Father of Christ is the revelation of the Father Himself in the incarnation of Christ and the way of access to God.
Son

“Son” is a common noun that means male descendant and offspring rather than the immediate one. At times, it refers to the succession of one king by another, but not necessarily from the family lineage. It is also a term capable of many figures of speech.

Son of Man

In the OT, this phrase is frequently used on Ezekiel. It simply makes a clear distinction between God and man. In the NT, it appears most commonly in the Synoptic Gospels, apart from some of the occurrences in John (1:51; 3:13f; 5:27; 6:27, 52, 62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23f; 13:31) and elsewhere (Acts 7:56; Rev 1:13; 14:14). It often applies to Jesus Himself and falls into five groups.

First, it emphasises the manhood of Jesus. In other words, Jesus was a man (Acts 2:22) who required to sleep (Mt 8:20) and to eat (Mt 11:19).

Second, it refers to Christ’s suffering and death for us (Mt 12:40; 26:2, 24). This aspect of the Son of Man may find some parallelism in John: He came from heaven (Jn 3:13; cf 1 Cor 15:4), He has to be lifted up in crucifixion to grant eternal life to those who believe in Him (Jn 3:14). For in Him is eternal life (Jn 6:53). By His death, as in His life, His manhood has demonstrated complete submission to the Father’s will (Jn 12:23; 13:31). He learned to be submissive from the
things He suffered (Heb 5:8). Having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation (Heb 5:9; 2:10). Being a man Himself, He could therefore sympathise with our weaknesses, for He Himself too had weaknesses (Heb 4:15; 5:2). Having personally become a man, free from sin, He will judge mankind in full realisation experientially of their conditions (Jn 5:22, 27).

Third, it identifies with Jesus in the prophecy of Daniel (Dan 7:1ff). Daniel saw a figure like the Son of Man as the Judge. He is the same person while in the flesh, still existing as a man and at the same time God.

Fourth, it confirms the power and authority of Jesus in the flesh. Examples include the Lord of the Sabbath (Mt 12:8; Mk 2:28), His throne and judgement (Mt 19:28), and service and sacrifice of His life for many (Mt 20:28).

Fifth, It relates to the glorious resurrection and advent of Jesus Christ (Mt 10:23; 13:41; 16:27f; 17:9; 24:27, 30, 37, 39, 44; 26:2, 24).
Son of God

“The Son” or “His Own Son” or “Son” has to be understood as the “Son of God” (Lk 10:22; Jn 5:19), but not the “Son of Man”. This understanding has its foundation in the description: “He is the expression of God. He is the radiance of His (God’s) glory and the exact representation of His (God’s) nature and upholds all things by the word of His (God’s) power” (Heb 1:3). John uses the expression with a similar stress: “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (Jn 14:9).

It solely applies to Jesus (Lk 1:35b; Jn 20:31). Whenever it was used, the deity of Jesus was asserted. This understanding does not come from flesh and blood, but from the Father who is in heavens (Mt 16:18). So, when Christ revealed that God was His own Father, the Jews were infuriated and conspired to put Him to death. For they concluded that Jesus being a man was making Himself equal with God (Jn 5:18).

In the same conversation, Jesus claimed His worthiness of receiving equal honour with God. He further reminded that he who did not honour the Son did not honour the Father who sent Him (Jn 5:23).

In asserting He and the Father were one, He received the identical violent reaction from the Jews (Jn 10:30). They drew the same conclusion that Jesus was making Himself equal with God (Jn 10:33): “Do you say of Him, whom the
Father sanctified and sent into the world, “You are blaspheming”, because I (Jesus) said, “I am the Son of God.”” (Jn 10:36).

Confessing that Jesus is the Son of God must form part of the belief of the believers, by which, in their lives, God abides in them and they in God (1 Jn 4:15).

The Only Begotten Son
It is referred to Christ as the Son of God (Jn 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 Jn 4:9). In John 1:14 the phrase “the Only Begotten Son” is translated “the Only Begotten God”. The word “begotten” does not imply, in any way, the sense of being born or generation as in the case of man. It means the unique, only one of its kind. “The Only Begotten” is the exact representation of God and is the only representative from above (Jn 1:14; 3:16).

It does not denote the beginning of the Son, even though a unique relationship between them does exist. God continues in the Spirit while in the flesh. Such an explanation is necessary for two reasons. First, it is to confirm that the Word (God) became flesh. Second, it reveals the plan of God to save mankind by dying on the cross (Jn 3:16, 18; 1 Jn 4:9).
Summary

- “Son of Man” refers to the humanity or manhood of Jesus.
- “Son of God” refers to the divinity or deity of Jesus.
- “The Begotten Son” refers to the incarnation of God.
The Holy Spirit

Frequently the biblical designations of the phrase “Holy Spirit” include “the Spirit of God”, or just “the Spirit”, “the Spirit of the Lord”, “the Spirit of Jesus” (Mt 3:16; Lk 4:18; Jn 14:17; Acts 5:9; Phil 1:19), Pure Spirit, Father of spirits (Heb 12:9) or the Spirit of the living God.

HEBREWS 12:9

...Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

The Holy Spirit is not a form of energy emanating from God. He is the Father Himself. This is evident from the following perspectives:

He possesses knowledge (He is supremely intellectual), is sovereign and holds the eternity (Rm 8:27; 1 Cor 2:11; 12:11; cf Heb 9:14) in His divinity. He must be revered and worshipped (Acts 28:25ff; 2 Cor 13:14). He has emotions - He can be grieved by our sins (Eph 4:30); He can be quenched (1 Thess 5:19); and He can feel insulted (Heb 10:29). He instructs (Jn 3:5f), directs (Acts 8:29), guides (Rm 8:14), warns (1 Tim 4:1), regenerates (Jn 14:16f), sanctifies (Jn 16:13f) and comforts (1 Pet 1:2) His believers.

He is attributed as the Creator, the Provider of new birth (Gen 1:2; Job 26:13; Jn 3:3ff) and the Giver of life to man (Job 33:4) in His works. In other words, He is the only source
of life and all things come from Him (Ps 104:30; Is 32:15; Gen 2:7; Ex 31:3; Num 11:17).

He is the Author who discloses all divine truth (Mic 3:8; Jn 14:26; 16:13; 1 Cor 2:10ff) - the provision of spiritual insight to His words (cf Acts 2:17; Jn 16:7ff; 1 Cor 2:14). In the OT, He moved the prophets to receive the divine oracles, to convey to the people (Zech 7:12; Neh 9:30; Ezek 2:2). He does likewise in the NT (2 Pet 1:21). He brings to remembrance all things that He had said to the apostles (Jn 14:16).

**JOHN 14:16**

*And I pray that the Father, and He will send you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever.*

He convicts and leads mankind graciously to repentance (Gen 6:3; Jn 16:8f; Rm 2:4). His grace is evident throughout all ages, especially the prophecies of His redemption by the coming Messiah (Is 63:10ff; Mic 3:8). He dwells in the believers who have received Him (Jn 14:17; Lk 11:13; Rm 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19f) and seals them for redemption (Eph 4:30; 1:13f; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5).

He takes full control in the ministration of the church by endowing each believer with different gifts to administer in His body (Acts 13:2, 4; 1 Cor 12:4ff).

**Summary**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. He is God Himself.
Chapter Seven

The Functions of God

The Holy Spirit is the Father
Jesus is the Father
Jesus is the Holy Spirit
Introduction to Chapter Seven

The apostles were witnesses to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. They were commissioned to preach the Gospel of Salvation to all the nations and to baptise those who believe (Mk 16:15f) in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19). They are the foundation of the household of God with Christ being the corner stone (Eph 2:20). “We are of God. He who knows God hears us (the apostles); he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error” (1 Jn 4:6). Whoever believes in Jesus would heed the utterances of the apostles: “If they keep My word, they will keep yours (the apostles) also” (Jn 15:20). “He who hears you (the apostles) hears me, he who rejects you rejects me” (Lk 10:16).
THE FUNCTIONS OF GOD

Observe what Jesus commanded (Mt 28:20), the apostles started preaching this Gospel - the standard or pattern of God’s word (Rm 2:20; 6:17f; 2 Tim 1:13) - from the day of Pentecost. However, throughout the book of Acts, they baptised those who believed only in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 22:16; cf 4:12). This happened as the promised Holy Spirit had come to them, led them into all truth (Jn 16:13; 14:16f) and gave them the understanding that the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit was Jesus.

**ACTS 4:12**

Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

**JOHN 16:13**

However, when He the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not names. They are nouns. The word “name” in Mt 28:19 is singular not plural. This means that the three nouns share the same name and that they refer to the same God. Mt 28:19 is the revelation of the three roles of the one indivisible God in His soteriological plan for mankind. In executing His plan God assumes a different title for each role - Father in creation and in heaven (over all); Son in redemption and of intercession (through all); Holy Spirit in
regeneration and comfort (in all), the seal to heavenly inheritance (Eph 4:6).

**EPHESIANS 4:6**

One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Though Paul was strictly monotheistic, he used the titles “the Father”, “the Son” and “the Holy Spirit” interchangeably because they do not refer to three different entities:

“However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells in you...but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rm 8:9ff).

Here “the Spirit of God”, “the Spirit of Christ”, “His Spirit” and “the Spirit” are being used freely, describing the way of our complete transformation in Christ Jesus. Paul was saying that the same Spirit who is also Jesus Himself will give us life, just as He raised His (Jesus’) manhood from the dead. And by counting on Jesus (the spirit), we shall be saved.
“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with might through the Holy Spirit in the inner man that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you being rooted and grounded in love…” (Eph 3:14ff).

Moreover, Paul was saying that the Spirit dwelling in us is the Spirit of the Father and of Christ.

**The Holy Spirit is the Father**

“My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working” (Jn 5:17). Jesus was referring to Himself as the Son of the Father, making Himself equal with God (Jn 5:18; cf Jn 3:16). Yet from the Bible, the Holy Spirit is also the Father of Jesus (Mt 1:18ff; Lk 1:35), though their relationship is not genealogical. The titles “Father” and the “Holy Spirit” thus describe the same God.

There is only one Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the “Spirit of God” (Gen 1:2), “Spirit of the Lord” (Is 40:13), “the Spirit of the Father” (Mt 10:20), “the Spirit of our Lord” (1 Cor 6:11) and “Spirit of Jesus” (Acts 16:6f). These are designations of the Father.

**1 CORINTHIANS 6:11**

*But you were washed, but you were sanctified,*

*but you were justified in the name of name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*
Jesus is the Father

The common acknowledgement among those who believe in the one true God is that God is one and He is the Father (Mal 2:10; Eph 4:6). From the prophecy of Isaiah, the Son is the everlasting Father (Is 9:6) meaning that Jesus is the Father Himself, which the NT writers confirm:

**Malachi 2:10**

*Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?…*

**Ephesians 4:6**

*One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*

“Of whom are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever, Amen” (Rm 9:5). “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God” (1 Jn 4:2).

“And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life” (1 Jn 5:20).

When Philip asked Jesus to show him the Father, Jesus told him that He was the Father. “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, “Show us the
Father?" Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves” (Jn 14:8ff).

**Jesus is the Holy Spirit**

In replying to Judas (not Iscariot) about why He did not show Himself to the world (Jn 14:22), Jesus revealed the greatest mystery that “He is the Father who is the Holy Spirit”: “If anyone loves Me (Jesus), he will keep my word; My Father will love him, and We (Jesus and the Father as the Holy Spirit) will come to him and make Our home with him” (Jn 14:23).

The impending departure of Christ made the disciples feel sad and perplexed. Jesus encouraged them not to be troubled. To make sure that they were truly comforted, He promised that the Father would give them another Helper, namely the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:16). Jesus, however, told them that the Helper had been with them already (Jn 14:17). Not long after He would dwell in them: “I would come to you” (Jn 14:18). This clearly explains that Jesus is the Holy Spirit who was with the disciples at the moment in the flesh and who would soon be in the Spirit dwelling in them (cf Jer 31:32ff; Ezek 36:27ff; Joel 2:28f).
Summary

- God, who is the Spirit, is the Father. Thus the Father is the Holy Spirit.
- “Jesus is God” is confirmed by the NT writers. When the disciples saw Jesus, they saw God.
- Jesus was the Holy Spirit with the disciples in the flesh and would soon be the Spirit dwelling in them.
Chapter Eight

The Divinity of Jesus

I Am
His Infinity
He is the Searcher of hearts and minds
He is the Light
He is the good Shepherd
He is the Judge
Introduction to Chapter Eight

The claim that “Jesus is the Father (God) or the Holy Spirit” is not a new theology developed and perpetuated by Jesus Himself and the apostles respectively. The deity of Jesus is one aspect of His dual nature. Jesus once remarked that Moses wrote about Him (Jn 5:46). His statement places Him in the central message of the gospel for Christian proclamation of who He is. This includes physically His betrayal, arrest, crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and ascension which fulfilled the prophecies about Himself. He, in the Spirit, is God Himself in the OT. The latter is precisely our point of discussion. God’s divine essence, sovereignty and work in the OT were attributed to Jesus in the NT.
THE DIVINITY OF JESUS

I Am

In the OT, “I AM” represented the best of God’s essence. It expressed His self-existence (Ex 3:14). It is rendered “Lord” when relating to the name (title) of God, YHWH. It was used absolutely by and for God. It referred to the eternal One, the true God, the Creator of the universe and the Redeemer of Israel (Is 43:13; 44:6; 46:9; 48:12; 52:6; Deut 32:39; cf Acts 7:32; Mt 22:32). It was also a title to distinguish God from the false ones (Is 42:8).

ISAIAH 52:6
Therefore My people shall know My name; therefore they shall know in that day that I AM He who speaks:
“Behold, it is I”.

DEUTERONOMY 32:39
Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God beside Me...

In the book of John, “I AM” is reminiscent of God’s revelation of His almightiness to Moses (Ex 3:14f). In adopting “I AM” (Jn 8:58; Mt 18:20; Jn 8:23), Jesus confirms that He is the eternal and invisible God who became incarnate or manifested in manhood (Jn 1:8; 1 Tim 3:16). Such a declaration surfaces the duality of Jesus – He is fully God (Col 1:19; 2:9; Rm 9:5; 1 Jn 5:20) and is fully man (as in His physical existence).
In Jesus’ answer to the question “who is Your Father?” (Jn 8:16ff, 24, 28; 13:19; Is 41:4; 43:13; 48:12; Jer 29:23) from the Pharisees (Jn 8:19), He pointed out that He was the Father. They would be guilty of sin unto death, if they did not believe that Jesus (I) is (AM) the Father (He). The crucifixion of Jesus endorses and confirms the truth that He is the Father (Jn 13:13f).

Sometimes, “It is I” (Jn 6:20; Mt 14:17; Rev 1:17) denotes Jesus as the Father where a predicate is implied even though it is not included.

Throughout the writing of John, “I AM” is used with a nominative (Jesus describes Himself metaphorically):

- a. I am the bread of life (Jn 6:35, 41, 48) and I am the living bread (Jn 6:51).
- b. I am the light of the world (Jn 8:12; 9:5).
- c. I am the door (Jn 10:7, 9).
- d. I am the good Shepherd (Jn 10:11, 14).
- e. I am the resurrection and life (Jn 11:25).
- f. I am the way, the truth, the life (Jn 14:6).
- g. I am the true vine (Jn 15:1, 5 cf Jn 1:9; Heb 8:2; 1 Jn 5:20).

This self-disclosure of Jesus’ deity or divinity shows that He is the eternal God - He was, is and will be the same (cf Heb 13:8; Rev 1:8). He is the God of mankind, especially those who believe in Him.
His infinity

“O my God, do not take me away in the midst of my days; Your years are throughout all generations. Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You will endure; yes, all of them will grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will change them, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will have no end” (Ps 102:24ff). “For you, Lord, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods” (Ps 97:9).

The psalmist in veneration and adoration uttered praises to God for His infinity. He acknowledged God as the Creator of the universe, who lives on forever from eternal past. He is in full control of His creation and could change it at His discretion, yet remaining unchanging Himself. This powerful description of God is attributed to Jesus, the Son (Heb 1:8ff). “He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all” (Jn 3:31).

He is the Searcher of mind and heart

The OT saints knew that God’s work on man begins by searching their hearts (Jer 11:20; 17:10). Jesus, being God Himself, takes up this divine duty to search the minds of those who form the church in the last days.

“...I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works” (Rev 2:23).
He is the light

Knowing that sins always darken man’s heart, God, being the light, has been shining on His people to guide them back to Himself (Is 60:19). This everlasting light is Jesus and continues to shine on His people and Gentiles, according to the Gospel writers (cf Lk 2:32).

“That was the true light which gives light to every man who comes into the world” (Jn 1:9).

Though the people had beheld His glory, they rejected this beacon of light and denounced His word (Is 6:1, 3, 10). John records the rejection of the signs performed by Jesus:

“Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”...“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes and understand with their heart, lest they should turn, so that I should heal them” (Jn 12:38ff).

He claimed that Isaiah saw Jesus’ glory and how the people rejected His word (Jn 12:41). The meaning is explicit. The prophecy of God and His work being rejected happened on Jesus, who must be God Himself.

On another account, David, being moved by the Spirit, ascribed “the King of glory” to the Lord (Jehovah) of host (Ps 24:10). However, the NT writers render this title of supreme honour to Jesus:
“Which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord (Jehovah) of glory” (1 Cor 2:8).

“My brethren do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord (Jehovah) of glory, with partiality” (Jas 2:1).

**He is the good Shepherd**

Though God has been rejected, there are some who believe in Him. He promised that He would become their Shepherd (Ps 23:1). “He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in the bosom, and gently lead those who are without young” (Is 40:11). He would go round to seek them out (Ezek 34:11f, 18).

When Jesus came into this world, He declared Himself to be the good Shepherd, who would do exactly what the prophets in the OT had talked about (Jn 10:11; Lk 19:10), and reward those who are faithful with the crown of glory (1 Pet 5:4). Since the Bible teaches monotheism, God, the good Shepherd has to be Jesus.

**He is the Judge**

Though God is the good Shepherd, He is the Judge at the same time. He executed His judgement upon those who disobeyed Him and who strayed stubbornly from His shepherding hand. He, the Lord, was the stumbling block of the OT (Is 8:12ff). At the same time, He shall save His people: “That
CHAPTER 08 

NOTE: 

“I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgement is righteous...” [Jn 5:30].

I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgement and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely. Now this is His name by which He will be called - the Lord our righteousness” (Jer 23:5f; 33:15f).

In the NT it is Jesus who is the Judge (Jn 5:27ff; 2 Thess 1:7ff) and the rock of offence (1 Pet 2:7f; 1 Cor 10:9; Mt 21:42ff; cf Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17f; cf Acts 4:11; Rm 9:33ff; cf Eph 2:20). The apostles call Him the Lord of righteousness (1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:21).
Summary

God or the Father is:
2. Infinite (Ps 102:24ff).
3. The Searcher of mind (Jer 11:20).
4. The Light (Is 60:19).
5. The good Shepherd (Ps 23:1).
6. The Judge (Is 8:12ff; Jer 23:5f).

Jesus is:
1. The “I Am” (Jn 8:16ff; 24, 28).
2. Infinite (Jn 3:31).
4. The Light (Jn 1:9).
5. The good Shepherd (Jn 10:11).
Chapter Nine

The humanity or manhood of Jesus
Introduction to Chapter Nine

The other aspect of Jesus’ dual nature is His manhood (cf Rm 1:3f). He was the Word became flesh as the only begotten from the Father (Jn 1:14). Jesus’ teaching on Psalms about Himself astounded the Jews. “The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies Your footstool”” (Ps 110:1). He asserted His divine authority and dumbfounded them. There was none amongst them who could disclose the mystery of Christ as the Lord and as a descendant of David (Mk 12:35ff; Mt 22:42ff).
THE HUMANITY OR MANHOOD OF JESUS

Jesus remained God in the Spirit though in the flesh He was a Man. The fullness of the Spirit was in Jesus (Lk 4:14ff). “For it pleased the Father that in Him (Jesus) all the fullness shall dwell” (Col 1:19). “For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col 2:9). The complete God did not stay apart from the manhood of Jesus.

There are various reasons why Jesus took on the human form. First, the great mystery that God appeared in the flesh was to be preached amongst the nations (1 Tim 3:16). God ordained the incarnate Jesus to preach the gospel (Lk 14:17ff), to bring grace and truth to those who believe in Him (Jn 1:17). In so doing, His believers can be delivered from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of light.

He is the Man attested by God to us through miracles, signs and wonders performed by Him (Acts 2:22; 10:38f). John in his old age had not forgotten this great mystery of Jesus’ incarnation (1 Jn 4:2f; 2 Jn 7). He concluded that those who did not believe were of the anti-Christ.

ACTS 2:22

...Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in you midst, as you yourselves also know.
Second, His humanity was vital for God to accomplish the
divine plan devised for man’s salvation. By coming in the
likeness of sinful flesh, Jesus destroyed sin in the flesh (Rm
8:3; 1:3f; 9:5; 14:9; 7:4). In all things He had to be made like
His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High
Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for
the sins of the people (Heb 2:14, 17). As the only righteous
one, Jesus put Himself in the position of reconciling us to
God by breaking the veil in His flesh (Heb 10:20).

When he suffered for us, it was His physical body that suf-
fered (1 Pet 4:1; Heb 5:7). Likewise in His flesh, Jesus ful-
filled the ultimate plan of God’s salvation for man by dying on
the cross (1 Pet 3:18; Col 1:22).

Summary
The proofs of Jesus’ humanity or manhood
• Jesus is the descendants of David (Mk 12:35ff; Mt
  22:42ff) - no one is able to disclose the mystery of Christ
  being the Lord and the descendants of David.
• Word became flesh as the only begotten from the Father
  (Jn 1:14).
• Fullness of the Spirit in Jesus (Lk 4:14ff; 5:17; Acts 2:22; 10:38).
• Jesus came in the likeness of the sinful flesh to destroy sin in the flesh (Rm 8:3; 1:3f; 9:5; 14:9; 7:4).
• God manifests in the flesh (1 Tim 3:16).
• Jesus shared in the flesh and blood (Heb 2:14).
• His flesh to break the veil (Heb 10:20).
• Christ being put to death in the flesh (1 Pet 3:18; Col 1:22).
• Christ has suffered for us in the flesh (1 Pet 4:1; Heb 5:7).
• Christ has come in the flesh (1 Jn 4:2f; 2 Jn 7).
Chapter Ten

The concept of God in Revelation
Introduction to Chapter Ten

The book of Revelation is a summary of the One True God in the entire Bible. It tells us about Jesus, His divinity, His role in the salvation plan of God and His name. There are various designations of Jesus used in Revelation. Examples include the Lamb, One, the Son of God, Seven Spirits of God, the Living God, the Almighty and Lord God.
THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN REVELATION

The pointers of “Jesus is the Lord God” are numerous. The self-declaration of the Lord God: “I am the Alpha and the Omega” is one of the convincing proofs (1:8). “Alpha” is the first Greek alphabet and “Omega” the last. They represent “the first and the last” respectively. These designations “the first and the last” are characteristic of the Son of Man (1:18; 2:8), as are evident in the introductory explanation of Himself to John, who having seen Him, fell at his feet as dead man (1:17). The Son of Man is thus Jesus.

After the appearance of the new heaven and new earth, He who sits on the throne introduces Himself as “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end” (21:6). Here an additional phrase “the beginning and the end” is attached to the foregoing declaration (cf 1:8). Its meaning is identical to its preceding phrase. It thus further enhances the transcendence of God.

In the final message of Revelation, the same phrase is being repeated with a greater emphasis: “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (22:13). A careful reading of its preceding verse shows that “the end of the age is near” comes from the same person. Who is He? The answer lies in one of the subsequent verses of the same chapter. He is Jesus (22:16).
From the perspectives of the Lamb and throne, it again confirms that Jesus is the Lord God. In the analysis of chapters 4 and 5, the One who is like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance, occupies the throne (4:2f). The Lamb is the Spirit (5:6b). He is also Jesus, when comparing verse 5 of chapter 5 with verse 1 of chapter 6. The former depicts the Root of David, the One who is capable of opening the seals of the book. The latter indicates that it is the Lamb who broke the seal.

The Lamb was standing between the throne and the elders (5:6a). However, the Lamb and the One on the throne share the glory and praises from every created thing (5:12f); “Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb” (7:10). Significantly, it is always true and natural to believe that the Father or the Lord God is the One who sits on the throne. At the climax of the drama, right before the opening of the seventh seal, the true identity and position of the Lamb is revealed - He is God who is in the centre of the throne (7:17). The victory of the Lamb further discloses this identity - He is the Lord of lords and King of kings (17:14). Clearly, Jesus is the Lord God, the Father.

Prior to the opening of the seventh seal, the coming of the end of all things, the Lamb (Jesus) always plays the role of intercessor. This is consistent with other parts of the Bible (cf Heb 7:25). The role of the mediator terminates, upon fulfilling God’s redemptive plan. There is no need for the continu-
ation of the various functions of God to ensure the salvation of man. Thus the One, whose name is Jesus, will resume His role as God on the throne.

After the seventh trumpet has been sounded, the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. But the two titles, which may appear to refer to two persons, point to the same person, as indicated by the pronoun 'He' in the following statement (11:15).

“...but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him for a thousand years” (20:6). Those who have a part in the first resurrection are considered the priests of God and of Christ. However, they shall reign with Him, which signifies God Himself and is plural. Undeniably, Christ is God.

References
2. Alpha and Omega (1:8, 11; 21:6, 13).
6. The Son of God (2:15).
7. The Seven Spirits of God (3:1; 4:5; 5:6).
8. The living God (7:2).
9. I am He (2:23).
Summary

• Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega.
• Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.
• Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.
• Jesus is the Lamb.
• Jesus is the Lord God, who sits on the throne.
• Jesus is the Lord of lords and King of kings.
Chapter Eleven

Specific Passages and Questions that need to be Explained

Jesus’ Baptism
Jesus’ Prayer
Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani
Jesus is Sent
The Departure of Jesus
1 John 5:7
Firstborn
Introduction
to Chapter Eleven

Any attempt focusing on using any sort of Trinity interpretation clouds the understanding of One True God. Any careful reader would know that the Bible does not in any way talk about Trinity. But, it teaches Jesus’ dualistic nature - Jesus being the Father Himself in His Spirit and the Son of man simultaneously. This is the basis for explaining the questions of Trinity (Col 2:9).
SPECIFIC PASSAGES AND QUESTIONS THAT NEED TO BE EXPLAINED

Jesus’ Baptism

FTER being baptised, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and He saw the spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying this is His beloved Son, in whom He is well-pleased (Mt 3:17).

The above verses are a well-constructed revelation of God which discloses His omnipresence. The principal features are the voice from heaven and the visionary descending of the Holy Spirit in a bodily shape like a dove (Lk 3:22). He did not do away with His omnipresence after His incarnation, because that is one of His fundamental attributes.

To emphasise on the duality of Jesus, in this case, would no doubt make the different manifestations of God in Jesus’ baptism, which was designated with purposes, much easier to understand.

Jesus Himself declared that He was baptised to fulfil all righteousness (Mt 3:15) and, at the same time, to institute baptism as a sacrament by setting Himself as an example (cf 1 Pet 2:21).
His baptism was a soundless public declaration to support His future ministry and to reveal Himself to be the Messiah to John the Baptist, who identified that the One whom the Holy Spirit descended upon was the Son of God (Jn 1:32ff). This confirms that He was the anointed one of God who came to fulfil the Law (Mt 5:17f) and the prophecies of His divine roles (Ps 2:2; 45:7; Is 61:1), as a prophet, a priest, a king (Acts 3:20ff; Heb 3:1; Rev 1:5) and an apostle (Heb 3:1).

**JOHN 1:33f**

*I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptise with water said to me, “Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptises with the Holy Spirit”. And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.*

It was to make Him known to Israel (Jn 1:31). The voice from Heaven, according to John in an identical situation, was to announce the divine nature of Jesus to the many who were present at the baptismal scene (Lk 3:21). Obviously, such a divine declaration of Jesus’ deity from above was much more convincing than if He were to make an announcement Himself.

**JOHN 1:31**

*I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptising with water.*
With all these in mind, His baptism would in no way lead one to view God in three separate entities but disclose only His duality as well as the purposes attached to it. We do not think of Him as having many different entities but as the Almighty. He did not purport to reveal His baptism to the monotheistic Jewish onlookers as a radically new revelation of plurality in the Godhead. Also there is no indication from Jesus Himself and the apostles whatsoever that we can interpret it as such, in complete conformity to the Bible.

**Jesus’ Prayer**

“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” (Mt 26:39, 42)

There are two possibilities in Jesus’ prayer: His deity prayed to Himself the Father, and His manhood prayed to the Father. Immediately we can reject the former one. To put it simply, within the person Jesus was the complete deity of God (Col 1:19; 2:9). Otherwise, it would seem that the deity of Jesus is inferior to or different from God Himself, and that will be confusing. This possibility also effectively proves that there are no co-equal persons in the Godhead.

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**COLOSSIANS 1:19**

> For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell.

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Using the principles given, it is not so great a difficulty to comprehend that the human nature of Jesus learned to submit and to obey to the divine authority, to fulfil the critical will of God in His salvation plan. In His flesh, He was a Man with a nature like ours, except that He was sinless (Heb 4:15). This made Him struggle agonisingly between His humanity and His Spirit before crucifixion. Thus it was necessary for Him to pray to the Father, to overcome His flesh. Such a necessity terminated when He was no longer in the flesh (Heb 5:7):

**HEBREWS 4:15**

> For we do not have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

“But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of the death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through suffering” (Heb 2:9f).

**“Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani” (Mt 27:46)**

Does Jesus’ crucifixion illustrate an actual separation between the Father and Jesus, and thus, authenticate the concept of three in one? Scrutinising the other passages of the Bible, we find that this is not the case: “God was in Christ reconciling
the world to Himself” (2 Cor 5:19). It does not point to the claim that there is one entity from the Godhead being forsaken by the other two.

The Spirit of God, the deity of Jesus did not leave the physical body of Christ till He yielded His Spirit to the Father (Jn 19:30). Prior to His death, He said “Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me” (Jn 16:32).

Jesus’ sacrifice could only be possible through the eternal Spirit: “How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God” (Heb 9:14). His death would not be a divine ransom for mankind without the presence of the eternal Spirit, who left His physical body at His death.

When Jesus cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” He was expressing the intolerable torment of bearing the sins of mankind in His body (1 Pet 2:24, cf Heb 5:7). He took our place and went through the suffering and death which we deserved (Rm 5:6ff).

NOTE: The argument of Paul against the infiltration that “Jesus is not God” in the Book of Colossians, sheds light on the fact that the Godhead is God Himself, as He fully dwells in Jesus bodily [Col 2:9].
Jesus is Sent

“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him” (Jn 3:17).

“He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me” (Mt 10:40; read also Mt 15:24; 21:37; Mk 9:37; 12:6; Lk 4:18, 43; 9:48; 10:16; Jn 5:30, 36, 38; 6:29, 57; 7:29; 8:42; 10:36; 11:42; 17:3, 8, 18).

In Greek, the “sending” of the Son by the Father was from the glory which He had with the Father in the world by way of incarnation, and not a “sending” out into the world after His birth, as if denoting His mission among and His manifestation to the people. The expression “Jesus is sent by God” denotes the mission which He has to fulfil and the authority which supports Him (Cremer, Lexicon of NT Greek).

In Hebrew 3:1 Jesus is addressed as the Apostle of our profession. Apostle means “one sent” in Greek. The word 'sent' indicates that a special assignment is entrusted to Jesus, but does not have any implication of the pre-existence of the Son. The existence of the Son physically occurred when the Word (God Himself) became incarnate. Throughout the Bible the role of Son (a function of God) only exists for a specified period of time (Phil 2:6ff; Heb 2:7ff; 1Cor 15:24ff). Whereas the role of the Father, as well as the Spirit, is eternal (Is 9:6;
Heb 9:14). Thus the sending of the Son focused on the humanity of Jesus and the soteriological purpose for which Jesus was commissioned (or was born).

The Departure of Jesus

“And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever” (Jn 14:16).

The departure of Jesus and the promise of the coming of the Helper may give an impression that Jesus and the Holy Spirit (the Helper - Jn 14:26) are two separate entities. The promise contained here, however, was a change of role from directing the disciples externally to transforming them internally; Jesus would be the Spirit who was to dwell in the believers rather than be among them. Reading verse 17, Jesus explained that the Helper was with them already. Not long after, He would come to them (v18). This explains that Jesus was the Holy Spirit with the disciples then. In the near future, Jesus the Holy Spirit would dwell in them (cf Rm 8:9; 2 Cor 3:17f). However, such a change of role could only take place if Jesus in His flesh went away: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth, it is
to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you” (Jn 16:7).

**JOHN 14:26**

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

**ROMANS 8:9**

*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.*

In short, Jesus was present physically with the disciples while he was on earth. He promised that He would come to dwell in them not long after He left. With this understanding, we know that when we have the Spirit of God we have Jesus Christ (Eph 3:16f).

**1 John 5:7**

“There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit” as a testimony about the triune God, is without substance. First, this part of the scripture is omitted by many versions of the Bible. Even if it is considered authentic, the three persons mentioned here do not fit into the triune grid of the Orthodox Church, for the “Son” is not included. The “Word” is God Himself (Jn 1:1). If we argue that the “Word” is the “Son”, the argument is only sound, when we explain that God became incarnate (put on flesh),
taking the form of the Son, and not three persons in the Godhead; otherwise the difficulties of a deeper character on the fourth person in the Godhead would arise.

Judging from the foregoing, for Paul to say “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit” is nothing but an expression of the three roles of the one indivisible God. According to John, grace and truth came from Jesus Christ (Jn 1:17). By being in the flesh Jesus inaugurated a way by which grace and truth were given to those who believe and accept Him (cf Eph 2:8ff). The fact is that God so loved the world He gave His only begotten son to die for all (Jn 3:16ff). The coming of Christ in the flesh was thus initiated by the love of God. The communion of the Holy Spirit detailed the complete love of God for us - to help us from within (cf Rm 14:17). For the above reasons, Paul courageously proclaimed, “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all” (Eph 4:6).

**Firstborn**

To the patriarchs, the beginning of their strength was their firstborn (Gen 49:3; cf Deut 21:17), to whom God’s promises were attached. Being the head of the house, the firstborn in a family was entitled to privileges which the younger members were unable to enjoy: the firstborn received a larger or double portion of the estate, with the right to paternal blessings (Gen 25:25ff; Deut 21:15ff), whereas the other sons received equal portions.
Even when a father was to have two wives, one loved and the other despised, he was to transfer the right of primogeniture to the firstborn of his wife, whom he did not love (Deut 21:15ff).

Only in a few rare cases was the conferment of birthright contrary to expectation. One of the notable examples is the occasion when Jacob took away the birthright of Reuben, because of his incestuous sin (Gen 35:22; 49:3f), and transferred it to Joseph’s two sons. In this very same example, Jacob’s preference overruled the customary practice by giving the younger son, Ephraim, the right of primogeniture, instead of Manasseh, the firstborn, despite Joseph’s objection (Gen 48:17ff).

**Israel’s firstborn**

After the exodus from Egypt, the firstborn in Israel had to be redeemed (Num 18:15ff). Children were redeemed by Levites, after the transference of priesthood from the tribe of Reuben to that of the Levites (Num 3:12ff; 8:18f). Later, the redemption was by a payment of five shekels (Num 18:16; cf 3:42ff). For those who were unable to redeem their firstborn, the Jewish law required the children to redeem themselves when they grew up.

According to Mosaic law, the firstborn of beasts needed also to be redeemed. The Israelites had to bring the firstborn of their clean beasts to the sanctuary within a year and to offer
them there (Num 18:17f; cf Ex 13:13; 22:30; 34:20; Neh 10:36). Before sacrifice, the beasts which were to be offered had to be freed from all forms of work, since they belonged to God (Deut 15:19ff). The unclean animals would be redeemed by a payment based upon the priest’s estimation of their value (Ex 13:13; 34:20).

The redemption of both the firstborn sons and animals served to remind Israel how God delivered and preserved them from the slaughter of Egypt’s firstborn (Ex 12:29). The object of God’s deliverance of His people was the result of their sanctification and obedience before the Lord (Ex 12). The pre-eminence of Israel being the firstborn emerged when they became exclusive to God, though not all of them were the first sons in their individual family units (Ex 4:22; cf 19:6; Jer 31:9).

From the foregoing points, we may derive that the firstborn, in the OT context, regardless of man or beast (Num 18:15):

a. Must be sanctified (Ex 13:2; Num 3:13);
b. Belongs to God (Ex 13:12; 34:19);
c. Is redeemed by God (Ex 13:15);
d. Is to be given to God (Ex 22:29).

**Firstborn in the NT**

The incarnation of Jesus made Him the firstborn (prototokos) of Joseph’s family (Mt 1:25; Lk 2:7). The Bible is silent about
the price for Jesus’ ransom (cf 1 Sam 1:11, 22) when His parents offered Him (Lk 2:22ff) to serve God.

That aside, Jesus is referred to, on at least four occasions, as the firstborn which has different shades of meaning from the above sense:

1. “For whom he foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29).

The meaning of the word “firstborn” is evident from the verse itself. The “image” represents the attributes of God (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10; 2 Cor 3:18; Col 1:15; cf Ps 17:15). After the Fall, man lost the likeness of God. But, Jesus, by His death, restores the new order of this likeness - He transforms man into His likeness. He is the head (firstborn) of those whom He loves and who believe in Him. And they form part of this new order under His jurisdiction.

2. “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation (v15)...All things were created through Him and for Him...” (Col 1:15ff).

In the context of verse 15, Jesus is the eternal model of which man is the replica. The “firstborn” here indicates a title of sovereignty rather than of the right of primogeniture (cf Ps 89:27), the state of being firstborn. For in the next verse, He is described as the Creator of all things.
But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him” (Heb 1:6).

This verse has its origin from the book of Psalm (2:7). It is the prophecy relating to the incarnation of Jesus. The “firstborn” here bears the same connotation of the previous point. It is the title of sovereignty, not an indication of His state of being created. As the subsequent verses explain the Son (firstborn) is God Himself (Heb 1:8f).

And He is the Head of the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence” (Col 1:18).

“And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev 1:5).

The “firstborn”, in these two accounts, points to Jesus’ supremacy over life and death. He is the first one to remain alive continuously, after having risen from the dead (Heb 7:25). By divine arrangement, those who are sprinkled by the blood of Jesus, who share in the privileges of the Son - participating in His resurrection - form the church of the firstborn (cf Acts 20:28; Heb 12:23f), and are led by Him. The church, in this light, belongs exclusively to Him (cf Ex 4:22).

NOTE: We, who are redeemed by the atoning blood of Jesus, are the firstborn in the Kingdom of God.
In conclusion, the word “firstborn” is a connotative one. It cannot be taken strictly to mean the first male child of the family. It is used, in the NT, in Christ as the first in all spheres of Christian faith.
Chapter Twelve

The Development of Trinitarianism

The Trinitarian Controversy

The Creeds

Contradictions
Introduction to Chapter Twelve

The concept “God is three persons” (Trinitarianism) originated in ancient Babylon with the worship of the Babylonian deity: Nimrod, who was a sun worshipper, led many to worship the sun. The original Trinity in Babylon included the eternal Father Cush, a Divine son Nimrod and spirit of God incarnate in human mother Semiramis (The Two Babylons, 2nd Ed. by Hislop). This doctrine of Trinity was later known in the early church, after a considerable period, in conflict with Judaism and Paganism. The church arrived at something of a formal statement. After the fourth century, the church started to accept the formulation “One God in Three Persons” - the Trinitarian dogma that became the source of many diversified views of Trinity.
THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRINITARIANISM

The Trinitarian Controversy

The Apostolic Father

HE apostolic father, who wrote between 90 and 140, did not present a definite doctrine on the relationship of Jesus and God. Their discussion of the person of Jesus Christ simply repeated the teaching of the NT.

The Apologists (130-180)

With the apologists, Greek philosophy became associated with Christianity. The simple second century view of the knowledge of God and His law was transformed into a closely reasoned rational scheme centring on the concept of Logos. A major Apologist, Justin Martyr, taught that within God was Reason, or Mind (Logos), and when He created the world, he needed an agent. God begot a divine being, called logos, who is the son of God. The Son is powerful enough to create the world, but He is, nevertheless, a created being. He is secondary to, dependent upon, and caused by the Father.

Irenaeus (130-200)

Irenaeus was more open to the biblical view of Christ. He taught that the historical Jesus was born of a virgin, Mary.
Jesus existed before he was born: He was with God before the creation, and all things were made by him. He believed that “this Son was very Man, and that He was very God”. Irenaeus emphasised that the manifestation of God in Christ was for the sake of redemption, and Jesus Christ was the mind of God and was the Father Himself.

**Adoptionism - Dynamic Monarchiansm (195-198)**

In approximately 195, a certain Theodotus, who came from Greece to Rome, taught that Jesus was born miraculously of a virgin and he was a good and righteous man. At the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan, the Holy Spirit, whom Theodotus called Christ, came upon him. He progressed in goodness, was crucified and arose again from the dead. Jesus could be our Saviour because of Christ (the Holy Spirit) who was in Him and because His obedience was complete. Therefore, God adopted Him as His Son.

**Sabellianism - Modalistic Monarchianism (190)**

Sabellianism originated in Asia Minor. As with dynamic monarchianism, this concept was accented largely only in the East. It held that God is one individual being and that “Father, Son and Holy Spirit” are terms which apply to different modes of action of the one God. It identified Jesus Christ as God Himself (the Father) manifested in the flesh.
**Tertullian (150-225)**
In the West, Tertullian proposed the most influential answer to the relationship of Jesus and God. He was the first person recorded in history to use the words “Trinity”, “Substance” and “Person”. He was the first to speak of three persons in one substance. He taught that there is one divine nature. The Father and the Son have this one nature in common. They are separate and distinct, in so far as their persons are concerned. Therefore there is one divine nature (substance). At the same time, He gave a distinctly subordinate place to the son – He is not eternal. The eternal God became the Father when He begot the Son, just as He became the Creator when He made the world. Finally, he also related the Holy Spirit to the Father and Son. Three divine persons exist in one divine substance, and by so it was with this idea that he provided the main outlines for the Christian doctrine of Trinity.

**Arianism (250-336)**
Arius, a presbyter in the church in Alexandria, was a disciple of Lucian, who in turn was a student of Paul of Samosata, bishop of Antioch from 260 to 272. Paul was an adoptionist who taught that the logos or reason of God dwelt in the man Jesus. The son (or Logos) had a beginning; God created the Logos in order that he might create the world as God himself, far removed from men who could not create the material man. In his teaching, he viewed that Christ had a human body, but not a human soul.
Athanasius (300-373)

Athanasius, the successor of Alexander as bishop of Alexandria helped to formulate the decision of Nicaea and spent the remainder of his life defending it. This decision is doctrinally influenced inter alia by a major theological concern of the East, namely human corruption. Man as the head of creation, has lost God’s image and has become spiritually and morally deprived. To save His creation, God became man. In Christ the human nature is united with the divine nature, and in Him man’s corrupt mortality is changed into a beautiful immortality. Through faith in Him, we become partakers of the divine nature. Salvation came through a fully divine Christ, who is also fully human.

The Creeds

The Nicene Creed

Alarmed that the Trinitarian controversy spreading through his empire might threaten the unity of his empire, Constantine decided to call a council of the entire church. The first ecumenical council was held in Nicaea in Asia Minor and met in 325.

The Nicene Creed, arising from this council, expressed beliefs as follows:

“We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the son of God, begotten by the Father, only begotten, i.e. of the
nature of the Father. God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not mode, of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made both things in heaven and things on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh and assumed man’s nature, suffered and rose the third day, ascended to heaven and shall come again to judge the living and the dead…”

Although there is no clear statement that Trinity is this creed, it does affirm that Jesus is of one substance with the Father in opposition to Arianism. There is also no reference to the Holy Spirit as a separate person. It merely expresses a belief in the Holy Spirit.

Debate continued with the definition of “homo-ousios” (same substance). Is the son of the same nature as the Father, or is he not? The next 60 years saw the unceasing battle between the Arians and the decision of the Nicene Creed, “drafted” by Athanasius. There were fears that the door had been left open for the “Sabellian heresy”. Therefore, in 335, an attempt to remove the “homo ousios” from the creed was made by the party of Arius, and this time they gained the support of Constantine. In 335, a council declared Athanasius deposed and he was exiled.

As Constantine supported the Arians, he forced the western bishops to abandon Athanasius, and he exiled some of their leaders. In 357, a council held in Sirmium in Illyria forbade
the use of “Ousia” (nature) in speaking of the relationship between the Father and Son. During this period, a new word entered the debate, namely, “homoiousios” (like nature).

Those that took the “middle ground” were not prepared to state that the Father and the Son relationship was one of the sameness of nature: however, they did believe that there was a similarity in the natures of the Father and the Son.

As the battles continued, the participants began to reconcile ideas, as they discovered that there is very little difference between “like” nature and “same” nature.

The Council of Constantinople
In 379, Theodosius became the emperor in the East. As a Christian in the western church, Theodosius stood committed to the Nicene theology. In 381, he called the second ecumenical council to be held at Constantinople to confirm the faith of Nicaea. This council also settled another issue, namely the relationship of the Holy Spirit to God. Was the Holy Spirit a separate person in the Godhead or not? The Council added statements to the original Nicene Creed in an attempt to clarify the relationship of the Holy Spirit and God. The Council and Constantinople added the following to the statement “And in the Holy Spirit”: The Lord and the light give, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the son is worshipped together and glorified together, who spoke through the prophets.
The Athanasian Creed

Augustine (354-430) was the early church’s most distinguished son. For centuries, he was the most influential theologian of the church. Amongst his writings, he developed the final form of the western teaching regarding the Trinity. This Creed was developed in 5th century and, therefore, reflected Augustine’s theology. It is the most complete statement in early church history of the concept of trinity.

It reads: The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after; none is greater, or less than another.

It has been accepted in the western church but not in the eastern. The latter believed that the Spirit proceeded from the Father only, and in 1054, this doctrine became a major doctrinal issue behind the schism between Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodoxy.

Contradictions

It is important for Christianity to guard itself against tritheistic conceptions. Any attempt which focuses on removing the difficulties concerning the One True God, by using any sort of Trinity interpretation, only raises further difficulties of a deeper character.
1. The fact that if there are three entities in the Godhead in any rational understanding and yet there is only one God, discloses the internal inconsistency of Trinity.

2. There is only one Spirit (I Cor 12:13; Eph 4:4). However, the Father is a Spirit (Jn 4:24), the Lord Jesus is a Spirit (Acts 16:7; II Cor 3:17) and the Holy Spirit is a spirit by definition. They are various titles of the one God.

3. The Bible does not teach the co-equality between the Father and Son, as they are one and the same (Jn 14:28; 8:42; Mt 24:36; Mk 13:32; Mt 11:25; I Cor 11:3).

4. If the Son existed at creation and is eternal, who was His mother at that time? We know the Son was given birth by a woman and has only a short-lived role as a Man (Gal 4:4; cf Jn 8:56).

5. The role of the Son is temporal as His reign will be terminated (I Cor 15:24ff).

6. If, in answering to the above questions, we say only the human Son of God was limited in power, in knowledge and died, then how can we speak of “God the Son?” Are there two sons?
7. Are there many spirits in a Christian’s heart? Father, Jesus and the Spirit all dwell in a person (Jn 14:17, 23; Rm 8:9; Eph 3:14ff). Yet there is only one Spirit (I Cor 12:13; Eph 4:4).

8. The disciples consistently baptise people in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16; I Cor 1:13), not in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

9. There is only one throne. Who shall sit on it? From the book of revelation we know that Jesus is on the throne.

10. The new covenant is inaugurated by the Lord (Jer 31:31ff; Heb 8:7ff). If the Lord is a Trinity then the Father, Son and Spirit all had to die to effect the new covenant (Heb 9:16ff).
Biblical References
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