

The Trinity

fact or fiction

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A central doctrine of most sects of Christianity is a belief that God is one, but that He consists of three beings that are coequal and coeternal. The doctrine further asserts that a common element of the three also makes them uniquely different in ways that cannot be explained nor understood. Simply put, God the Father, God the Son, and the God the Holy Spirit are believed to be three divine persons that define who God is, while one essence defines what God is. While admittedly incomprehensible, this doctrine is said to be “crucial for properly understanding what God is like, how he relates to us, and how we should relate to him. But it also raises many difficult questions.”

The trinity theory might be easily summarized as “One God in three persons,” but the simplicity ends there. Even the brightest Trinitarian scholars are unable to clarify what they consider to be a foundation of Christian faith. One of the most respected group of evangelists wrote the following:

Our finite minds cannot understand or explain this mystery of God, which is nevertheless a fact. We must accept the truths found in the Word of God by faith even though we ourselves cannot comprehend them fully... It is really not surprising that the infinite God should be complex in His nature beyond the ability of finite humans to comprehend! This doctrine is absolutely essential to New Testament Christianity. Theologians have pointed out that if it were not true, the Bible would be unreliable, Christ would not be divine, and His death on the cross would not atone for our sins, being merely the death of a martyr (<https://billygraham.org/answer/can-you-explain-the-trinity-to-me/retr.2/27/2022>).

Could this be true? Does God consist of three distinct individuals? Is the trinity essential to Christianity? Is it something that must be accepted? Is the Bible “unreliable” if God is not a triad of heavenly beings? Does the divine nature of Christ, and His status as our Savior, depend entirely on a doctrine that cannot be explained nor understood?

Truth be Known

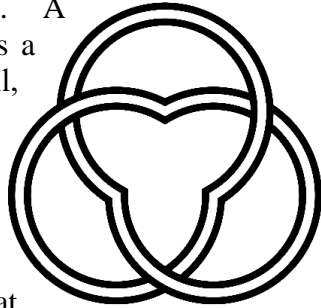
Billions who believe in the God of the Bible cling to the doctrine of the trinity as foundational to their faith. They believe that the Bible indicates that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three distinct individuals. While they agree that the doctrine of the trinity cannot be found in the books of the New Testament, many continue to claim that the New Testament possesses a triadic understanding of God. They assert that there are several trinitarian formulas, but a thorough study of the Scriptures indicates that those “formulas” do not really add up. A respected Catholic encyclopedia admits:

Today, however, scholars generally agree that there is no doctrine of the Trinity as such in either the *Old Testament* or the *New Testament*... the NT does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Trinity (*The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, pp. 564-565).

If the doctrine of the trinity did not come from the Bible, where did it come from? What may surprise trinity adherents are a variety of trinitarian concepts that can be found in the history of pagan religion.

For example, the nation of Babylon gave rise to numerous false deities under the leadership of Nimrod and his mother Semiramis. Semiramis is said to have become Nimrod’s wife, and these two were deified in multiple ways. Queen Semiramis was revered as the mother of a god while Nimrod was worshipped as a father god and also the son of a god. It is within this malevolent family that the origin of mother and son worship was established including the doctrine of the trinity.

Idolatry spread after the unified language was diversified while constructing the tower of Babel. The national project was abandoned and communities sharing a common tongue grew in various locations. In Egypt there was the worship of *Osiris*, *Isis* and *Horus* who were considered the father, mother, and son gods. In Greece it was *Zeus*, *Athena*, and *Apollo*. From India came *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiva*. The eastern worship of Buddha includes three gods in one named as *San*, *Pao*, *Fuh*. There is also the *Trikaya* doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism claiming that their single god manifests in three bodies of enlightenment called the *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya*, and *nirmanakaya*. A famous Buddhist/Shinto proverb uses a trinitarian concept stating, “See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.” Even the trefoil symbol used by many Trinitarians today dates back to ancient times. It was originally designed to represent three different positions of the sun that occur at sunrise, high noon, and sunset. The positions are depicted as interlocking to form an equilateral triangular effect reflecting a unified belief in one sun god.



History shows us that the concept of three gods in one is not unique to the professing Christian community. It existed long before the New Testament books were written, and we will see that the Bible never speaks of God existing in this way. The first mention of a divine triad from a believer in the Christian God was Theophilus of Antioch in 180 AD who wrote:

For the sun exists as a type of God and the moon as a type of man. As the sun greatly surpasses the moon in power and brightness, so God greatly surpasses mankind; and just as the sun always remains full and does not wane, so God always remains perfect and is full of all power, intelligence, wisdom, immortality, and all good things. But the moon wanes every month and virtually dies, for it exist as a type of man’ then it is reborn and waxes as a pattern of the future

resurrection. Similarly, the three days prior to the luminaries are types of the triad of God and his Logos and his Sophia [wisdom]... For this reason the luminaries came into existence on the fourth day (*Theophilus of Antioch as Autolyclus*, p. 53).

This first reference that was written in the 2nd century A.D. did not consider God to mysteriously exist in three persons. The triad concept was asserted as the Father and Son both having infinite wisdom. Their shared knowledge was said to be a reason why the sun, moon, and stars were set after three days as documented in Genesis 1.

Nearly two hundred years later, the trinity doctrine began to take hold within the Christian community. However, when it began, we must realize that the faith practiced by most who believed at that time was a far cry from what Christ and the apostles taught. The famed historian Edward Gibbon wrote in his classic work *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that a “dark cloud that hangs over the first age of the church” (1821, Vol. 2, p. 111).

This dark cloud refers to the fact that those who held fast to the faith once delivered to the saints were persecuted, marginalized, and became a scattered minority among what was considered by most to be a growing Christian community. A very different religion began to overshadow the foundation laid by Christ and what emerged was a religion infected by many concepts and practices that came from paganism. Historian Jesse Hurlbut said of this time:

For fifty years after St. Paul's life a curtain hangs over the church, through which we strive vainly to look; and when at last it rises, about 120 A.D. with the writings of the earliest church fathers, we find a church in many aspects very different from that in the days of St. Peter and St. Paul (*The Story of the Christian Church*, p. 33).

It was during that period of time that pagan holidays began to be adopted while God's holy days were rejected. A need to keep the ten commandments was replaced with a

misinterpretation of grace. It was not until the 4th century that the concept of the trinity entered a heretical stage. Notice what Catholic historians admit:

The writers of this school contend that the doctrine of the Trinity, as professed by the Church, is not contained in the New Testament, but that it was first formulated in the second century and received final approbation in the fourth, as the result of the Arian and Macedonian controversies (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15047a.htm>, retr. 12/12/2022).

The Arian and Macedonian controversies were a series of theological disputes between Arius, Athanasius and a contentious bishop known as Macedonius. One purpose of the Council of Nicaea was to resolve disagreements between these contemporary religious leaders over the nature of the Son and His relationship to the Father. This is when the trinity doctrine became established within the ranks of modern Christianity. Nonetheless, the theology was never accepted by the Church that Christ established through the apostles. From the first century forward, Christ's relatively "little flock" is documented to have stayed true to the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

In the seventh century, a group known as Paulicians are documented to have kept the commandments, including the seventh day Sabbath, the annual holy days, and they practiced baptism by immersion & laying on of hands for receiving the Holy Spirit (*Key of Truth*, Conybeare). Others known as Vaudois, Waldensians and Bogomils continued in the footsteps of Christ and the apostles. These faithful people are known to have rejected the concept of a trinity during the 12th century:

The historian, Mosheim, adds that they abstained from eating meats which were prohibited under the Mosaic economy, and refused to accept the "Trinity" doctrine. They seemed to have understood that God is a family, which converted Christians may join at the return of Christ (*The Incredible History of God's True Church*, 2nd ed. p.153).

Aside from being impossible to understand, the implication of the trinity doctrine is that God could never be considered a family that will one day increase in number. When we search the Scriptures for evidence of God existing in three persons, we find nothing. In fact, the word “trinity” is not found anywhere in the Bible. However, when we search other pages of history, we find that the concept has existed in pagan religion. In addition, the history of a popular religion claiming to be Christian hundreds of years after Christ’s death shows us that the doctrine was introduced by heretics. God’s true Church never accepted it.

Trinitarian Confessions

The Catholic Church is the most prestigious proponent of the trinity doctrine. The doctrine arose within their ranks between the 2nd and 4th centuries in Rome. This religious organization became extremely influential and powerful while the Empire was led by Emperor Constantine. Constantine practiced paganism all of his life, but professed to be converted to Christianity. His motives were sinister—proven by the fact that he attempted to abolish observance and keeping of the fourth commandment, the seventh day Sabbath, instead decreeing the “venerable day of the sun” (Sunday) to be the official day of rest for Christians of the Roman Empire. Religious leaders from that organization are responsible for establishing many false and heretical doctrines within their church. This includes the mysterious doctrine of the trinity, and yet they will admit that the theory is unhinged. Notice their own words, as well as the admissions of many others, indicating that the foundation of their faith is unstable:

It is difficult, in the second half of the 20th century, to offer a clear, objective, and straightforward account of the revelation, doctrinal evolution, and the theological elaboration of the mystery of the Trinity. Trinitarian discussion, Roman Catholic as well as others, presents a somewhat unsteady silhouette... Herein lies the difficulty. On the one hand, it was the dogmatic formula “one God in three

Persons” that would henceforth for more than 15 centuries structure and guide the Trinitarian essence of the Christian message, both in the profession of faith and in theological dialectic. On the other hand, the formula itself does not reflect the immediate consciousness of the period of origins... It is this contemporary return to the sources that is ultimately responsible for this unsteady silhouette (*The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV, p. 295).

Was the Trinitarian formula used in NT times? No record of such use can be discovered in the Acts or the Epistles of the Apostles (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, p. 396).

In this Trinity... is the revelation regarding God’s nature which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came upon earth to deliver to the world: and which she (the Catholic Church) proposes to man as the foundation of her whole dogmatic system. In Scripture there is as yet no single term by which the Three Divine Persons are denoted together (*Catholic Encyclopedia* online, <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15047a.htm#II>).

The Christian Bible, including the New Testament, has no Trinitarian statements or speculations concerning a trinitary deity. The dogmatic formulation, coined by the early church father Tertullian has it, three persons and one substance. This conception was not accepted without contradiction as is proved by theological disputes of the 3rd and 4th century. It is evident that Trinitarian speculation greatly resembles the way of thinking of pluriform monotheism (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1979, volume 12, p. 383).

But many doctrines are accepted by evangelicals as being clearly taught in the Scripture for which there are no proof texts. The doctrine of the Trinity furnishes the best example of this. It is fair to say that the Bible does not clearly teach the doctrine of the Trinity if by clearly one means there are proof texts of the doctrine. In fact,

there is not even one proof text, if by proof text we mean a verse or passage that “clearly” states that there is one God who exists in three persons (*Basic Theology*, Charles C. Ryrie, p. 89).

In order to articulate the dogma of the Trinity, the [Catholic] Church had to develop her own terminology with the help of certain notions of philosophical origin... In doing this, she did not submit the faith to human wisdom, but gave a new and unprecedented meaning to these terms, which from then on would be used to signify an ineffable mystery... (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p. 74).

The New Testament does not contain the developed doctrine of the Trinity. The Bible lacks the express declaration that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are of equal essence and therefore in an equal sense God himself. And the other express declaration is also lacking, that God is God thus and only thus, i.e., as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These two express declarations, which go beyond the witness of the Bible, are the twofold content of the Church doctrine of the Trinity (*The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Colin Brown, Vol. 2, p. 84).

The Trinitarians, of whom Athanasius was the great leader, taught that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost were three distinct persons but one God... The present writer can deal with them neither with awe nor derision; they seem to him, he must confess, a disastrous ebullition of the human mind entirely inconsistent with the plain account of Jesus preserved for us in the Gospels (H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, p. 541).

From what has been seen thus far, the impression could arise that Trinitarian dogma is in the last analysis a late 4th century invention. In a sense, this is true... The formulation “one God in three Persons” was not solidly established, certainly not fully

assimilated into Christian life and its profession of faith prior to the end of the 4th century... Among the Apostolic Fathers, there had been nothing even remotely approaching such a mentality or perspective... New Testament exegesis is now accepted as having shown that not only the verbal idiom but even the patterns of thought characteristic of the patristic and conciliar development [Catholic fathers who developed many doctrines] would have been quite foreign to the mind and culture of the New Testament writers (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV, p. 299-300).

The mind of man cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. He who would try to understand the mystery fully will lose his mind (*A Handbook of Christian Truth*, Harold Lindsay & Charles J. Woodbridge p. 51).

The term Trinity is not a Biblical term, and we are not using Biblical language when we define what is expressed by it as the doctrine... As the doctrine of the Trinity is undiscoverable by reason, so it is incapable of proof from reason (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. V, p. 3012-3013).

If there is no term by which the trinity can be denoted in the Scriptures, isn't that a good reason to question its validity? If it cannot be confirmed by reason, and there are no facts indicating that the trinity is true, the only conclusion is that the trinity is unreasonable and a work of fiction. Why, then, do hundreds of millions say that it is a vital doctrine of Christianity?

A Portrait in Baptism

An important step toward conversion is baptism. What many do not realize is that the rite is filled with symbolism that portrays a believer's commitment and connection to God. So important is this ceremony that Christ was baptized as an example to us, and He commanded ordained disciples:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20).

Teaching all who would listen, to observe all things that were commanded by Christ, quickly led to thousands of converts. But why were the disciples told to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Is this an indication that God consists of three persons? What exactly does it mean? The answer can be found when we examine the steps and purpose for baptism.

The first step is repentance. Repentance is a choice that an individual must make in order to recognize a need to change behavior and direction in life. Speaking of wicked behavior, the Apostle Paul wrote:

But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:2-4).

When the term “God” is used in the New Testament it is speaking of the Father. Christ previously said “that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins” (Mark 2:10). But the power to forgive sins in heaven is reserved for the Father (Rev. 20:11-12). As Christ also said, “My Father is greater than I,” indicating that there is a hierarchy to the relationship between Father and Son. Christ also said, “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Mat. 6:14). While life was draining out of Him, Jesus asked the Father to “forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34). These are some of the reasons why baptism is to be performed in the name of the Father.

A second step to baptism requires belief in Christ as our Savior before submersion. Belief is portrayed by willingly joining Christ in a type of death being fully immersed for a few moments in what can be considered a “watery grave.” The convert then comes out of the water a new person who must go forward living a new way of life in Christ. This symbolism led Apostle Paul to write:

Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4).

Baptism also represents washing away sins that were previously committed (Rom. 3:25). Christ’s sacrifice made this possible. It is written that Jesus “loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. 1:5). On the day of Pentecost, about 3,000 people of Judea heard the apostles speak this truth, and they were convinced:

Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37-38).

These are the reasons baptism is to be done in the name of the Son. The last step is equally important. Believers must receive the Holy Spirit. This is performed by an elder who has been ordained to serve as a minister in the Church of God. So important is this final step that apostles were sent to people who were baptized and had not completed the process:

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the

Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

The Holy Spirit is a power that God uses to help people in a variety of ways. It is a way of being able to better connect to God while He remains in heaven. The Holy Spirit allows for converts to gain a better understanding of the things of God so that they may be able to build righteous character. The Apostle Paul explained:

But God has revealed them to us through His spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual (1Corinthians 2:10-13).

The Holy Spirit is not a spirit being that possesses people after baptism. It is a divine attribute considered to be an ability or power that God has. Moses and many other prophets were affected by God's spirit. Mary was impregnated by it, and some are led by it today. In fact, it is through this Spirit that the process of conversion begins. The Apostle John spoke of this process as a form of begetting, stating:

Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God (1John 3:9).

The Greek term *gennaō* is translated as "born" many times in the Bible. However, what it means regarding receiving God's spirit is to conceive or beget (*Strong's Exhaustive*

Concordance of the Bible, G1080). That is why the Apostle John spoke of those who have begun this process not being allowed to continue practicing sinful ways because “His seed remains in him” (1John 3:9). The word “seed” is translated from the Greek *sperma* referring to conception by means of sperm. In this way, God’s seed is planted in a person when they receive His spirit. A new creation begins to develop spiritual maturity:

Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2Corinthians 5:17).

Just as a man’s seed joins with a woman’s egg to begin a new life, so does a new creation begin when the Holy Spirit from God merges with the spirit in man. It is not by coincidence that God’s Church is symbolized as a woman in the Scriptures (John 3:29; Eph. 5:23; Rev. 12:6; 19:7; 21:9). Notice how Paul described those who have begun this development process and are waiting to be born again as literal children of God:

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together (Romans 8:13-17).

Being born of the spirit is not something that can happen right now while people are mortal. It can only occur when Christ returns and gathers His elect (Mat. 24:31). That is why Jesus told Nicodemus, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). For more on this read our booklets—*What it Really Means to be Born Again* and *The Gospel of the Kingdom of God*.

The reason Christ told His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is not because God is a triad of beings; it is because God is the Father, Jesus is the Son, and the way to be born into His family, to become like Him in character and composition, is through begetting of the Holy Spirit.

To be baptized in the name of someone means to accept them as a religious teacher. Paul spoke of the nation of Israel who experienced a type of baptism by Moses while passing through the Red Sea (1Cor. 10:2). To be baptized in the name of the Father and Son means to come under God's authority. It means that we will reject the behaviors that are contrary to God, accept His commandments, laws, and statutes as the ethic of our lives. It represents the way to fulfill our conversion by seeking God's spirit to guide our development and maturity so that we might be born again at the resurrection.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of His resurrection (Romans 6:5).

Linguistics

Belief in the trinity may appear to be supported by some translations of the Bible. Many translators have unwittingly used such terms such as *he*, *who*, or *him* when referring to the Holy Spirit. What both the translators and readers may not realize is that the rules of linguistics categorize a variety of nouns that are truly gender neutral. For example, while animals and people have innate gender designating their natural class of male and female, grammatical gender is an entirely separate method of placing nouns without gender into male or female categories.

The English language has used this technique for centuries. Only recently have some linguists stopped classifying non-binary nouns by using terms like *the* or *it*. And yet there are still many nouns that retain feminine pronouns such as countries, churches and vehicles of transportation. These nouns are frequently personified as *she* or *her* when referencing such things as a boat, an airplane, or a nation.

Greek nouns have long leaned toward personified pronouns when referring to places and things that have no gender or personhood. Nonetheless, the Greek term for “spirit” is *pneuma* and is considered to be neuter. When the Holy Spirit is referred to as a “helper” or “comforter,” the translation comes from the Greek *parakletos* which is inherently masculine. This may explain why translators chose to use terms like *he*, *him*, or *himself* when referring to the Holy Spirit while translating the dialogue of Christ’s last Passover. However, why did they consistently use such terms when translating other scriptures?

William D. Mounce is a present-day scholar of New Testament Greek who is in favor of the trinity, and yet Mounce agrees that *pneuma* is grammatically neuter and most translations of the Bible break the Greek rules of proper grammar. This leads us to believe that that the “break” from the proper use of terms indicates an attempt to give readers the impression that the Holy Spirit is a person instead of a thing. When speaking of the Biblical use of this term, Mounce admitted:

Indeed, it is difficult to find *any* text in which *πνεῦμα* (*pneuma*) is grammatically referred to with the masculine gender” (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, p. 332).

Personification of the Holy Spirit is erroneous when it comes to the original language of the Bible. Despite the error, it has become a tradition for many to use personified pronouns that also include *who* and *whom*. However, the use of these terms did not come from the original authors of New Testament books. It is a result of translators who presumptuously chose to apply their own rules and to disregard Greek linguistics when describing a noun that has no gender or personhood. Knowing this helps us to understand that the Holy Spirit was not intentionally personified by Christ in the speech He made during Passover. While instructing and encouraging the disciples, Jesus said:

If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper,

that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you (John 14:15-17).

This profound statement reveals that the power of Holy Spirit was already present, and was indicated previously when Christ said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes” (Mat. 11:25). Jesus also told Peter that, “flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Mat. 16:17).

The Holy Spirit was already influencing some before Christ’s death and resurrection. This means that the power of God was around them just as it has been with many others in times past. By this, Christ indicated that the Holy Spirit would be in the disciples after He was gone, and it was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost 7½ weeks later.

Throughout the next two chapters, the text uses the pronouns *who*, *him*, *his* and *he* when referring to the Holy Spirit. Though these terms are usually associated with an individual, they were not used for theological reasons. The pronouns are the result of both applying Greek rules for describing nouns, and also misusing the inherent grammar of the language.

Qualities of Personhood

Christ referred to the Holy Spirit as a “helper” or “comforter” (John 14:26). These words were translated from the Greek *parakletos* relating to one of the many functions of the Holy Spirit. The facility is also defined as “intercessor, consoler, or advocate” (*Strong’s*, G3875). Interestingly, this function is not unique to the Holy Spirit. It is a term also used to describe a role of Christ. The Apostle John wrote:

My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate [*parakletos*] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (1John 2:1).

Advocacy can include pleading or arguing in favor of someone, but it can also be any kind of active support. The reason Christ referred to the Spirit as a “helper” is that kind of support comes from God through the power of His Holy Spirit. It does not mean that the Holy Spirit is an individual.

Our understanding of the spirit realm is fairly limited. The term “Spirit” comes from the Greek word *pneuma* meaning “a current of air, that is, *breath (blast)* or a *breeze*” (*Strong’s*, G4154). Even though we are limited in our understanding of the spirit world, we understand that there are spirit beings such as angels and demons. God is the Supreme spirit being “who alone has immortality” (1Tim. 6:16). There are spiritual places such as Jerusalem above, and Mt. Zion, that exist in the third heaven (Psa. 134:3; 137:6). In these locations there are spirit trees, water, furniture and even food. Much of this was described by the Apostle John in the book of *Revelation*.

This should tell us that—simply because something is spirit does not mean that it has personhood. Just as it is in the physical world, where mountains, animals, elements, and people exist alongside forces of nature such as gravity, wind, and electrical currents; a spiritual noun can be an inanimate object as well as a force of God’s nature. This is something that we have limited knowledge about, but the creation itself is a testament to this truth.

Contrary to a Biblical approach, the trinity teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person with individual thoughts, abilities, and personality. The reasoning may come from the fact that the Holy Spirit assists in producing character traits within those who are indwelt by it. One trinity advocate wrote:

The fact that the Holy Spirit is a Person, not an impersonal force (like gravity), is also shown by the fact that he speaks, reasons, thinks and understands, wills, feels, and gives personal fellowship. These are all qualities of personhood (<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-doctrine-of-the-trinity>, retr. 3/1/2022).

When examining the asserted “qualities of personhood” that are attributed the Holy Spirit, what we find are people who have the Holy Spirit and are led to display these qualities.

For example, the author of Hebrews wrote “as the Holy Spirit says...” and proceeded to quote Psalm 95:7-11 (Heb. 3:7). The quote came from a person who was inspired by the Holy Spirit to compose a psalm. Instead of indicating that the Holy Spirit speaks, the author of Hebrews merely implied that it was God’s spirit that inspired the words documented in the Old Testament book of *Psalms*.

When it comes to thinking and understanding, the Holy Spirit is given to assist a believer in their personal thoughts and knowledge. That is why Christ called it a “helper” and why Paul previously noted “These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1Cor. 2:13).

There is not a single verse in the Bible indicating that the Holy Spirit wills, has freewill, or feels. Any insinuation is toward God who feels and wills what His spirit will do. The fellowship we have is with the Father and His Son—not with an inanimate spiritual force:

Truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1John 1:3).

It is also thought by trinity apologists that the Holy Spirit has a mind of its own. They attempt to use an expression found in the book of Acts as an example:

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell (Acts 15:28-29).

The conclusion was the result of a notable council of elders meeting to discuss circumcision among gentile communities. This council was prayerfully conducted under the

guidance of men who were baptized and had God’s spirit in them facilitating spiritual wisdom. Therefore, the expression that “it seemed good to the Holy Spirit” means that God did not incline these men to require gentiles to be circumcised. It remained a rite of devotion among the tribes of Israel.

There are a few other verses misused by advocates of the trinity such as the following excerpt from Paul explaining a key function of the Holy Spirit:

But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God (1Corinthians 2:10-12).

These scriptures say that “the Spirit searches all things” and yet the searching is done by the man or woman who, like the Bereans, “searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). Paul had instructed believers to “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2Tim. 2:15). Obviously searching the “deep things of God” is not something the Holy Spirit does by itself on our behalf so that we don’t have to make any effort to think. Study and deep thought require the effort of people led by the Spirit of God.

While some conclude that the Holy Spirit has a mind of its own, their conclusion is based on a misunderstanding of the facts. Paul said no such thing. He as an apostle led by God’s spirit who concluded that, “we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God” (1Cor. 2:12). The explanation of this great apostle sent to preach to the gentiles was, while the spirit of man allows us to understand the things of this world, the Spirit of God helps us to understand the

things of God. Just as the spirit of man is not its own person separate from, and yet unified with, the individual, and the spirit of the world is not its own person separate from, and yet unified with, every individual in the world; even so the Holy Spirit is not its own person that is separate from, and yet unified with, God the Father and God the Son.

Another assertion is that the Holy Spirit has feelings. The claim comes from a belief drawn out of a single sentence found in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Paul said, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God..." To understand what He meant, we must use the first rule of thumb when attempting to form an understanding of Scripture. We must consider the context:

Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers (Ephesians 4:29-31).

The trinity doctrine concludes that the Holy Spirit experiences grief. However, this descriptive term is an expression indicating that corrupt words and behavior cause the Holy Spirit within a person to fade. A similar expression used by Paul is found in his letter to the Thessalonians, stating "Do not quench the Spirit" (1Ths. 5:19). This does not mean that the Holy Spirit is like a consuming fire that should not be quenched. It is an expression meaning, "do not let God's spirit fade in you." It is likened to the light of a lamp that burns within believers which should never be put out. As Christ related:

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:14-16).

Understanding what these Scriptures really mean helps us to know what the Holy Spirit is and also what it is not. It is what allows us to have an intimate and personal relationship with God the Father and His Son. It is a force of influence and guidance. It helps us to build character and gain a deep understanding of God. The Holy Spirit is not a person that can walk, talk, think, feel and reason of itself.

Telling a Lie to God

The New Testament Church began as a fledgling community that quickly found a need to combine their resources in order to support a larger work. Everyone willingly shared what they had. However, one couple wanted others to believe that they shared everything when they actually held a portion back. They lied to the apostles and were rebuked by the Apostle Peter:

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware *of it*, and brought a certain part and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:1-4).

Many believe that Peter's reply means Ananias and Sapphira lied to a spirit being called the Holy Spirit. But who exactly did this couple lie to? They attempted to deceive the apostles. The apostles were men who had the Holy Spirit within them. That spirit is a power sent by God which is why Peter said, "You have not lied to men but to God."

God is omnipotent, but the Scriptures never say that He is omnipresent. We will not find God in a brothel, a crack-house, or other places where evil thrives. Nonetheless, God is able to see anything and everything that takes place on the earth.

The Holy Spirit is one of these ways in which God knows everything about those who have the spirit. As Paul recognized:

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints according to *the will of God* (Romans 8:26-27).

If the Holy Spirit were an individual who could think, feel, reason and talk; why would Paul say that its intercession to God is “with groanings which cannot be uttered?” Surely the Father would be able to hear and understand any coherent living being. What Paul described was a method of relating information that cannot be heard because it comes through a force that we do not understand.

It is also written that God has angels who are His ears and eyes on the earth (Zec. 4:10; Rev. 5:6). Both the Father and Son are fully aware of the evil and good that is taking place everywhere on this planet (Pro. 15:3). For these reasons, Peter said that Ananias had “not lied to men but to God:”

The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks on all the inhabitants of the earth (Psalm 33:13-14).

Like a Dove

A great miracle occurred the moment Christ was baptized in the Jordan river. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all recorded this event describing the same detail about the Spirit of God descending like a dove:

When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, “This is

My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”
(Matthew 3:16-17).

The description is another element used to advance the doctrine of the trinity. Adherents believe that the description is evidence that the Holy Spirit is a being that can change shape and form at will. They seem convinced after reading Luke’s account describing the Holy Spirit descending “in bodily form like a dove” (Luke 3:22). One problem with the conclusion is that the Spirit was not a dove, but only resembled the way a dove might flutter while descending from the air. While Luke’s account appears to be more specific, all eye-witnesses precede their description with the word “like” a dove. This term has the same definition in both the English and Greek languages. It means that the Holy Spirit was visible and descended as if it were a dove.

Another problem with attempting to use this miracle to say that the Holy Spirit is a person is the fact that the form of God’s spirit when alighting on Christ was very different from the same Holy Spirit that came upon the disciples more than three years later:

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:1-3).

The same Spirit of God that filled the disciples looked like fire which is not a bodily form. Fire is an element that cannot think or feel and does not have freewill. In addition, the miracle during Pentecost indicates that the Spirit gave the disciples an ability to speak or to be heard in a variety of languages. It was not a being that possessed them as a demon might. The Holy Spirit gave these men an ability to understand

and do things that could not have been known or done prior. The result was a miracle that God performed by using the power of His spirit.

Lastly, even though the Holy Spirit descended on Christ after baptism, the Scriptures indicate that Christ was also conceived by it. Both Jesus and John the Baptist had it from birth (Mat. 1:20; Luke 1:15). If the Holy Spirit was a person, then Christ would not have called God His Father. All of these facts indicate that the Holy Spirit is not a person, but a power that God the Father uses at His discretion.

Spirit, Water, and Blood

One of the most convincing Bible verses among trinity advocates is a passage regarding baptism. The following verses have been used to persuade many into believing that God is a triad of beings. As we carefully examine the following words you are going to see that all is not as it seems:

This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness *in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one* (1John 5:6-8).

You might be wondering why we put a portion of these verses in italics. Italics indicate words that were not a part of the original text, and that is exactly what we would like to point out. Trinitarians would say that the above verses hit the nail on the head of their foundational doctrine. But when we examine the history of the text, we find that they actually miss the mark.

The first verse speaks of two substances that portray purification. First, the water of baptism portraying washing away sins of the past. Second, the blood of Christ that can redeem us and cleanse us from most sins. John then wrote, “it is the Spirit *who* bears witness...” Personification of the Spirit is again an inaccurate rendering of the text. Spirit is a neuter

term and the sentence should be translated “it is the Spirit *that* bears witness...” The Holy Spirit is a thing—a guiding force of God—indicated by John’s definition “the Spirit is truth.”

What may surprise many to learn is that the words misused by trinity apologists, a phrase that many would consider to be the most convincing evidence in favor of their doctrine, is actually spurious. It is the believed witness in heaven being “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” The inserted text then attempts to make sense of the original author’s thought by adding “And there are three that bear witness on earth...”

However, none of these words were found in the original manuscripts. They did not appear in any of the copied texts before the 4th century. They were inserted long after the doctrine of the trinity was established by the organization that became known as the Roman Catholic Church. Their own historians examined the documents of history and concluded:

From what has been seen thus far, the impression could arise that Trinitarian dogma is in the last analysis a late 4th century invention. In a sense, this is true...
(*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV, p. 299).

This truth has also been noted by many other scholars such as Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown who wrote in their 19th century commentary:

The only *Greek* manuscripts *in any form* which support the words, “in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; and there are three that bear witness in earth,” are the *Montfortianus* of Dublin, copied evidently from the *modern Latin Vulgate*; the *Ravianus*, copied from the *Complutensian Polyglot*; a manuscript at Naples, with the words added in the *Margin* by a recent hand; *Ottobonianus*, 298, of the fifteenth century, the *Greek* of which is a mere translation of the accompanying *Latin*. All the old versions omit the words... It was therefore first written as a *marginal* comment to complete the sense of the *text*, and then,

as early at least as the eighth century, was introduced into the text of the *Latin Vulgate (A Commentary, Critical, and Explanatory on the Old and New Testaments, vol. II, p. 536)*.

The reason the inserted text was at first a marginal comment was because of an agenda to promote a different perspective of God. The result was a growing belief in the trinity. This belief became a part of their own dogma to the point that the terms were added directly into the Scriptures in the eighth century. *The New Bible Commentary* agrees that the addition was presumptuous and an error, stating: “The words are clearly a gloss and are rightly excluded by RSV even from its margin” (p. 1269). Most translations of the Bible omit the terms, while many leave them in. What is important to realize is that the terms were not written by the Apostle John and therefore do not indicate that God exists as three persons. The correct translation of the original text should read:

This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one (1John 5:6-8).

The three constituents of spirit, water, and blood are a witness that those who are baptized and receive God’s spirit are united in agreement with the fact that Jesus is the Son of God! The words added to the original text were an attempt to promote the trinity, and we cannot trust them. We could further point out that the inserted text violates a direct command from, stating “Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it” (Deu. 12:32). This precept was restated several times in the Bible:

Every word of God *is* pure; He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar (Proverbs 30:5-6).

Inserting our own ideas into the Scriptures is forbidden, but that is exactly what happened several centuries after John’s letters had been circulated. It appears that the reason for the inclusion was to generate biblical evidence for an otherwise unbelievable doctrine. Such a strong attempt at deception could be considered a de facto admission that, without outside intervention, the trinity would crumble under its own weight like a house built on shifting sand instead of Rock (Mat. 7:26). If the set of controversial verses in 1John 5 were, as many would say, “the most convincing scriptures in favor of the trinity,” the ideology falls apart when we realize that the inserted text is illegitimate.

Many may not have known that such a heretical thing was done to the book that they hold most precious. However, don’t let the presumptuous sins of some shake your faith. It is important to remember that we can always trust the written Word of God. Such occasions of misuse should cause us to heed the advice that Paul gave to Timothy:

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness (2Timothy 2:15-16).

We cannot always trust what some people may do with the written Word. There have been many misuses and abuses of the Bible over thousands of years. No translation is flawless, and some are more accurate than others. Nonetheless, as long as we are actively engaged with God, truly seeking to understand His will by keeping all of His commandments, God will lead us to the truth that will set us free (Psa. 25:5, 111:10; John 8:31-32, 16:13).

Salutations

George Johnson was a respected elder of the Church of God who authored material for Ambassador College during the 1970s. His study, and resulting booklet about the trinity,

concluded that, if the concept were true, then the most prolific author of New Testament books would be considered a skeptic:

The Apostle Paul would probably be considered a blasphemer by many Trinitarians today, because in his greetings to the churches he neglected to mention the Holy Spirit (*Is God a Trinity?* p. 39).

Johnson makes a good point. The Apostle Paul's claim to fame is the fact that he was "an apostle; not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead" (Gal. 1:1). Paul said that His entitlement came from Jesus Christ and God the Father. He did not mention a word about the Holy Spirit. This is also reflected in each of his letters that begin with salutations mentioning only two divine individuals:

- Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:7).
- Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1Cor. 1:3).
- Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (2Cor. 1:2).
- Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:3).
- Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:2).
- Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Php. 1:2).
- Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:2).
- Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (1Ths. 1:1).
- Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (2Ths. 1:2).
- Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord (1Tim. 1:1).
- Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord (2Tim. 1:2).

- Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior (Titus 1:4).
- Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (Phm. 1:3).

Notice that there is never a salute to the Holy Spirit. The Apostles Peter & John, James & Jude wrote likewise:

- Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (1Peter 1:3).
- Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord (2Peter 1:2).
- Truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (1John 1:3).
- Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love (2John 1:3).
- James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ (James 1:1).
- Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ (Jude 1)

Then, in the last book of the Bible, before introducing prophecies that lead up to the end of the age and the return of Jesus Christ, the Apostle John gave similar salutations.

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:4-5).

The final salute in the Bible includes greetings from seven angels before God's throne. If the Holy Spirit were an individual that is also God, surely John would have noted it. If the spirit of God was coexistent and equal to the power and status of the Father and the Son, surely these champions of faith would have mentioned something about it in their letters. Instead, there is not a single word giving the trinity any credibility.

Some have said that these men were not as stimulated in thought as those who came later, and they were still trying to figure things out. Because there is no hard evidence for the trinity, it is thought that the authors did not understand the nature of God. To such delusions of grandeur, we would recommend searching the Scriptures to see whether or not these things are so (Acts 17:11). If anyone would have been able to recognize that there were three persons assembled into one God, surely it would have been the men who had direct contact with Christ. These men saw the miracles and had the power of God's spirit visibly come upon each one of them. They had first hand instruction from the very Son of God. The revelation of God's nature would not have skipped over these men and then been given to theologians centuries later—men who were already wresting the Scriptures in order to concoct unholy doctrine.

The apostles gave no status to the Holy Spirit as a third person of God, and the reason is that the trinity is, in itself, a false and heretical doctrine. It is a doctrine of the demons that attempts to leave believers dumbfounded (1Tim. 4:1). With no way to explain how God can exist as three in one, there would be no possible way for anyone else to follow in the footsteps of Christ and be born again as a part of God's family.

From the Source

The evidence against the doctrine of the trinity is overwhelming. If what has been presented so far were not enough, we need only consider a single statement that Christ made in order to know for certain that the Holy Spirit is not an individual. He said:

I and *My* Father are one (John 10:30).

Jesus told the Jews that He and the Father were one in mind and purpose. If the Holy Spirit were an inseparable third part of God, Christ would have said that He, the Holy Spirit, and the Father are one, but He didn't. Jesus had every opportunity to credit the Holy Spirit if it that credit was due.

The fact is, Jesus did not acclaim the Spirit. He offered praise and glory to the Father alone.

What is the Holy Spirit?

The Bible does not teach that the Holy Spirit is an individual or a third portion of what constitutes God. What it tells us is that God's spirit is enormously important for many reasons. One of them is for us to be intimately connected to God. As the Apostle's Paul and John related:

Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1Corinthians 3:16).

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (1Corinthians 6:19).

By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit (1John 4:13).

The connection the Holy Spirit makes between us and God allows for Him to know us better than we know ourselves (Rom. 8:26). It allows for us to gain understanding of the deep things of God (1Cor. 2:10). The power and relationship of that spirit cannot be entirely explained. But it can be understood that the Spirit is not a person or a spirit being. The Scriptures indicate the Holy Spirit is a power that God possess, and it is used by both the Father and the Son in numerous ways. Notice what God said to a prince and leader of Judah during the second temple period:

This *is* the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD of hosts (Zechariah 4:6).

The Holy Spirit was an active force that God used to inspire, lead and strengthen people during the rebuilding of Jerusalem. It gave Moses and others physical and mental strength while leading Israel out of Egypt. It inspired the

prophet Micah to say, “truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD” (Mic. 3:8). Jesus felt this power go from him when a woman with chronic illness touched His garment and was healed (Mark 5:25-34):

And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed *them* all (Luke 6:19).

Christ said that we are led by the Spirit, taught by the Spirit, and Paul said that we are “sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, sealed for the day of redemption” (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). All of these abilities of the Spirit do not mean that it has a will of its own. They indicate that it is God who directs what the Spirit will do.

The Holy Spirit does not have a body or a mind. It is not like one of the angels that travel the earth. It does not have a personality, make decisions on its own, or speak by itself. The Holy Spirit is a part of God’s nature and is an active extension of His miraculous power. It is not someone, but something. It is a tool used by God to give understanding, to inspire, and at times generate miracles. Even the unpardonable sin of “blasphemy against the Spirit” indicates that a person can choose to go against God after the Holy Spirit has shown them otherwise, and such a sin will not be forgiven.

The helper that Christ spoke of is assistance by use of the Spirit. The comforter indicates God giving solace when times seem unbearable. It is power from above given to those whom God wills. However, in order to receive this Spirit, we are required to make a significant change in our lives:

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

The Holy Spirit is a gift from God. It assists converts with guidance and understanding. A prophecy of the end of the age reveals that this Spirit will powerfully inspire many:

And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD (Joel 2:28-31).

The Holy Spirit does not possess people. It inspires them. Notice a prophecy of the time after Christ's return:

Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them* (Ezekiel 36:25-27).

It is unreasonable to think that God would plan to convert the nations by means of spiritually possessing every person. He is not like those demons in the Bible that possessed people rendering them powerless and without self-will or determination. God does not want people to have no mind of their own. He desires people who want to do what is right, and will make righteous choices based on the wisdom that God has to offer. It is His hope that we will gain the wisdom that He is willing to share with us. God empowers us with free will to choose to serve him; we are not forced by the possession of a spirit being.

This is why we have to actively work toward removing sin from our lives (Rom. 6:1-2). God cannot just push a button in order to remove sin forever. We have to continue working with God, and the power of the Holy Spirit assists us to overcome. This is necessary for all who hope to be chosen. As Christ reminds us eight times in the last book of the Bible:

To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God (Revelation 2:7).

He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death (Revelation 2:11).

To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it* (Revelation 2:17).

And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations... and I will give him the mornings star (Revelation 2:26).

He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels (Revelation 3:5).

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him* My new name (Revelation 3:12).

To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne (Revelation 3:21).

He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son (Revelation 21:7).

Eight is a number representing a new beginning. And in the last book of holy writ we are told that the reward of those who will overcome sin will be a transcendent new beginning within the family of God! God will not save believers who do not actively work to overcome the many temptations of sin. If the Holy Spirit were likened to a ghost that could force a person to no longer sin, it would be against your own will. The bride

that the Father seeks for His Son will consist of those who will choose the faith of Christ and not merely have a belief in Christ. This is the endurance of the saints who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Christ (Rev. 14:12).

God is looking for faithful people to bring into His family; to imbue with the same power and eternal existence that He alone possesses (1Cor. 15:53; 1Tim. 6:15-16). Such a prestigious and precious gift requires believers to wholeheartedly choose to keep God's laws. If the process of conversion were to take place through possession by a "Holy Ghost," there would be a high possibility of future heavenly rebellion like the time when Lucifer and other angels turned from the righteousness of God (Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:12-18; Jude 6).

The Duality of God

The trinity doctrine claims that God was manifested in one form during Old Testament times, and a different form in the New Testament. They attempt to make a difference between the two covenants based on the notion that the God of the Old Testament behaved in ways that are very different from the conduct of Jesus Christ. This has caused a misunderstanding of a profound revelation from the Apostle John, who wrote:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made (John 1:1-3).

This statement from the last New Testament author indicates that, from the very beginning of our creation, there were two beings both considered to be God. This point was actually made in the first sentence of the Bible when, "In the beginning God created the heavens and earth" (Gen. 1:1). The Hebrew word translated as God is *Elohiym*—a plural term meaning more than one (*Strong's*, H430). The duality of God was again noted when He made the first man and woman:

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26).

The terms “Us” and “Our” indicate a collaboration between two individuals who decided that mankind would be made to look like God. This means that our physical form having a torso, arms, legs, a head, eyes, ears, and so on, was based on the same features that both beings considered to be God have. That is why John started his gospel record noting that there were always two deities that are both God. In fact, Christ indicated that one of the reasons He came was to reveal the fact that He was the God of Israel, but there was another greater than Him called the Father (Mat. 11:27; John 14:28).

Christ was with God from the very beginning. He is called the *Logos* because by God’s command all things were made. He is the spokesperson for the family of God that currently consists of two. The Prophet Jeremiah wrote the following about the Word:

He has made the earth by His power; He has established the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by His understanding. When He utters *His* voice—*there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens (Jeremiah 51:15-16).

Interestingly, the book of Revelation also describes Christ’s heavenly voice “as the sound of many waters” (Rev. 1:15). The book of Hebrews states that this Word was previously “without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God” (Heb. 7:3). There are many other verses explaining that Christ was the God that delivered Israel—that Spiritual Rock of the Exodus that became the Son of God (1Cor. 10:4). The Messiah even said of Himself “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58). Jesus also prayed to the Father indicating that He was previously second in command of the entire universe:

And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was (John 17:5).

Christ also said, “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is*, the Son of Man who is in heaven” (John 3:13). All of these verses show us that there were two beings working together as God as far back as the Bible takes us. God continues to be two beings that have the same functions, but in a somewhat different context. What was previously the Word that was with God and was God, is now the Son of God. Though we do not fully understand what the relationship was like previously, it is clear that the family of God is one in mindset and purpose; but consists of a hierarchy of two beings at this time—not three.

God’s Right Hand

The New Testament clearly describes the relationship between God the Father and Christ the Son. But the trinity claims that there are three individuals who are all God. The claim is described by theologian Wayne Grudem:

Somehow God’s being is so much greater than ours that within his one undivided being there can be an unfolding into interpersonal relationships, so that there can be three distinct persons (*Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith*, p. 120).

According to this belief, the distinction between the three does not make any one of them above the other. They are thought to be “coequal.” The *Catholic Encyclopedia* attempts to define the equality of this theological triune in this way:

In this Trinity of Persons the Son is begotten of the Father by an eternal generation, and the Holy Spirit proceeds by an eternal procession from the Father and the Son. Yet, notwithstanding this difference as to origin, the Persons are co-eternal and co-equal: all alike are uncreated and omnipotent (<https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15047a.htm#II>, retr. 1/11/2023).

While claiming that all three beings are equal in every way, the trinity must reject the words of Christ who said, “My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28). If three beings equally

existed in heaven then why did John begin his gospel record by indicating that there were two? If there were three beings that are coequal, then Jesus would never have indicated that there was a hierarchy in His relationship to the Father:

I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me (John 5:30).

We are familiar with the term many use when indicating that a person is their “right hand man.” This means that they are instrumental and vitally important, but not the one in charge. Notice what Christ said in this regard to elders, chief priests, and scribes:

Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God (Luke 22:69).

The duality of God, and the hierarchy of the relationship between the Father and Son, was evident long before Christ’s ministry; inspiring King David to compose a prophetic Psalm:

The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool” (Psalm 110:1)

Stephen’s vision just before death confirmed the ordered relationship of God:

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!” (Acts 7:55-56).

These verses indicate that Christ is second in command of all things as God. In this way, “God” is a familial term. This has always been the relationship that He shared (John 17:5). To believe that there are not two, but three Gods, who all share the

same authority is likened to saying that Christ was either mistaken or was not telling the truth.

God and Family

God currently consists of two beings known as the Father and the Son. There is a good reason that these terms were used by Christ. It is the same reason that God designed a human family to have devoted parents who give birth to children. The reason is because God is a family, and He has long been planning to add to His family.

God entered a type of marital relationship with Israel when He gave them terms of His covenant at Mt. Sinai. The nation responded by accepting these terms “All that the LORD has spoken we will do” (Exo. 19:8). This is similar to a man and woman who agree to the terms of fidelity when they marry. Because of their spiritual harlotry, God was forced to divorce most of those people:

Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also (Jeremiah 3:8).

Christ is the “head of the Church” just like “the husband is the head of the wife” (Eph. 5:23). This relationship is a form of engagement where Christ plans on taking the faithful members of His Church as a bride (Isa. 62:5; Rev. 19:7). Jesus referred to Himself as the Bridegroom on several occasions (Mat. 9:15; 25:1-13). The necessary structure for a God-fearing family reflects the fact that the Father plans to adopt many children into the family of God. Paul said of those called:

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15).

This process includes begetting of the Holy Spirit. It is by that spirit people will be able to be born again at the resurrection

of the chosen saints (John 3:3-8). Paul also said we who have the firstfruits of the spirit eagerly wait for the adoption (Rom. 8:23). Not everyone who has the spirit will be chosen. Christ plainly said, “For many are called, but few *are* chosen” (Mat. 22:14). A profound prophecy in Revelation states that, “He who overcomes... I will write on Him the name of My God” (Rev. 3:12). In fact, the process of baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit, faithful behavior to the end, resurrection, and ascension to heaven, was put on display by Christ in order to show us the way into the family of God. It is only through repentance, baptism, begetting of the Holy Spirit, and continual faithful behavior that a believer can eventually be born into the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ plainly told Nicodemus:

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit (John 3:5-8).

If the trinity were true, something that cannot be explained nor understood, then there would be no clear path for others to become a part of God’s family. The trinity is not biblical and it actually attempts to discredit the plan God has revealed throughout the pages of the Bible. It is heretical to claim that God exists in a mysterious way in three persons.

Contrary to that radical theory, the Bible tells us that Christ is coming to gather His faithful bride from the four corners of the earth (Mark 13:27; Rev. 19:7). Those who are chosen will become literal children of God. They will be changed into spirit beings in the same way that Christ was changed. The Apostle John prophesied:

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that

when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1John 3:2).

If we desire to be a true Christian, if we want to be a part of the family of God, a people that will inherit the earth and govern in His Kingdom, if we hope to have eternal life, then we must reject the false doctrine of the trinity. We cannot worship the “spirit of truth,” but we must worship only God the Father and God the Son—in spirit and truth.

The Eternal Church of God offers a variety of books, booklets, articles, audio, and video to help people better understand the Bible. Some of the printed material available includes:

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