

Appendix D

The Trinity: Are there three separate co-eternal Persons in the one God?

The Church,¹ during the time of Constantine and Athanasius in the fourth century A.D., decided to define God as a Trinity of three separate but co-equal and co-eternal Persons. It was, after much debate and division, agreed upon during one of the councils. Various official “creeds” devised since that time include references to this doctrine. Hundreds of statements of faith promote it and countless churches and religious organizations require acceptance of this interpretation of the Deity for membership and/or service. And it’s true that the Bible itself makes reference to Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Father all as God. And sometimes it refers to them simultaneously at particular events, such as the baptism of Jesus. In other cases, words are exchanged between the Father and the Son.² That, in a nutshell, is the reason they arrived at this conclusion (though it was not arrived at without great debate, argument and even bloodshed). The Trinity doctrine, however, was not part of the Jewish legacy from which Christianity arose.

Why? Because the Old Testament declares in no uncertain terms that God is one. The Jews were absolute monotheists and religious Jews are to this day. They know nothing of a Trinity doctrine. And it is, in fact, this very doctrine, by and large, that has kept the Jews from embracing Christianity throughout the centuries. Deuteronomy 6:4 says: “Hear O Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” And in Isaiah, God Himself says to Israel: “Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me. I, even I, am the LORD (Jehovah); and there is no saviour besides Me. It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed...Even from eternity I am He.” And “Thus says the LORD (Jehovah), the King of Israel and his (Israel’s) Redeemer, the LORD (Jehovah) of hosts; ‘I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me...Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none....There is no other God besides

¹ We use the term “Church” loosely here. Never has the true Church been defined by ecclesiastical office holders and self-proclaimed leaders. It is the company of those who trust in Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls and who demonstrate that trust through lives characterized by the fruit of the Spirit.

² Though never between the Spirit and the Father or the Spirit and the Son.

Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me.”³ The Jews cannot fit the concept of three separate Persons into these verses and still maintain their monotheistic flavor or their own intellectual honesty. So they reject the Trinity as untenable in view of what they read in their Scriptures.⁴ In fact, in the April 2009 edition of “Israel Today” magazine, J. Jerries and M. Schneider state, “The biggest problem for Jews as a whole is the Trinity. Jews see it as ‘three gods’ and refer to Exodus 20:3: ‘You shall have no other gods before Me.’ In Islam there is only one god—Allah.” The implication being that Islam is easier for religious Jews to accept than is Christianity and this is also stated in the same article: “...54 percent of the secular believe Christianity is closer to Judaism than Islam, while only 17 percent of the religious share this opinion...” This is telling and substantiates our claim that the Trinity doctrine may be the single biggest impediment to the conversion of Israel over the last two millennia.⁵

“I AM”

It is also stated unequivocally in Exodus 3:14-15 that God has one personal name. He identifies Himself as “I AM,” the root meaning of YHWH, four Hebrew characters vocalized in English as “Yahweh” (or something similar). Note that He does not say “WE ARE.” He tells Moses to say to the people, “‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent Me to you.’ This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations.” Perhaps most significantly, God used this name when He said through the prophet Isaiah: “I, even I, am Yahweh, and there is no Savior besides Me. It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed....so you are My witnesses, and I am God. Even from eternity I am He.”⁶

³ Isaiah 43:10b,11,12a,13a, 44:6,8b, 45:21b

⁴ Remember, the Jews do not have the New Testament scriptures to complicate matters.

⁵ Someone may well say this is God’s design since “blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” But God does not contradict Himself. The God of the Old Testament is the same as the God of the New. But clearly He has allowed this distortion to survive, perhaps because He finds it understandable that man, with his limited knowledge and need to unravel the mysteries of life, would go to great lengths to explain the unexplainable, with good intentions. And perhaps because it has served a useful purpose in the overall setting aside of the Chosen Nation for a time, to bring them to repentance. But it is more than a little doubtful that God was behind the murderous wrangling that went on for years among the “saints” until this doctrine was canonized and all other views were prohibited.

⁶ Isaiah 43:11-13a

But Jesus claimed this name for Himself when He said to the Pharisees, “Before Abraham was, I AM.”⁷ The Jews, recognizing His allusion to deity, picked up stones to kill Him because they said He, being a man, was making Himself equal with God. Even His earthly name “Jesus” is merely the anglicized name for the **one** God incarnate who saves us. Jesus means “Yahweh saves” or “Jehovah saves.” In Hebrew it is pronounced “Yeshua” (Yah-shoo-ah).

The writers of the New Testament themselves equated Jesus with Yahweh. One example: Paul says, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.” (Titus 2:11-13)

“THE WORD”

Besides the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Bible also talks about a Being called “The Word,” referred to in John 1:1 (“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”).⁸ Who was this “Word”? The Church has, for the most part, determined that “the Word” is another name for the “eternal Son of God.” Since the Word “was in the beginning with God and the Word *was* God and the Word *became* flesh,” they insist that the Son was actually eternally existent as the Son, but was called The Word by John. This is a conundrum since the word “son” denotes one who is an offspring or descendant of another, but an “eternal son” by definition has no beginning, so he could not have descended from anyone. Thus the term “Son” in this context is meaningless—unless we use the word strictly as a metaphor to connote an eternal diad with the “Son” projecting from the Father as a sort of lesser deity; an emanation if you will, not *literally* a son. This was one of the arguments that the debaters of the early centuries wrestled

⁷ John 8:58

⁸ Scripture does *not* say, “In the beginning was the *Son* and the Son was with God and the Son was God” and “the Son became flesh and dwelt among us,” even though this is what the Trinity doctrine teaches.

with.⁹ Was the Son eternal, and if so, was He just an emanation, or was He a separate person? They finally decided He was a separate person, but this did not address the issue of literal sonship. Nevertheless, they settled on this doctrine of the three-Person godhead or Trinity as the best explanation for what was basically incomprehensible to them. And then they pretty much made that the linchpin of orthodoxy.

The Church over the centuries has hung onto this bequest from the past and now no one dares question it, as to do so brings down the wrath of all “the powers that be” and brings up far too many questions no one can or dares to answer. And, consistent with other forms of esoterica, anyone who does not wholeheartedly subscribe to this doctrine of eternal Sonship and a three-Person godhead cannot serve in any capacity in the churches and is viewed as threat or a renegade, if not an outright heretic. Virtually all statements of faith¹⁰ subscribe to this tenet and woe to the man who dares part company with the masses of the faithful.

Well, I’m sure you can tell we are about to upset the apple cart here. Or at least we’re going to dump out the apples and look them over.

ANOTHER VIEW OF “THE WORD”

The Word, from our perspective, was not an “eternal Son” as modern theologians attest, nor a Son “begotten of His Father before all worlds” (and then re-begotten in Mary) as the Nicene Council declared, but rather the *manifestation* of God,¹¹ by which He appeared to the created order prior to the incarnation of God in Christ. This would be the “manifest presence” then of the invisible God. (These appearances are called theophanies and there are many of them in the Old

⁹ Largely because they were not willing to accept it as a mystery, the way Paul and the apostles did. They did not try to explain it, which may be why, at times, it all seems a little like spaghetti in the New Testament.

¹⁰ Except in specifically “oneness” churches, such as United Pentecostal.

¹¹ Scripture does not ever define this term for us. Jews and Christians have historically defined the word in significantly different ways. That doesn’t mean any of them are accurate. And it doesn’t really matter, because it is, in one sense a mystery. You could define the Bible itself as a theophany: a manifestation of God’s heart and mind.

Testament Scriptures. See examples below.¹²⁾ Since God is pure Spirit and dwells in unapproachable light, He must make Himself visible in some form so that His creatures can relate to Him, or communicate with Him “face to face.”¹³ In a final and permanent theophany, then—one that astounded even the angels—God became manifest in humanity and dwelt among us. John says this very thing in John 1:14: “The Word became flesh and *tabernacled* among us.” This is a clear reference to the fact that the Shekinah glory that appeared in the Old Testament tabernacle foreshadowed the final manifestation of God when He Himself would tabernacle with men through the incarnate Son and would make their hearts His temple via the Holy Spirit. Amazing.

Note that Scripture does not say the Son became flesh. The term “Son” defines *how* the *Word* became flesh. God joined Himself biologically to the human race¹⁴ by overshadowing Mary in the privacy of her own womb, and whatever that “overshadowing” consisted of, it resulted in the birth of the one and only Son of God at a specific point in time.¹⁵ “Today I have begotten Thee.”¹⁶ This is recorded in Luke 1:26-35. It is for this reason that the holy offspring will be called the Son of God.

The “Son” did not exist as the Son, then, before the incarnation (except in the foreknowledge and transcendent “nowness” of God), but as the Word. *Nor did the Father exist as the Father*, except in a prophetic or typological sense. In fact, the word “Father” is used of God only six times in the entire Old Testament and at least one of those times refers directly to the incarnation of Jesus

¹²For example, the angel of the Lord, Melchizedek, the burning bush, the pillar of fire, the pillar of cloud, the Shekinah glory.

¹³The “Word” is the term the Scriptures use for this “God made visible” or “God manifest,” and appropriately so since the Word is the vehicle through which God communicates to men and through which He impacts the creation.

¹⁴ Ps.2:7 says: “Let me tell of the decree: Yahweh said to me, ‘You are My son, I have fathered you this day’” (Tanakh). By using the term “biologically,” we do not mean that God had carnal sex with Mary. We are talking about the fact that God merged His deity with humanity in some mysterious way that involved supplying half the genes in the incarnation. We know Mary supplied the other half because legally speaking, Jewishness is passed through the mother and Jesus was Jewish, of the tribe of Judah. As Paul said, “Great is the mystery of godliness.”

¹⁵ Luke 1:35: “...‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.’”

¹⁶ Heb. 1:5

(who will, in fact, Himself be called “the eternal Father.”)¹⁷ Others refer to the nation of Israel, a type of the Church, spiritual Israel. That is but once in every 222 pages in my Bible. Contrast that with the New Testament, where “Father” is used 396 times, or an average of once in every one and-a-half pages. That is an astounding difference and one that illustrates the radical transformation in the Fatherhood of God toward individual believers in the New Covenant. Prior to the incarnation, God was primarily experienced as the Creator, the Lord, the Supreme Being, the Master, the Shepherd, and the Savior and Redeemer of Israel. The personal Father/Son relationship, then, is *also* uniquely a product of the incarnation, and only via our identification with Christ may we participate in this relationship, addressing God as Father. Without Christ and our entrance into Him by faith, we cannot be the adopted sons and daughters of God.¹⁸

THE “SON OF GOD”

The Bible clearly teaches that the term “Son of God,” when used of Jesus, refers specifically to the Virgin Birth when God overshadowed Mary and she conceived a child. It explains the process God used to bring *Himself*, as our Messiah, into the world as the Second Adam. This is precisely what the New Testament teaches in Matthew 1:20-23: An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.’ Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which translated means, ‘God with us.’” This New Testament verse in Matthew is quoting from the Old Testament book of Isaiah (7:14), which makes the same statement with equal clarity.

¹⁷ Ps. 2:7, Isaiah 9:6

¹⁸ Jesus told the Pharisees that their father was Satan because they did not believe in Him and thus could not enter this relationship. (John 8:24-59, especially v. 44) Old Testament references to God as Father of Israel were predicated on Israel’s selection as God’s chosen nation, a type of the Church, and on the future coming of Christ and His death, burial and resurrection which would make such sonship authentic.

Since God is an omnipresent Spirit (invisible) dwelling in unapproachable light, He must have the means or capacity to manifest or localize Himself in any time or place (or multiple places) or form(s) when necessary to interact with His creation and carry out His own purposes. And we see that He did that many times in the Old Testament (pillar of fire, pillar of cloud, burning bush, angel of the Lord, Melchizedek possibly, the Shekinah glory). Eventually, in the fullness of time, this capacity of God to manifest Himself was clothed in and literally joined to human flesh. Why? Why not simply continue manifesting Himself in all the various ways He had before? Because God gained rights to a do-over when Satan lied to the woman in the Garden. He cheated. So, in the *ultimate* theophany as the Second Adam,¹⁹ God permanently wedded Himself to His own creation, that He might become our Benefactor and Redeemer after undergoing the test of His love that resulted in the journey to the cross. (See Theory #4 for a thorough discussion of this.)

This “God with us,” called Jesus, *is* the biblical Messiah, precisely as the Old Testament describes in Isaiah 43:11. Jesus is *God* birthed into human flesh. As the unfallen Second Adam, He was tested, lived a sinless life, and then died on a cross to pay the penalty for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day. He purchased us from the camp of Satan and His glorified body dwells now in heaven, a permanent visible representative of the invisible God, the Father of Lights, where He awaits our arrival. He is forever localized²⁰ and made manifest for our benefit. Otherwise we could not fellowship with God in eternity. Certainly not with any sense of likeness or identification, for God “is a Spirit (the *Holy* Spirit), whom no man has seen nor can see.” Thus the Invisible became Visible and the Unapproachable became Approachable. Jesus “is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”²¹

This one Scripture verse says it all:

¹⁹ A theological term meaning an appearance of God.

²⁰ This does not mean that He ceased to be omnipresent. God can appear in multiple forms at one time, at the same time that He is also present everywhere via His Spirit.

²¹ Colossians 1:15

“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful (Incomprehensible), Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”²² Or in the Septuagint: “For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, whose government is upon his shoulder; and his name is called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty One, Potentate, Prince of Peace, Father of the age to come.” (LXX, Alexandrian text; cf NASB).²³ This one verse alone makes it clear that God is one Person, despite the mystery of His appearing simultaneously in multiple forms and states. Otherwise, based on Isaiah 9:6, we have two eternal Fathers, Jesus (the son who is called the Eternal Father) and Yahweh. We also have two sons, the eternal Son and Son who was begotten “this day.”

It is unfortunate that the “Church” decided to explain this phenomenon of the incarnation by describing God as three separate, co-eternal and co-equal Persons—a Trinity or Tri-Unity. This doctrine was intended to *explain* or define the mystery of godliness. But since when does three equal one? In actual fact, the Trinity doctrine merely compounds the problem, creating another layer of mystery on top of the already naturally mysterious incarnation,²⁴ and sounding suspiciously similar to polytheism. So, perhaps to obscure this failure of the “fathers” to explain the *real* mystery, we are prohibited from challenging their doctrine at the risk of “losing our salvation” or being excommunicated as heretics. So we don’t talk about it. We aren’t *allowed* to question it and still maintain our claim to orthodoxy.

Well, we think it’s high time we talk about it, don’t you? Sitting here in the dark on one of the most critical issues of faith is, at best, unwise. And though there is a definite element of mystery in the incarnation, it is not as *paradoxical* as the Trinity doctrine would have it.²⁵

²² Isaiah 9:6

²³ As a reminder, the Septuagint from which these verses are quoted, was the Scripture of the early Church. It’s what they used in the synagogues and it’s what they are quoting most of the time in the New Testament.

²⁴ Paul uses the word “mystery” to describe the incarnation, not the “Trinity.” (1 Tim.3:16) The Trinity wasn’t even a doctrine in Paul’s day.

²⁵ Far from making the “mystery of godliness” more comprehensible, the Trinity doctrine has obscured it even more and has distorted the reality of God’s personal effort to save us.

SO LET'S LOOK AT IT

We see in Scripture that there are three who are called God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Well, four if we include the Word.) Sometimes, as we said earlier, they interact with each other or talk to each other and sometimes they appear simultaneously in different forms, such as at the baptism of Jesus.

What gives? Sounds like multiple persons to me!

But let's look at the Shema²⁶ again: "Hear O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"²⁷

So what does that mean? One *what*? Given the multiple references for God, are we to conclude that the term "God" is a word describing a "one of plurality," like one team? One committee? One group? One consortium? One substance? One nature? Maybe "god" *is* a class of beings, and if so, there could be any number of "persons" in the one God-class. God even refers to *men* as gods in Ps. 82:6 when He says, "I said, 'You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High.'" So maybe we're being too picky about this god-thing. Maybe rather than describing a *particular* Being, "God" just describes a divine race or the highest form of life. Those that are made of god-stuff. Kind of like a pie. No matter how many slices you make, they are all still pie.

And this is how some actually view it: Divinity is in all of us. We are all part of the divine essence or consciousness. We can merge with the divine now and when we die we will re-enter the divine cosmic Self. We just need to find the god-within as a race and we'll solve all the problems that humanity is heir to. The Age of Enlightenment is nearly upon us!

BUT IS THERE A BETTER EXPLANATION?

We think so.

Let's look at the Shema again: "Hear O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" (Deut.6:4)

Sounds pretty simple. Almost generic. But let's look a little deeper.

²⁶ Jewish confession of faith.

²⁷ Deut. 6:4

Because it really says something quite specific.

A little history here. Because the Jews have always had such respect for the personal name of God,²⁸ they refrained from letting it pass their lips. So, as extra insurance, they would not *write* this name either, and when they came upon it in the sacred texts, they would render it G–D. Consequently, Christian Bible publishers have followed suit, but instead of using G–D, they use a small caps form of Lord (LORD) whenever Yahweh appears in the text. So if we were to translate Deut. 6:4 literally, it would actually say: “Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our Elohim (God), Yahweh is one!” The one and only God. The one and only Savior. None before and none after.

Now we see that God is being very pointed here. He is saying that He Himself, Yahweh, is one God. He is not a multiplicity of Gods or gods. He is not big-God, little-god. He is one Person, despite the use of the plural “Elohim.” Why didn’t He say “Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our El” (singular)? Because in Hebrew, there is such a thing as a plural of majesty. Elohim is a plural of majesty, similar to when an editorial writer uses the term “we” instead of “I” to express his views.

But...if God is one, how then do you explain Jesus’ comment in the Garden, when He says, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt,” (Matt.26:39) clearly indicating that Jesus had a will different from that of His Father? If they are one person, wouldn’t they have one and only one will? It would seem so.

This is where it gets sticky. Jesus was God manifested in flesh—*joined* to flesh—not just wearing flesh as in a suit of clothes, although Paul seems to describe it that way in Phil. 2:6-8: “...although He existed in the form of God...[He] emptied Himself...being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death...”). It is clear from the verse in Matt. 26:39 quoted above that Jesus’ humanity was real

²⁸ The third commandment states: “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.” (Deut. 20:7)

and that He was in every sense the Second Adam, bound to undergo the trials of “the do-over” as a man with a human will and a human body that was subject to pain and suffering. (See Theory #4 for more on the “do-over.”) He would not float above it on some sort of celestial cloud of heavenly oblivion. Nor would His deity carry Him through this trial with ease, since as Paul said, He emptied Himself, laid aside His heavenly privileges and powers, to undergo this test and trial as a man. He in fact accomplished the redemption *as a man*, “the man Christ Jesus.” Since God cannot die, the divine part of Him separated from His body just prior to His death, at which point He cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken (left) Me?” Up to that point, the Father had been with Him and in Him. Their communion had been constant and intimate, their unity unbroken, because God is one. But when God the Father withdrew, there was only man left, for only man can die. God is immortal. Thus in every way, Jesus accomplished the redemption as the Second Adam.

But let’s look at this from another angle: How many people am I?

If I say that I am made in the image of God and that I am a tripartite being, made up of spirit, soul and body, does that make me three *people*? Or am I one person operating (manifesting myself) in three arenas simultaneously, which sometimes conflict or disagree with each other?

For example:

- 1) My body (flesh) may desire, even demand, chocolate, but my will may overrule it because a higher law (my mind) reminds me I don’t want to gain weight.
- 2) My mind (perceptions) may produce fearful emotions in response to a threatening stimulus, but I can choose with my will to give that perception an interpretation or explanation that will alleviate the fear.
- 3) My soul (heart) may crave diversion, but my spirit may bring it under subjection to the will of God.

All of these *manifestations* or expressions of my “self” can be operating during any particular event and can be having differing responses entirely. But they are all me, and I am one person. And I can even be “someplace else” in my mind or heart, basking on a beach on a far away island, while my body sits in a rainy shelter waiting for a bus.

In one sense, you could say that my **spirit** has a will (a “decider” that can choose to please God); *and* my spirit has a “mind” (a way of perceiving reality from God’s perspective²⁹); and my spirit has “emotions” (the fruit of the Spirit). And my **soul** has a will of its own (desires), a mind (a way of perceiving), and emotions (feelings). And my **body** has a will of its own (appetites or physical drives), a mind or way of perceiving (senses), and a soul or emotions (sensations, physical feelings). And I can let any one of them, my spirit, soul or body, be in charge at any particular time. It’s up to me. Scripture calls me to have my spirit be in control.³⁰ But I may not if I’m immature, or rebellious, or sufficiently driven by forces within or outside myself. I may let my body be in control at times. I can even feel split or conflicted at times, as if I am *actually* two people with two completely separate wills duking it out inside me. And I can, in fact, actually split off parts of my self and lock them in a room in my mind and never let them out.

In a similar way perhaps, God is one Person, operating in three manifestations or expressions simultaneously, which Scripture calls the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father could be said to correspond to the will or mind (or perhaps the spirit) of man. The Holy Spirit could be said to correspond to the emotions or heart (or soul) of man. And the Son could be said to correspond to the flesh (physical body and appetites) of man. (This is not a doctrine, but simply an illustration and an over-simplification at that. You might come up with a different way of allocating the roles. My husband prefers to see the Holy Spirit as the spirit. It’s really okay).

²⁹ i.e., the mind of Christ

³⁰ Romans 8:12-14 says, “So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God.”

Jesus, then, as God manifested in the flesh, had to subject Himself to a higher law (“the Father is greater than I”) and obey the will of the Father even if He didn’t *want to* in His flesh. In the same way, our flesh, or appetites, must bow to the higher rule of the spirit-controlled will or the whole life will run amok. The Holy Spirit is said to be a comforter, a counselor, who speaks to our hearts with conviction, warning, encouragement, and wisdom. He is a picture of the soul or heart of man. He aligns Himself with the Father’s will, just as *our* emotions are governed by the perceptions/conclusions/beliefs of our mind or spirit.³¹ And the Father is a picture of our spirit, under which every other part of us must be brought into submission. This perhaps explains Scripture’s insistence that we “think on these things: things which are good, noble, etc.” Because what we think/believe, and think about, governs everything else: how we feel (emotionally and in large part physically), how we act, what our priorities are, our decisions, and so on.

One could suggest that each of these manifestations of God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) then, has its own individual will, mind, and emotions, just as my flesh, soul and spirit do.³² But still that does not make them three People any more than it makes *me* three people. My flesh has desires of its own apart from my soul and spirit and often contrary to them. It has a will and sometimes is determined to exert it. And it has a way of viewing things or understanding what it sees, hears and feels. But it must be brought under the control of the spirit—the higher self so to speak.

In reality though, it was the incarnation and only the incarnation (the union of God with humanity) that produced this appearance of multiple wills. Jesus, the man, had a human will that had to be brought into submission to the Father’s will. The divine part of Jesus was actually not in conflict with the Father’s will, because He *was* the Father! (Again, see Is. 9:6.) But the flesh had to be subjected.

³¹ Our emotions derive from our perceptions/beliefs as discussed in earlier theories.

³² This can most readily be seen in Jesus’ agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He sweated drops of blood in His battle to surrender to the will of the Father. He finally said, “Not My will, but Thine be done.”

Jesus, then, is a picture of our flesh, which we have to submit to the God.³³ He was not, however, a second God or a separate Person in the Godhead. He is God *manifested* in flesh via the incarnation³⁴ and was the Second Adam. In that sense only is He a separate Person.

The fact that we are made in God's image, then, is most fully demonstrated in the incarnation and redemption where we literally see God's spirit, soul and "body" (a body designed by God for God) operating ultimately in complete harmony.³⁵ We are spirit, soul and body and each respective part is able to express its own unique feelings, desires, perceptions and will. The goal of sanctification is that all of our "parts" would learn to conduct themselves in perfect agreement in submission to the will of the Father just as Jesus, the man, did. "He learned obedience through the things that He suffered." (Heb. 5:8)

We and God are different beings though we share His image. *We* are naturally localized, finite, and limited by our physical creation. God, however, is omnipresent and eternal and not limited to a specific locality. Therefore, in order to "appear" to men, He is required to take on a *form* that is localized. But that does not mean He is no longer omnipresent or that He is now limited.³⁶

That said, it is clear that God was permanently changed by the Redemption story.³⁷ This is why Jesus could say, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." When you're looking at Jesus, you're looking into the eyes of the eternal "I AM." And He's looking back at you through the eyes

³³ Jesus said in John 5:19: "the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."

³⁴ Not as a suit of clothes. See our Theory #4.

³⁵ In the Garden of Gethsemane, we see Jesus struggling with his human will, but ultimately submitting that will to the Father's will. "Not my will, but Thine be done."

³⁶ My favorite illustration for God is the sun. The sun is huge, powerful, formidable, and is an unapproachable light. That light, which would destroy anyone who came near it, emanates out in a way that fills all of the earth with its life-giving effects, just like the Holy Spirit. Warm, nourishing light that is shed on everyone equally. But if I take a magnifying glass (representing the incarnation) and focus that light on a piece of paper, it will burn a hole in it, or I can write my name on it. That localized light is a picture of Jesus and the magnifying glass represents the mechanism of the incarnation; God impacting the physical world with His own physical presence.

³⁷ When God says "I change not," He is referring specifically to His character and nature, because we have many examples of Him changing His mind, changing His course, changing His requirements, manifesting in different ways, speaking in different ways, etc.

of His Son. The gospel story tell us how God played His cards in order to win back His creation. He became a Man by having a literal Son, Jesus, the Second Adam, in order that He might die for our sins and cleanse our hearts for the purpose of uniting our spirits to His Spirit, installing His divinity in us. Scripture says “when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.” (1John 3:2) God has mingled Himself with His creation and we who are being saved are being mingled with Deity.³⁸ He *lives* in us, we partake of His nature, and we will be glorified with Him, and will be *like* Him. In a sense, God is creating a new race of beings who will be raised up to a status far above that of natural man. Above the angels. To rule and reign with Him. What a high calling! What a privilege! We are so dimly aware of what lies in store for those who trust in Him. God, help us to see our destiny and reach for it with all our hearts.

RAMIFICATIONS OF THE TRINITY DOCTRINE

There are several unintended consequences of the Trinity Doctrine. Here are a few of them:

1. Confusion: Some people don't struggle with this, but others do. They don't know with whom it is that they are supposed to have a personal relationship or pray to. In order to enter the kingdom of God, one must have a childlike conversion in which one develops a personal relationship with the one God. The devil is behind this confusion, doing everything in his power to prevent individuals from having a one-on-one relationship with the one true God.
2. Division and Death: The Trinity doctrine has produced division, hatred, persecution and martyrdom in the Church from at least the third century. Men actually killed each other, in no small numbers, over this issue.
3. Creedalism: After Augustine and Athanasius, the Church hardened in its Trinitarian positions. Christianity became creedal in nature and no longer primarily relational and experiential.
4. Polytheism: The Trinity doctrine is clearly polytheistic (promoting the idea of three equal Persons) despite orthodoxy's insistence to the contrary. Those who do not hold to this

³⁸ Hebrews 6:4: “For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit...”

doctrine are not fooled by the irrational and contradictory statements of Trinitarians. This includes the Jews, who have been kept out of the Church because they cannot accept the idea of three co-eternal and co-equal Persons in the godhead.

5. Theological abstraction: In an attempt to explain the unexplainable, “the mystery of godliness,” the Trinity doctrine further confuses and complicates Christianity, making it inaccessible to childlike minds. Thus the need for seminaries, bible colleges and formal teachers, none of which were needed prior to the introduction of this doctrine.

CONCLUSION

It may be that the entire purpose of the Trinity doctrine is to keep Israel blinded to the identity of Jesus until the fullness of the Gentiles has been brought in. It has certainly been effective on that score. And perhaps God has allowed it for that reason. Consequently we do not believe that God will keep people out of heaven because they have acquiesced to this doctrine or even embraced it wholeheartedly. Christianity is, above all, a relational faith, and how we respond to God is primary. Do we treat Him like He deserves to be treated: as Numero-Uno? Do we repent when we disobey and offend Him? Do we walk in the light, confessing our sins? Do we refuse to deny Him even at the risk of losing friends, jobs, reputation, life? Do we know that we are incapable of meriting heaven and walk in grateful obedience? Do we spend time with Him, talk to Him, share our most intimate thoughts with Him? Have we invited Him to be Lord of our life? Salvation is a betrothal, the Holy Spirit is like an engagement ring, and God will look at our lives to see if they reflect that commitment. There will be no harlot Bride for Jesus, but only a spotless virgin made clean by the blood and the white garments of her Messiah.