

Lamb's Book | Appendix A | Monotheism vs Tritheism - Three Gods in One

Author: Larry W. Wilson

Trinity

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is a separate, distinct, coeternal member of Deity — The Trinity. Jesus is not the Father and the Father is not Jesus. Both deities are separate persons having separate wills. Jesus said, **“For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.”** (John 6:38) Jesus and the Father are equals in substance. The Father calls Jesus, “God.” **“But about the Son He [the Father] says, ‘Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God [Jesus], your God [the Father], has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.’ He also says, ‘In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.’ ”** (Hebrews 1:8-11, insertions mine)

The apostle Paul clearly equates and separates the Deity of Jesus from the Deity of the Father: **“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross! Therefore God [the Father] exalted Him [Jesus] to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in Heaven and on Earth and under the Earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** (Philippians 2:5-11, insertions mine)

By definition, if you can accept the idea that the Father is not Jesus and both persons are Deity you are a polytheist. Do not be alarmed. The Bible teaches tritheism. The Bible teaches there are three and only three Gods who are united in love. All other gods are false. (Exodus 20:3; Isaiah 44:6) In the Old Testament, the three Gods seem to be one God. Then, in the New Testament we begin to see there are three Gods. Finally, in the book of Revelation we can confirm there are three separate, distinct, coeternal Gods. Because the three Gods are so closely united, they appear as one God. Because Jesus is the Word, the voice of God, He often uses a singular voice because they are one in purpose, plan, and action. Honoring one of them is the same as worshiping all three. (John 5:22,23; Matthew 12:31,32; Matthew 28:19)

The Bible teaches the Holy Spirit is a God. He is a separate, distinct, coeternal member of Deity. The Holy Spirit has a will of His own. The Holy Spirit is not the Father or Jesus. The Holy Spirit can hear and speak on His own. He is equal with the Father and Jesus in substance. There has been a great deal of controversy over the nature of the Godhead and I hope this study will resolve some difficult questions.

Three Gods in One

Three separate members of Deity functioning as one God can be compared to a husband and wife (two separate individuals) functioning as one flesh. (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:6) Many Christians believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit without thinking through what they really believe. Many Christians reject tritheism (three Gods) without first considering what they are rejecting. They believe the Bible teaches monotheism, that is, there is one God who manifests Himself as three persons. Therefore, they reason that if a person worships Jesus or the Holy Spirit, he is actually worshiping the Father because the Father is in Jesus and the Father is in the Holy Spirit and all together, these three persons are the Father. The question of whether there are three separate coeternal Gods or one God manifesting Himself as one person dates back to the beginning of the Christian church.

The Nature of Jesus in Church History

During Christ's ministry on Earth, the Pharisees found Jesus' teachings to be blasphemous because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and this logically made Him an equal with God. (See John 5:18.) The Pharisees were incensed because Judaism is strictly a "one God" religion. Naturally, Judaism rejects the possibility of three separate coeternal Gods and Judaism also rejects the possibility of a Godhead where one God manifests Himself as three persons. Therefore, Jesus seriously challenged Israel's monotheistic tradition when he began His miracle working ministry in A.D. 27.

The first converts to Christ's teachings were Jews (His disciples). During His ministry, the number of Jewish believers grew, but still remained a small percentage of the population. Then, a few days after His ascension, 3,000 Jews were baptized into Christ at Pentecost. (Acts 2) As the number of Jewish converts swelled, they became divided over the nature of Jesus. Some Jewish converts believed that Jesus was a separate God, separate and distinct from the Father. Others believed that God created Jesus, and still others believed that Jesus was an incarnation of the Father. Years later, after Paul converted to Christianity, Gentiles joined the Christian Church in increasing numbers and seeds of a stubborn controversy began to sprout. Gentiles generally came from polytheistic backgrounds and arguments between monotheistic biased Jews and polytheistic biased Gentiles began over the nature of Jesus and the Godhead. The core of their argument was whether Christians should be monotheistic or tritheistic.

Conflict over the nature of Jesus and the Godhead roiled the church for several centuries and many ideas and divisions followed. During the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., the church at Rome gained religious and political powers. Once the Catholic church held sufficient standing within the Holy Roman Empire, the church moved to "forever settle and end" the argument over the nature of Jesus and the Godhead. The Eleventh Synod of Toledo (in Spain) in A.D. 675 formally declared the Church's position on the Trinity. In brief, church leaders said: "We confess and we believe that the holy and indescribable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one only God in His nature, a single substance, a single nature, a single majesty and power. . . . The three are

one, as a nature, that is, not as person. Nevertheless, these three persons are not to be considered separable, since we believe that no one of them existed or at any time effected anything before the other, after the other, or without the other.” (Source: Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J., Catholic Doctrine on the Holy Trinity)

With this declaration, the Roman Catholic Church modified the strict monotheism of the Jews. Abbot Joachim (1135-1202) was an influential monk who promoted the idea that the Trinity was made up of three separate, distinct Gods. Because Joachim was widely respected as a priest, his views gained some traction. After his death, the church silenced Joachim’s teaching during the Fourth Lateran Council (1251). The council affirmed that there is one God, manifested in the Bible as three persons. Nearly 200 years later, at the huge Council of Florence (1445), the church reaffirmed monotheism: The Trinity is One God who manifests Himself as three persons. Like the Jews, the Church maintained there was one God, but He manifested Himself as three persons. This position remains unchanged and many Protestant Churches embrace this understanding today.

Conflicts between Bible Texts

Sometimes, the Bible presents a topic that seems to have opposing properties. For example, the Bible indicates in one place that Hell will burn forever and in another place, that Hell will not burn forever. When the Bible presents an *apparent conflict*, a controversy can occur because people will typically sample *some* of the evidence and reach a premature conclusion. Human nature loves to magnify what it wants to believe and diminish the importance of what it does not understand or want to believe. The doctrine of the Godhead has been controversial for centuries because the Bible *appears* to present conflicting things on this topic. However, to seekers of truth, an *apparent conflict* in the Bible is an invitation for careful and thorough study because mature Christians know there is no internal conflict within God’s Word. The Godhead is true and changeless and the Word of God accurately reflects their character. Therefore, an *apparent conflict* in the Bible means there is a lofty solution that, when found, will harmoniously encompass all the apparent conflicts. *The Bible has to make sense just as it reads or it cannot speak for itself.* With this premise in mind, please consider the following seven issues:

1. If the Catholic position on the Trinity, “one God manifesting Himself as three persons” is valid, how can one God have two wills? Did Jesus petition another manifestation of Himself in the Garden? “**Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.**” (Luke 22:42, italics mine)
2. Did the Father send a manifestation of Himself to Earth or did He send another Deity who had a will of His own, a Deity who was separate and distinct from Himself? Jesus told the Jews, “**For I have come down from Heaven not to do My will but to do the will of Him who sent Me.**” (John 6:38, italics mine)
3. Did the Father speak about His love for Himself when Jesus was baptized or did the Father speak about His love for another member of Deity? “**Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: ‘This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!’**” (Mark 9:7, italics mine)
4. During His final moments on the cross, did Jesus cry out to another manifestation of

Himself with a question? **“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ – which means, ‘My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?’ ”** (Mark 15:34, insertion mine)

5. Paul said that God the Father raised Jesus from the dead. Did the Father raise up a manifestation of Himself or did the Father restore life to a member of Deity who willingly gave up His eternal life so that sinners could have it? **“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead.)”** (Galatians 1:1, italics mine)
6. Jesus says that He was once dead and is now alive forever more. (Revelation 1:18) If Jesus is a separate member of Deity who willingly gave up His eternal life so that sinners could have it, the price of our redemption exceeds calculation. On the other hand, if Jesus is a mere manifestation of the Father, God’s sacrifice for our sins amounts to just suffering. Said another way, if the penalty for sin is death, God did not pay the penalty for our sins because God Himself could not die (cease to exist) on the cross and then resurrect Himself.
7. Finally, if there is one God who manifests Himself as three persons, why did the Father search through the whole universe only to determine that another manifestation of Himself (Jesus) was worthy to receive the book sealed with [seven seals](#)? (See Revelation 5.) This prophetic story highlights the core issue between the doctrine of monotheism (one God) and tritheism (three Gods). If the Father found Himself worthy to take the book sealed with [seven seals](#), what is the point of His search of the universe only to give Himself the book which He wrote? If monotheism is true and there is only one God, then Revelation 5 becomes a divine sham and we know this is not possible! **“Let God be true and every man a liar.”** (Romans 3:4) God is honest and always above any hint of reproach.

When considering the previous seven issues, the idea of one God manifesting Himself as three persons creates many logical and textual problems for which there are no solutions. *The greatest problem I have with Jewish monotheism and the Catholic Church’s modification of that monotheism is that the Bible is put into a position where it cannot be understood just as it reads.*

If a Bible student is willing to consider the idea that the Godhead (the Trinity) is made up of three separate Gods who are united as one Deity, serving creation as one God in purpose, plan, and action, the entire Bible will make perfect sense *just as it reads*. When people reach or support conclusions built on religious bias, insufficient samples, inadequate knowledge, or maligned opinions, these conclusions create many insurmountable problems and questions resulting in confusion and more division.

What Difference Does One God or Three Gods Make?

If the Godhead functions as one in purpose, plan and action, what difference does it ultimately make if there is one God or three separate Gods? Let me emphasize why I believe this topic is important by listing four reasons:

First, when people know the truth about the Godhead, the Bible will make sense, *just as it*

reads. This is extremely important. *Every truth is a stepping stone for understanding greater truth.* For example, Paul says the Father is **“King of kings and Lord of lords.”** (1 Timothy 6:15) However, when Jesus appears at the Second Coming, John saw Jesus wearing the title, **“King of kings and Lord of lords.”** (Revelation 19:16) Can the Father and the Son be the same person or is there more to the story? Chapter 5 of this book reveals that Jesus was found worthy in 1798 to receive sovereign power from the Father and to take over God’s throne. In essence, the Father gave His throne and power to Jesus and this is how Jesus became “King of kings and Lord of lords.” Paul tells us that once Jesus has accomplished everything that needs to be done, Jesus will return the sovereign power and throne to the Father. (1 Corinthians 15:25-28) This means the Father has chosen to end the sin problem with a profound revelation. At the end of sin’s drama, the Father will reveal that Jesus is His equal in every way even though Jesus will not sit on the throne throughout eternity! (For further study on this topic, please see Prophecies 3 and 6 in my book, *Jesus’ Final Victory.*)

There is a second reason why a proper understanding of the Godhead is important. The behavior of three separate but equal deities is defining. Three separate Gods living in perfect harmony defines what love is and is not to all observers. Every moment, they live and function according to the laws of love, thus their lives are a comprehensive demonstration, a living laboratory for all creation to study.

There is a third reason why a proper understanding of the Godhead is important. If we understand that Jesus is Deity, a separate, distinct coeternal member of the Godhead, then the enormous price which our salvation required is shocking. Think about this: A coeternal member of the Godhead was willing to cease to exist forever so that we might have His eternal life. Because Jesus was willing to forfeit His life for sinners and was willing to fulfill the Father’s will perfectly for our salvation, the Father, by His own authority, raised Jesus from the dead so that He could later exalt Jesus as His equal! This is important to know because the character of Jesus perfectly mirrors the character of the Father. This is why Jesus said, **“Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”** (John 14:9)

There is a fourth reason for properly understanding the nature of the Godhead. The presence of three independent members of Deity and an expanding universe of created beings having free will requires a very wise government. Three Gods and billions of people having the power of choice could not harmoniously live together without a government based on love. This is why monotheism is a deficient doctrine. If there is only one God as Judaism claims or one God having three manifestations as Catholicism claims, then love becomes a doctrine (or a theory) instead of a living demonstration. If God does not have to live and love as His subjects do, then love becomes whatever God determines love will be. When there is tritheism, the Godhead is not in a position to make up what love will or will not be. When three equals have to live and function as one God, the universe has the privilege of seeing love demonstrated!

If Lucifer and his followers had to wait for “a manifestation of God” to die on the cross in A.D. 30 to see what love is, their complaints against God before the Earth was created could be justified. If there is only one God, there is no example of love to emulate and no definition of love other than what God says. Conversely, if there are three distinct, separate, coeternal members of the Godhead who have their own wills, their daily submission to each other is a

divine example which created beings can study and emulate throughout eternity. *God never asks His children to do or experience something that He has not first experienced.*

The Deity of Jesus

Now that we have briefly examined some church history and mildly challenged two forms of monotheism, we need to dig a little deeper into the Bible to see if Jesus is in fact, a coeternal, separate, and distinct Deity independent of the Father. We need to know if the Bible teaches polytheism at a minimum and tritheism as a maximum. Please examine the following passages and consider my response to each one:

Psalms 45:7 “[The Father said to the Son,] **You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.**” (Paul repeats Psalms 45:7 in his letter to Jewish believers to affirm that Jesus is a God who was set above His companions. At a point in time, God the Father elevated Jesus above the angels. See Hebrews 1:8-11.)

Comment: This verse, twice repeated in Scripture, confuses many Christians because they either reject or do not know that Jesus once lived among the angels as one of them. Before coming to Earth, Michael was the archangel. For the purpose of discussion, consider this: Before Jesus lived on Earth in the form of a man, Jesus lived in Heaven in the form of an angel. Similarly, many people did not know that Jesus was God when He was on Earth and many of the angels did not, at first, know that Michael was God. (For further discussion on this issue, please see Chapters 1-3 in my book, *Jesus: The Alpha and The Omega* and Prophecy 12 in my book, *Jesus' Final Victory*.) When sin occurred on Earth, Michael offered to give His eternal life for sinners and the Father responded with the words written in Psalms 45:7. The Father openly declared Michael to be “God” before the angels and this is how Michael was elevated above His companions. This is one of the wonderful things about the Godhead. They do not lord their awesome powers over their subjects. Love does not permit it! Returning to the reason for discussing this text, this text indicates polytheism, which is one member of Deity speaking to another member of Deity, calling Him, “God.”

Philippians 2:6, Colossians 2:9 “[Jesus] **Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped . . . For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.**”

Comment: Because Jewish converts to Christianity often stumbled and struggled with the Deity of Jesus, Paul was forced to confront the monotheism of Judaism regularly. Wishing to clear the air on this topic, Paul wrote to the churches in Philippi and Colossae saying, (a) Jesus was “God in His very nature” and (b) “in Christ’s body, all the fullness of Deity lives.” Paul was adamant that Jesus is Deity like the Father. Jesus also said that He should be honored (worshiped) even as the Father is honored. (John 5:22,23) If the Father and the Son were not equals, Jesus’ words would have been blasphemous and this is precisely how the Jews interpreted His words. (See the following text.)

John 5:18 **“For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill Him; not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.”**

Comment: The Jews were fiercely loyal to “one God” and because of this, they “tried all the harder to kill Jesus” when He called God His Father. To better appreciate their hatred for Jesus, please consider this backdrop:

The devil is a master at creating lies and counterfeits. For example, the Bible says that Jesus created the world in six days. But the devil has led many educated and intelligent people to believe that the world and everything in it evolved over billions of years. Jesus made the seventh day holy at the end of Creation week and the devil has either created competing holy days (Friday for Moslems and Sunday for Christians) or anti-Semitism (to disparage the “Jewish Sabbath”). The Bible teaches that salvation comes through faith in Christ, but the devil has led billions of people into thinking they can obtain salvation through sacraments, merits, or good works (self-righteousness). For every good thing that God has said or created, the devil has created a lie or a counterfeit. This is particularly true regarding the Godhead. After Noah’s flood, at the Tower of Babel, God divided the world. The devil seized this development by leading mankind into the darkness of superstition and counterfeit polytheism. The devil did this to obscure the truth about the Godhead. The devil led the ancients to believe there were many gods, each of them competing for supremacy. (Greek mythology is a good example of counterfeit polytheism.)

Lucifer’s counterfeit polytheism was apparent at the time of Abraham when the Egyptians worshiped a number of gods. Four hundred years later, many of Abraham’s descendants worshiped the gods [notice the word is plural] of the Egyptians. The biblical account confirms this practice: **“When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, ‘Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.’ ”** (Exodus 32:1) I am sure that you remember that Aaron made a golden calf which probably represented Apis, a powerful “bull god” which the Egyptians worshiped in hopes of having the military might of a “divine bull in a china closet.”

When Jesus spoke to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, He spoke to them in the singular because Jesus spoke on behalf of a united Deity. Therefore, the first commandment says, **“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me.”** (Exodus 20:2,3)

Given their polytheistic experience in Egypt, the Jews understood the first commandment to mean the gods of the Egyptians were nothing because there was only one God, the God who had delivered them from Egypt. However, their simplistic understanding of the Godhead eventually set them up for a fatal mistake. Their narrow understanding of the first commandment gave them a reason and the authority to reject Jesus as another God fifteen hundred years later. Ironically, the Jews never discovered that the God who they called Jehovah for fifteen hundred years was Jesus Christ Himself. When Jesus claimed that God was His Father, they understood Jesus to claim equality with the Father which made them so angry they tried “all the

harder to kill Him.”

This brings us to an important point. If a person wishes to properly understand the doctrine of the Godhead, he has to search the Bible with timeliness in mind. In other words, a Bible student has to be aware of a divine process called “progressive revelation.” Progressive revelation means that over time, more about the subject is revealed. The book of Genesis introduces the Godhead in the first verse by using the Hebrew word *elohiym* (*elohiym* indicates plural Gods) and sixty-five books later, the book of Revelation brings this topic to a profound climax. The book of Revelation is called, “The Revelation of Jesus Christ” because at the end of sin’s drama, Jesus will be revealed to the universe as a distinct, separate, coeternal equal with the Father. Of course, Jews and Christians through the ages did not understand the Godhead because the book of Daniel was sealed up until the time of the end. (Daniel 12:9) Now that Daniel has been unsealed and the rules of interpretation have been discovered, Revelation’s story unfolds to reveal the truth about the Godhead. For the first time in Earth’s history, we can understand all sixty-six books in the Bible. They are in perfect harmony *just as they read*.

Here are three examples of progressive revelation: The Lord said to Moses, “**I [Jesus] appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name the Lord [Jehovah – eternal God] *I did not make myself known to them.***” (Exodus 6:3, italics and insertions mine)

Paul wrote: “**Now to Him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but *now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey Him.***” (Romans 16:25,26, italics mine)

Peter wrote: “**He [Jesus] was chosen [by the Father] before the creation of the world, but was revealed [to us] in these last times for your sake.**” (1 Peter 1:20, insertions mine)

We can begin to understand progressive revelation when we study the relationship of monotheism with the first commandment. When Jesus spoke from Mt. Sinai, He spoke in the singular because the Godhead is singular in purpose, plan, and action. The first commandment declares the oneness of the Godhead. “**I am the Lord your God. . . . you shall have no other Gods before Me.**” (Exodus 20:2,3) We know that Jesus spoke for the Godhead because He used the plural for God (*elohiym*) when He said, “**I am the Lord your God.**” Speaking in the singular, Jesus counteracted the gross polytheism which permeated the world at the time. Remember, the Father does not have a problem with Jesus speaking in the singular because worshiping the Son is permitted since the Son is also Deity. (John 5:22,23) Moreover, no one comes to know the truth about the Father without first coming to know the truth about Jesus. (John 14:6) This brings us to the next text.

John 1:1,3 “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth . . . Through Him [the Word] all things were made;**

without Him nothing was made that has been made.”

Comment: If we allow the Bible to speak for itself, we can see John declares that Jesus created everything and He is a separate God independent of the Father. John says Jesus was with God and Jesus was God before anything was made. This indicates more than one Deity was present in the beginning – polytheism. Jesus is given the title, “the Word,” in John 1 because Jesus is the voice of the Godhead. When the Godhead has something to say, Jesus speaks it.

Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.”

Comment: The first verse in the Bible gives us a clue about whether to believe in monotheism or polytheism. The Hebrew word *elohiym* is used for God in Genesis 1:1 which is the plural form of *elawahh* which means Deity. Three deities (plural) were present when Earth was created. The Father commissioned Jesus to create the Earth. (Hebrews 1:2) As the creative agent of the Godhead, Jesus created the Earth (John 1:3,10) and at the same time, the Holy Spirit was hovering over the waters. Wherever the Father and/or Jesus go, the Holy Spirit is already there because the Holy Spirit is everywhere; He is omnipresent. (Genesis 1:2; Acts 5:31,32; 2 Timothy 1:14).

Genesis 1:26 “Then God said, ‘Let *us* make man in *our* image, in *our* likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air.’ ” (italics mine)

Comment: The plurality of God cannot be overlooked or ignored in the first chapters of Genesis. At Creation, Jesus said to the Father and the Holy Spirit, **“Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.”** This passage and Genesis 1:1 indicates polytheism existed before the creation of Earth and John 1:1 affirms this is the case. All of God’s children are created in His image, after His likeness. Every child of God has a separate, distinct will because each member of the Godhead has a separate, distinct will. Every child of God can know and understand the principles of love because each member of the Godhead is a God of love. When Jesus created Adam and Eve, He gave them a number of characteristics that mirror the characteristics of the Godhead. Because the Godhead lives together as one Deity, a husband and wife can live together as one flesh.

Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.”

Comment: The English translation of this verse appears to support monotheism (one God). However, when we look into the Hebrew language, Moses used the word *elohiym* for God to indicate that God is plural. A literal translation of this verse means: Hear, O Israel: Our God is plural and Jehovah (Jesus) is the One [who represents them]. Incidentally, about 98% of the references to Jehovah in the Bible refer to the God we call Jesus! The Father also uses the title Jehovah which means eternal God. See Psalms 2:7 and 45:7.

Isaiah 45:5 “I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me.”

Comment: At first glance, the English translation of this verse supports monotheism. However, if we look again into the Hebrew language, Jesus Himself used the plural form of Deity (*elohiym*)

in this declaration. A literal translation of this verse means: "I am Jehovah (Jesus). I speak for the Godhead. What I say is from Us." This truth is affirmed in John 1 where Jesus is called "the Word." Jesus is called "the Word" or "the Word of God" (Revelation 19:13) because He alone speaks for the Godhead.

Jesus Is an Almighty God!

Before we leave this discussion on monotheism versus polytheism, I need to address a number of things that have been postponed in previous paragraphs.

Look at this text: **"This is what the Lord says – Israel's King and Redeemer, the Lord Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from Me there is no God [elohiym]."** (Isaiah 44:6, insertion mine) Let us study who made this declaration, Jesus or the Father. Open your Bible and thoughtfully compare Isaiah 44:6 with Revelation 2:8, then compare Revelation 22:13 with Revelation 1:8. Exchange the terms used in these four verses and you will discover four facts: (a) Jesus declared that He is the first and the last, (b) Jesus declared that He is the Lord Almighty, (c) Jesus declared that He is Israel's King and Redeemer (Pilate's sign on the cross was correct – compare Luke 23:3 with John 19:19-22), and finally (d) Jesus declared that He is the Alpha and the Omega. Please review these verses until they make sense, just as they read. Jesus revealed many characteristics about Himself in these verses that separate Him from the Father.

When Jesus said that He is the First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega, He was not saying that chronologically speaking, He was the first God to exist. Rather, Jesus was saying that from the cosmic beginning (before anything existed), He has been the voice of the Godhead. He does not speak on His own behalf. Therefore, as the Word of God, His words are first and they are final (the beginning and the end). When Jesus said that He is the Lord Almighty, He declared that He is an Almighty God, Israel's interface with an Almighty Godhead. Worshiping Jesus is the same as worshiping the Father because they are one and they are equals! (John 5:22,23; Colossians 2:9)

Three Are One or Three Function as One?

The Bible does not explicitly answer how the Godhead came about. However, the Bible contains insight on this topic and when the evidence is carefully put together, a wonderful story unfolds. The following scenario is supported by a variety of texts although some details are my own creation. For purposes of discussion, please consider the following:

The Bible indicates there was time in eternity past, before anything was created, that can be called "the beginning." (John 1:1) Let us assume in the beginning three separate, distinct, coeternal Gods came together for a meeting. According to infinite wisdom and loving kindness, they agreed to unite and unify to create a family that would fill an ever expanding universe. As equal, coeternal Gods, having the same powers and prerogatives, there could be endless competition and warfare or there could be submission to each other. They knew there is not enough space in the universe for three equal, independent, free-will, infinite Gods to live if there

was no interest in unity and cooperation! Therefore, if they could not unite as one Godhead, they knew that all creation would get caught in a conflict of loyalties between opposing deities. Because each Deity had a kind heart, their first act as the Godhead was a solemn declaration of submission to each other (comparable to a marriage). This submission involved separate components and with each submission, each God accepted a specific power and a specific limitation. In other words, to live together as one, each God had to relinquish certain powers and prerogatives to the other two so that all three could function as one Deity – their eternal commitment to each other was oneness in purpose, plan, and action.

For example, two Gods (the Father and Holy Spirit) agreed that the other God (the God the angels call Michael and we call Jesus) should serve as the voice of the Godhead. They did this so that everything and anything the Godhead might say to their creation would come from one mouth. This submission on the part of two Gods explains why Jesus is called “The Word” in John 1 and “The Word of God” in Revelation 19:13. In today’s vernacular, we would say that Jesus was appointed, “The Speaker of the House.” Speaking for the Godhead was not the only submission that Jesus accepted. The Father and the Holy Spirit also relinquished their creative powers to Jesus and He was appointed as “The Creative Agent of the Godhead.” Jesus is the only God who creates and He alone created everything that exists in Heaven, on Earth and throughout the universe. (Colossians 1:16,17) Because the Father and Holy Spirit have no voice (that is, neither can speak for the Godhead) and because the Father and Holy Spirit cannot create anything having substance, these two submissions are profoundly important to understand. Look again at John 1 and Colossians 1:16,17:

“In the beginning [before anything existed] **was the Word** [Jesus is called “the Word” because He speaks for the Godhead], **and the Word was with God** [Jesus was with the Father and the Holy Spirit], **and the Word was God** [Jesus is a distinct and separate Deity just like the Father and the Holy Spirit are separate and distinct deities]. . . . **Through him** [the Word] **all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.**” (John 1:1,3, insertions mine)

“For by Him [Jesus] **all things were created: things in Heaven** [the angels were created by Him] **and on Earth** [He created mankind], **visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He** [Jesus] **is before all things, and in Him all things** [the whole universe] **hold together.**” (Colossians 1:16,17)

The mutual submission of the Father and the Holy Spirit to Jesus encompasses some issues we need to consider. For example, two Gods (Jesus and the Holy Spirit) relinquished their rights to sovereign authority to the Father so the Father rules over Jesus and the Holy Spirit unopposed. As King of kings and Lord of lords (until 1798), the Father was free to exercise His authority according to His infinite wisdom. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are not only supportive; they are 100% committed to whatever the will of the Father might be! This awesome love and faith cannot be described in words.

The encompassing issue of mutual submission between members of Deity is important to understand because it explains elements which would otherwise be impossible to understand. Another example of submission is when the Father and Jesus surrendered their ability to be

omnipresent to the Holy Spirit. Prior to their union, all three Gods had the ability to be everywhere at once. However, the Father and Jesus relinquished this ability to the Holy Spirit so that the Godhead would have one set of universal eyes and ears. This exhibits their complete faith in each other and provides an example of how God's subjects should have faith in the Godhead. What a wonderful concept!

Since the Holy Spirit is the only member of the Godhead who can be everywhere at the same time, He serves as a two-way conduit between the Godhead and all creation. The Holy Spirit sees and hears everything as it happens in real time throughout the whole universe and He conveys this information to the Father and Jesus as it happens. On the other side of the coin, the Holy Spirit is the only member of the Godhead that connects one or all of God's saints with the Godhead without the necessity of an appointment! According to Apostle Paul, the Holy Spirit intercedes for God's saints. He also reports to the Father the contents and desire of every contrite sinner. (Romans 8:26,27) As you might expect, the Holy Spirit is a very busy and active God!

Think this through: Because of their perfect union and submission to each other, we actually serve three Gods. We have God above us (the Father who served as the supreme Ruler of the Universe (until 1798) whose government is righteous and true). We also have God beside us (Jesus, the Creative Agent of the Godhead, who lives among His created beings as one of us showing us what Deity would do if the Father lived within our limitations). Finally, we have a God within us (the Holy Spirit is present within every heart, nurturing us, guiding us, comforting us, edifying us, and bringing God's joy and presence to us).

Is the Holy Spirit a Separate God?

Now that we have discussed how and why the Father and Jesus are distinct, separate, coeternal members of Deity, we need to discuss the nature and identity of the Holy Spirit. I believe the Holy Spirit is a separate, distinct, coeternal member of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is not the Father. The Holy Spirit is not Jesus. The Holy Spirit is not "an influence" that emanates from the Father (as Catholics and many Protestants teach) like a perfume. The Holy Spirit is a Deity; a being that can speak on His own. He does not speak independently of the Godhead, no member of the Godhead speaks independently, but He does hear and respond in accordance with the wisdom and will of the Godhead! (John 16:13) Seven times in the book of Revelation Jesus said, **"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."**

Please consider four considerations that lead to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is a Deity, a separate God, and a member of the Godhead:

The first consideration concerns the timeless and universal presence of an unpardonable sin. Have you ever wondered why the unpardonable sin is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and not blasphemy against the Father or Jesus? Jesus said that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable "in this age and in the age to come!" (Matthew 12:31,32) This means the unpardonable sin is timeless because "the age to come" is everlasting. How does blasphemy against the Holy Spirit occur and why is sinning against the Holy Spirit the only sin which cannot

be forgiven?

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit occurs when a person defies an internal conviction from the Holy Spirit. Suppose the Father directs the Holy Spirit to convict a specific person about something which the Father wants that person to do. For example, the Holy Spirit convicted Noah to build an ark and out of faith he did so. (Hebrews 11:7) Remember the note that Pilate's wife sent to her husband when Jesus was in his court. (Matthew 27:19) Remember King Agrippa's response to Paul that he was "almost persuaded" to become a Christian. (Acts 26:28) Suppose a person rejects the conviction of the Holy Spirit, not once, not five times, but like Pharaoh, he becomes more stubborn with the many times the Holy Spirit attempts to reach the person. Eventually, rebellion will mute all conviction and the internal struggle within will end because the Holy Spirit respects our free will and the only thing He can do is leave. When the Holy Spirit determines there is nothing further He can do within a person's heart, the unpardonable sin occurs.

The Holy Spirit, like the other two Gods, is a God of love. He loves and respects the will of each sinner for whom Jesus has died and He will only leave a person if that person insists on *continued* rebellion. When the Holy Spirit detects that defiance has taken a person beyond the point of repentance, that person's rebellion becomes unpardonable. After every effort had been made to bring them to repentance, God cast Lucifer and his followers out of Heaven because they blasphemed the Holy Spirit. What makes defiance against the Holy Spirit unpardonable? *The only God who can enter our hearts and convey the will of the Father is the God who is omnipresent.* Jesus cannot do this. The Father cannot do this. Neither of them has omnipresence. If we shut out the Holy Spirit, we shut off all communion with God and this is unforgivable. (1 Corinthians 2:14; Romans 8:6-9;8:14)

The second factor that indicates the Holy Spirit is a separate member of the Godhead is that when a sinner is baptized into Christ, he becomes a participant in God's redemption. Therefore, Jesus commanded that such a person be baptized into three distinct, separate, coeternal members of the Godhead, uniquely named and identified as The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:10,20) I believe that Jesus commanded this because redemption requires the efforts of all three Gods.

The final factor indicating the Holy Spirit is a separate, distinct member of the Godhead is that the Holy Spirit has relinquished His prerogative and privilege to speak independently. Carefully study this truth that Jesus spoke: "**But when He, the Spirit of Truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. [Even though He can,] He will not speak on his own; He will speak only what He hears [from the Father and Me], and He will tell you what is yet to come.**" (John 16:13, insertions mine) Why did Jesus say the Holy Spirit will not speak on His own? Why did Jesus say the Holy Spirit would speak only what He hears? Why did Jesus say the Holy Spirit will tell you what is yet to come?

Jesus used these phrases to indicate that like Himself, the Holy Spirit is a God who hears and speaks. However, the Spirit only speaks what He hears from the Father or the Son. If we treat the Holy Spirit as a separate member of the Godhead, the Bible will make sense *just as it reads*. The next paragraph will demonstrate a sample of this.

Jesus said to His disciples, **“It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”** (John 16:7) When Jesus spoke these words, He knew three things. First, Jesus knew that Jerusalem would be destroyed in A.D. 70 and the disciples would be scattered everywhere. (Matthew 24) Second, Jesus knew that the Father’s original plan (Plan A) to implement the kingdom of God on Earth during the seventieth week would not be fulfilled. Third, Jesus knew that He would be leaving Earth and returning to Heaven within a few days. (John 14:1-3) When we understand that Jesus does not have the ability to be omnipresent, His words concerning the Holy Spirit make perfect sense just as they read! In essence, Jesus told His disciples that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, He would be closer and nearer to each of them, no matter where they went after Jerusalem was destroyed. This is why it was for their good that He left Earth. The Holy Spirit would be sent to them and through the Spirit, Jesus would be able to be with all of them no matter where they went. This is how Jesus could say, **“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”** (Matthew 28:20) (For a discussion on Plan A and Plan B and the profound implications of each plan, please see Appendices B & D in my book, *Jesus’ Final Victory*.)

Jesus also said, **“Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.”** Jesus meant that on resurrection Sunday, He would ascend to the Father. The Father was very pleased with all that Jesus had done to redeem mankind, but the Father was not pleased with the way Israel had treated Jesus. Because the kingdom of God could not be established on Earth as planned (Plan A), the Father gave Jesus “all authority” to establish His church on Earth. (Matthew 28:18)

Jesus knew that Lucifer and his demons would do everything possible to destroy His church. Therefore, a few days after ascending to Heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to Earth on a mission. Jesus knew the most convincing way to overcome the religious paradigms of the Jews and establish His church throughout the Roman Empire was through miracles and evidence of divine power. (See Acts 14:3.) Jesus also knew that His believers would not have sufficient wisdom and insight on managing and directing His church. Therefore, He promised to send “the Counselor” or “The Advisor” to them. Through the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit, a new religious body would not only begin, it would manage, against all odds and demonic assaults, to endure persecution and apostasy for centuries to come. The book of Acts tells a compelling story, how the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit enabled a few humble fishermen to change the course of human history. The Holy Spirit could do things for the church that Jesus Himself could not do if He remained on Earth. This is why Jesus was taken from Earth and the Holy Spirit was sent!

Was the Holy Spirit Held Back Until Pentecost?

Often people wonder if the Holy Spirit has always existed, why God waited thousands of years to pour out the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the first century A.D. was a special manifestation of divine power designed to achieve a special outcome. However, the work of the Holy Spirit within the hearts of individuals *prior* to Pentecost and *after* Pentecost did not change.

Here is the story: Because religion is a powerful paradigm, it controls what most people will consider about God. Remember, Jesus knew “the most convincing way to establish His church in Jerusalem and elsewhere in the Roman Empire was through a display of divine power.” People in Bible times did not know much about Earth sciences and they did not have a thousand explanations which technology has provided for us today. Therefore, the ancients were prone to superstition and fear of “the unexplained.” When the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost, there was a great wind (intimidation), tongues of fire appeared on the heads of the disciples (the anointing of chosen people), and the gospel was heard in many languages (the gift of tongues). This phenomenon was instantly deemed “an act of God” and 3,000 souls were baptized into Christ on the basis of what they saw and heard. This show of divine power gave the gospel of Jesus a huge dose of credibility which gave the church of Christ a huge boost in membership. The rest of the story, recorded in Acts, is church history. Early Christians regarded Pentecost as the birthplace of Christ’s church. (Acts 7:39)

Unfortunately, early Christians poorly understood their new religion. They knew just enough to abandon some of their former ways. Therefore, the first century A.D. was marked by Holy Spirit power much like the [great tribulation](#) will be marked by Holy Spirit power for 1,260 days. (Revelation 11:3) Through the ages, the Holy Spirit has been “poured out” on various people. For example, the Holy Spirit came upon Saul (1 Samuel 19:23), David (1 Samuel 16 & 17), Gideon (Judges 6:34), and Philip (Acts 8:39). In each case, Jesus wanted people to know that He had chosen certain people to do or say certain things. Do not forget, the Holy Spirit is omnipresent. He is at work at all times and in all places, edifying (building up) the body of Christ with gifts of all kinds. (1 Corinthians 12-14). He is also at work in every human heart as long as we permit Him to dwell within.

Special events and manifestations of the Holy Spirit (such as those at Pentecost) are not to be confused with the still small voice of the Holy Spirit calling us to intimately walk with God. Look closely at this text: **“Then the Lord said [to Noah], ‘My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.’ ”** (Genesis 6:3) The Lord indicated the Holy Spirit would not endlessly contend with the antediluvians. **“The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness on the Earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the Earth, and his heart was filled with pain.”** (Genesis 6:5,6) Corporately speaking, a majority of the people in Noah’s day had committed or was in the process of committing the unpardonable sin. The Holy Spirit could not soften the rebellious hearts of the antediluvians. Therefore, God had to destroy the whole world for the benefit of oncoming generations. The same is true of the world today. All signs indicate we have passed the point of no return. Our world (corporately speaking) will not repent and reform. According to the books of Daniel and Revelation, God’s wrath will come just as He said it would.

Finally, there is a fourth issue which indicates the Holy Spirit is a separate member of the Godhead. Chapter 8 in this book gives reasons why the four living creatures in Revelation 4 and 5 represent the Holy Spirit. A summary of those reasons is presented here:

1. The four living creatures are identical; four clones of the same entity. They stand closest to God and His throne. This representation suggests there is an omnipresent being who

can take any form and remain alive! They are called “the four living creatures” because the power to give life is within them. The 24 elders are not called, “the 24 living elders” and the angels are not called “the living angels.” The four living creatures are “living creatures” because the power of life is within them. Additionally, the four living creatures are present in the north, south, east, and west, the four points of a compass, all at the same time.

2. The four living creatures are covered with eyes. This indicates the Holy Spirit instantly sees everything occurring in the universe. The eyes, signifying the Holy Spirit’s omnipresence, indicate Deity because the Holy Spirit serves as the eyes and ears of Jesus and the Father. The Holy Spirit sees everything in the universe instantly and reported in real time. The amount of data that flows from the Holy Spirit every millisecond is unimaginable.
3. Ezekiel and John saw the same four faces on each living creature. Each face describes certain challenges which the Holy Spirit “faces.” For example, the Holy Spirit has intelligence. He knows God’s ways and will as well as mankind’s thoughts, motives, words, and deeds (this ability is represented by the face of a man – Ecclesiastes 8:1). The Holy Spirit has divine strength (represented by the face of an ox – Numbers 23:22). The Holy Spirit is deadly and can destroy anything that has been created (represented by the prowess of a lion – Numbers 23:24). The Holy Spirit travels at warp speed, much faster than light (represented by six wings). When necessary, the Holy Spirit can swoop down and catch any prey wherever or whatever it may be (represented by the face of an eagle – Deuteronomy 28:49).
4. The Holy Spirit is as selfless and humble as Jesus and the Father. The Holy Spirit extols the Father’s majesty, generosity, wisdom, love, goodness, and grace perpetually. The Holy Spirit’s highest work is to bond God’s children with the Father and Jesus in spirit and in truth. The Holy Spirit constantly brings glory to the Father and Jesus by exalting them. (John 16:14) The Holy Spirit also serves as a conduit between God and His children. He takes God’s happiness, joy, and goodness and shares it with everyone willing to receive it producing “the fruit of the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:22-24)

When we factor all of the attributes that Ezekiel and John mention, the four living creatures point to one person, the Holy Spirit. The most impressive element about the Holy Spirit is if it was not for His ministry, no one would ever know God! The Holy Spirit’s job is to reveal the other two Gods. He is fulfilling His job perfectly because He is just like them, a selfless member of Deity like the Father and Jesus.

If you would like to prove to yourself that the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are separate, distinct, coeternal members of the Godhead, try this simple experiment. In mathematics, we say that if a, b, and c have the same value, any of these three variables can be substituted at any time. Using this approach, if we say that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the same God (expressing Himself in three different ways), we should be able to go through the Bible and substitute any mention of God with any title for God and the result should be the same. Obviously, this approach does not make any sense. For example, Jesus did not find the Father worthy in Revelation 5 and then give the book sealed with [seven seals](#) to the Holy Spirit.

I hope this study has been helpful. I hope you will read through it a couple times and pray about

it. At first, you may think this topic is not very important. Understanding this topic is not required for salvation, but if you wish to understand the Bible in general and apocalyptic prophecy in particular, you need to understand this topic. We have looked at monotheism (one God), polytheism (more than one God), and tritheism (three Gods). The fullness of Deity is within Jesus just as the Father has the fullness of Deity within Himself. (Colossians 2:9) Jesus is not the Father and the Father is not Jesus or the Holy Spirit. I believe there are three separate, distinct, coeternal deities which function as One. One in purpose, plan, and action and they are forever committed to this arrangement. What an amazing demonstration of love for eternity to come!

[Read the next segment...](#)