DEW

ARABIA

CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE

EDITION THREE



A magazine with refreshing droplets of Gods word to Christians in the UAE.

DEW ARABIA™



A PRAYER

THE TRINITY

Three in one, one in three, God of my salvation, Heavenly Father, blessed Son, eternal Spirit, I adore Thee as one Being, one Essence, one God in three distinct Persons, for bringing sinners to Thy knowledge and to Thy kingdom.

O Father, Thou hast loved me and sent Jesus to redeem me;

O Jesus, Thou hast loved me and assumed my nature, shed Thine own blood to wash away my sins, wrought righteousness to cover my unworthiness;

O Holy Spirit, Thou hast loved me and entered my heart, implanted there eternal life, revealed to me the glories of Jesus. Three Persons and one God, I bless and praise Thee, for love so unmerited, so unspeakable, so wondrous, so mighty to save the lost and raise them to glory.

O Father, I thank Thee that in fullness of grace Thou hast given me to Jesus, to be His sheep, jewel, portion;

O Jesus, I thank Thee that in fullness of grace Thou hast accepted, espoused, bound me;

O Holy Spirit, I thank Thee that in fullness of grace Thou hast exhibited Jesus as my salvation, implanted faith within me, subdued my stubborn heart, made me one with Him for ever.

O Father, Thou art enthroned to hear my prayers,

O Jesus, Thy hand is outstretched to take my petitions,

O Holy Spirit, Thou art willing to help my infirmities, to show me my need, to supply words, to pray within me, to strengthen me that I faint not in supplication.

O Triune God, who commandeth the universe, Thou hast commanded me to ask for those things that concern Thy kingdom and my soul. Let me live and pray as one baptized into the threefold Name.

The Valley of Vision

by Arthur Bennett

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BELOVED READER,

Our purpose is to live for God's glory. For this reason, as Christians, we give ourselves to a lifelong pursuit: to know God more truly, to love Him more deeply, and to walk more faithfully in His ways. Yet there are truths about God that feel so far above us—so unlike us, and so difficult to grasp—that we may be tempted to avoid them. Not because we do not believe, or because we wish to doubt, but because we fear getting lost in abstract ideas that seem uncertain. We fear losing our footing in matters too mysterious and too difficult to grasp—until we drift into speculation and end up with ideas that cool our devotion, and the very God we long to know feels distant to us.

In our previous edition, we considered one such doctrine: the sovereignty of God. How did you enjoy reflecting on this beautiful and comforting attribute of God?

In this edition, our theme is another doctrine many find daunting: the Trinity. The Bible teaches that God is one, and also that the one God exists eternally in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet for many of us, the Trinity can seem like a philosophical abstraction, something to keep theologians occupied and hardly worth much thought. We don't feel particularly comfortable explaining it to a non-Christian who sees it as irrational—a mathematical impossibility. And rather than delighting in the Trinity, we feel awkward and ashamed, as though it were an obstacle to faith. So we quietly wonder: what difference does it make?

We are grateful to share a variety of articles and meditations that answer that question with warmth and wonder, showing that the Trinity is a highly practical and relevant doctrine for our everyday Christian life. Our prayer is that as you behold God as the Triune God, your awe will deepen, your worship will rise, and your love for Him will be strengthened in richly tangible, everyday ways.

In His service,
The Dew Arabia Editorial Team

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What are you hitting Satan with?

MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE

"Memorising Scripture enables me to hit the devil in the face with a force he cannot resist, to protect myself in my family from his assaults. What are you hitting him with? He is millions of times stronger than you! And he hates you! And your family! And your marriage! And this church! How anybody walks through this devil-ruled World without a sword [the Word of God] in their hand, is beyond me."

– *John Piper*

The Lord forbids worry. Your future is in His hands.

Stop normalizing the sin of worry. "To anticipate trouble is to double it, without the grace to endure it. Fear is a liar. Fear lies to you. Fear tells you your future is not under control. That is a lie. Don't worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will take of itself. … God will give you strength for every new day."

– *John MacArthur*

Podcast

PASTORS TALK

Why should pastors care about studying the doctrine of the Trinity? With Bobby Jamieson and Mark Feather.





Quote from Garrett Kell's book "*Pure in Heart: Sexual Sin and the Promises of God*".



"Think about the fact that Jesus over and over said,

it is written, it is written, it is written,

but in the garden, Satan essentially says, *is it written?* And I feel like that's so much of what ministry comes down to every day. Which voice are you gonna believe? … Did God really say He would be enough in ministry? Did He really say that faithfulness is success?

– *Matt Smethurst*

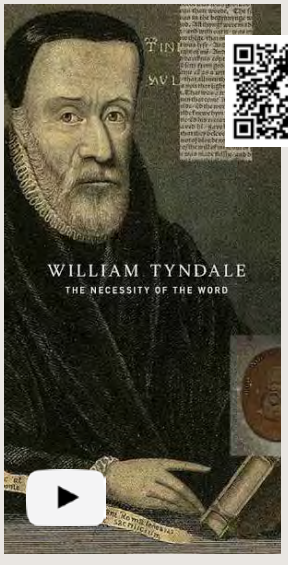


To many, homemaking seems like a waste of a woman's skills. But what if homemaking actually requires every ounce of her experience, intellect, and ambition?

Homemaking is an ambition—one the Creator of the universe celebrates. The world will not applaud the woman who, on a Saturday evening, preps several days' worth of meals for family, church members, and friends at deathly cost to her "me time." But "[her] Father who sees in secret will reward [her]" (Matthew 6:6).

But, as is true of the whole Christian life, our hearts sit in the driver's seat. No matter how fast our hands may move, homemaking is only idle noise and neatness if we have not love as we labor.

Read "Ambitious Wife, Happy Life" by Tanner Kay Swanson.



William Tyndale risked his life to translate the Bible into English. In honour of the 500th anniversary of Tyndale's translation, the first episode of Missionary's docuseries, *William Tyndale: The Necessity of the Word*, is now available to stream for free on YouTube.

"Prayer is a wartime walkie-talkie, not an intercom to the butler.

It's not to pad your life with more comforts, it's to give you the power to do hard things for the Kingdom. … Do you pray like a believer in a supernatural God? '*Hallowed be Your name. Your Kingdom come, Your will be done.*'?" – *John Piper*

Colophon

Dew Arabia™ is an independent publication dedicated to the Christian community in the UAE. Its mission is to deepen Christians' engagement with Scripture through thoughtfully selected content and to provide a platform for local Christian authors to share their writings.

Dew Arabia is named to represent the life-giving droplets of God's word to Christians just as dew brings life to the desert's dry expanse.

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Every future date mentioned in this publication presumes Deo volente—God willing.

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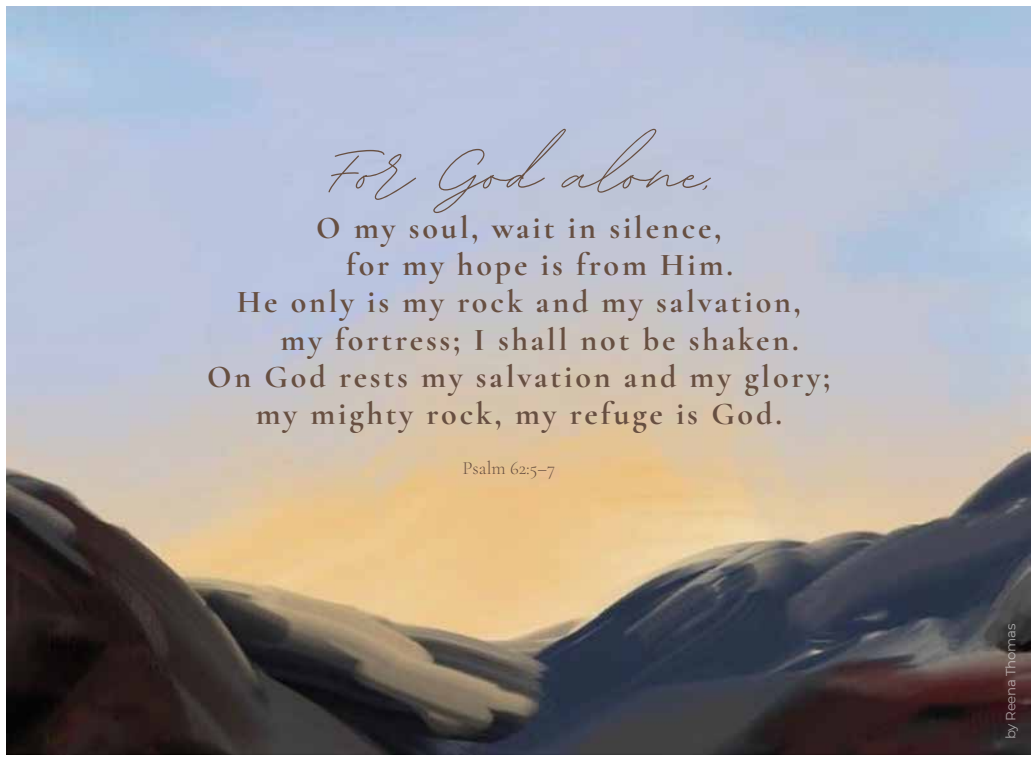
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Notable Lines



Excerpts from

John Owen

Communion with God

Abridged and made easy to read by R.J.K. Law

The Banner of Truth Trust, 2022

Fellowship with God

Consider that it is the greatest desire of God the Father that you should have loving fellowship with Him. His greatest desire is that you should receive Him into your soul as one full of love, tenderness and kindness to you. Flesh and blood is apt to think hard thoughts of God, to think that He is always angry and incapable of being pleased with His sinful creatures, that it is not for them to draw near to Him, and that there is nothing in the world more to be desired than never to come into His presence. ... Now, there is nothing more grievous to the Lord, nothing that serves the purposes of Satan more than such thoughts as these. Satan rejoices when he can fill your heart with such hard thoughts of God. Satan's purpose from the beginning was to fill mankind with lies about God. The first blood that murderer shed was by this means. He led our first parents into hard thoughts about God. '*Has God said so? Has He threatened you with death? He knows well enough that if you eat of this fruit, it will be much better for you.*' With these lies he succeeded in overthrowing all mankind at once. And remembering this great victory, he readily uses the same method with us. Now it is exceedingly grievous to the Spirit of God to be so slandered in the hearts of those whom He dearly loves. ... Many saints have no greater burden in their lives than that their hearts do not constantly delight and rejoice in God. Set your thoughts on the eternal love of the Father and see if your heart is not aroused to delight in Him. — p. 35–37

Praying to the Trinity

When we worship, we worship the divine nature. So it is impossible to worship any one person in the Godhead and not worship the whole Trinity. The divine nature in all its infinite excellence, dignity and majesty and as the origin and cause of all things is common to all three persons in the Godhead. ... Paul tells us that our worship is 'to the Father' that we come to the Father 'through Christ' and that we are helped to do this 'by the Spirit' (Ep. 2:18). Here each person in the Godhead is distinguished from the other two as to the works each has been appointed to do, but not as to their being the object of divine worship. The Son and the Holy Spirit are no less worshipped in our access to God than the Father Himself. The grace of the Father, which we get by the mediation of the Son and the help of the Holy Spirit, is why we draw near to God. So when we worship and pray to one person of the Trinity, we worship and pray to all three. ... Consider the Holy Spirit as the one sent from the Father and the Son to be our Comforter. We should pray daily for the Holy Spirit from the Father in the name of Jesus Christ.— p. 239–242

the greatest
LOVE STORY

A LOVE THAT TRANSFORMS

There is a reason that the best stories end with a bride and groom living happily ever after: it's because it's a little picture of the greatest true story of all: God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to bring us back to God. Sin broke our friendship with God, but Jesus came to fix what was broken. Here's how the story goes:

God's love: *The Bible tells us that "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16)*

The broken part: *Unfortunately, we don't love God as we should, our sin separates us from Him, leaving us in need of being forgiven (Rom 3:23).*

Jesus' sacrifice: *God didn't want us to stay lost and separated from Him. So, Jesus, God as human, took the punishment for all the wrong we did. By living perfectly, dying on the cross and then coming back to life, He offers forgiveness, new and everlasting life with God (2 Cor5:21).*

Our response: *So, how do we become part of this happily-ever-after? It's a free gift! By grace alone, through faith in Christ, we are saved. Turn away from your sin and follow Jesus (Eph 2:8–9).*

Volunteer with us!

Join our volunteer team, we're currently looking for **illustrators**, **Hindi** and **Arabic translators**!

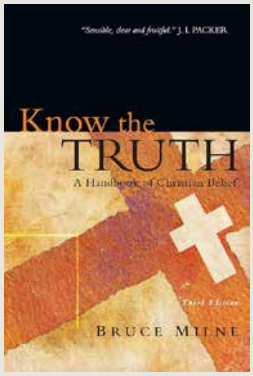
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Send your well wishes!

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Reach out to us at contact@dewarabia.com



Excerpts from

Bruce Milne

Know the Truth: A Handbook of Christian Belief

3rd edn., IVP Academic, 2009

The Virgin Birth

… Jesus' human nature was not derived as is ours from a human father. The Scriptures, however, nowhere cast God the Father in the role of the male progenitor supplying the male chromosomes for the developing foetus. A moment's reflection shows the questionableness of this position, for a being so produced would certainly not be a true God-man, but a half-human hybrid.

The mystery of the union in one authentic person of the eternal nature of the Son of God and a true human nature with its limitations and needs is not significantly lessened by the virgin birth. Since God chose this way, we may reverently conclude that any other would have been less serviceable to him. What, then, is its significance?

1. It proclaimed the unique character of the babe to be born. In Scripture special children often have special births (Gen 21:1–7; Luke 1:5–23).
2. It demonstrates the operation of the supernatural in the incarnation. For this reason biological objections are entirely beside the point. On the presupposition of an omnipotent God, the virginal conception was wholly possible.
3. The coming of the Spirit upon Mary declared that in Christ God entered completely and fully into our human experience from the very moment of conception.
4. It wholly agrees with Paul's teaching (Rom 5:12f.; 1 Cor 15:22) that Christ is the second Adam in whom there takes place a new beginning to the moral history of the human race. There is no suggestion that original sin was avoided by the absence of sexual intercourse, as though sin were a genetical contagion, which in any case would have been as surely inherited from Mary as from Joseph; … Rather, the virgin birth proclaims God's sovereign disruption of the age-long bondage and corruption brought about through the race's involvement in the fall of its representative head, Adam.
5. It is consistent with our Lord's pre-existence. In our case the act of conception is the coming into existence of a new person; in his case the eternal Word pre-existed conception. This is expressed in the biblical statements that 'the Holy Spirit will come upon' and 'overshadow' Mary (Luke 1:35).
6. It provides an analogy of redemption elsewhere described as a 'new birth' (John 1:12; 3:3ff.; 1 Pet 2:2; Titus 3:5). The setting aside of Joseph expresses in vivid fashion the helplessness, and in this sense the judgment, of humankind in face of God's work of redemption. — p. 192–193

Three What?

How may we refer to the 'three' in the Godhead without endangering God's unity? The classical formula, three 'Persons', has come under increasing strain, since contemporary usage rarely distinguishes 'person' from 'personality' with the latter's overtones of distinctiveness and independence. Hence 'three Persons' today comes close to denoting three separate Gods. No generally agreed alternative term has appeared, however, so the traditional formula is usually retained despite its limitations. — p. 82

Condescension

'He made himself nothing' (Phil 2:7). In the incarnation God himself has condescended to minister to his creatures' need (John 13:1–16); a servant God! This staggering event has far-reaching and deeply challenging implications for Christ's disciples: a fundamental humility of heart which renounces selfish ambition and vain conceit, a genuine and compassionate concern for others' interests, considering them better than ourselves (Phil 2:1–5) – nothing less than a reflection in us of the mind of Jesus. — p. 238

God's worship

To offer worship to any other being than the LORD God (Yahweh) was for the Jew unthinkably offensive, the most fundamental of all sins (Exod 20:3–6; Deut 6:4f., 13–15). Yet the earliest disciples, all of them Jews, directed worship to Jesus. It is this fact which, despite their comparative infrequency, makes the New Testament ascriptions of deity to Christ so overwhelmingly impressive. Doxologies are ascribed to Christ (Rom 9:5; 2 Tim 4:18; 2 Pet 3:18; Rev 1:5f.); two are addressed to both Father and Son (Rev 5:13; 7:10). Prayers are addressed to Christ (Acts 7:59f.; 9:13f.; 1 Cor 16:22; Rev 22:20). Old Testament worship passages are transferred from Yahweh to Christ (Isa 8:13f. in Rom 9:33; 1 Pet 2:7f., 3:15; the Septuagint version of Deut 32:43 in Heb 1:6). — p. 179

Theology

FOUNDATIONAL CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES

The Trinity | The Incarnation | The Resurecction

Christians are often called "People of the Book" because we believe that God has spoken. We do not construct our understanding of God through speculation or philosophy; we receive it from what He has made known in His Word. The Scriptures are the final and sufficient authority for all that we believe and confess.

At the very centre of this revelation stand three foundational doctrines [teachings according to the Bible]: the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection. These truths are not peripheral [secondary, minor]. They define who God is, how He has acted in history, and where our hope rests. To misunderstand them is to distort Christianity itself.

The Trinity

The God who exists has revealed Himself in history and in the Scriptures that bear witness to His saving acts. What He reveals about His own nature transcends human expectation. The doctrine of the Trinity is not the product of philosophical speculation; it rests upon God's self-disclosure in His Word.

The Trinity teaches that God is one being in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each Person is fully and eternally God, equal in glory and majesty, yet there are not three gods but one God. This truth surpasses human categories. It is not a contradiction, but a revealed mystery—one that we receive because God has made it known.

No analogy can fully capture the Trinity. Popular comparisons—such as water existing as ice, liquid, and steam—ultimately distort the doctrine by collapsing the distinctions between the divine Persons or by implying change within God's being. Such illustrations may appear helpful, but they inevitably distort the doctrine and diminish the uniqueness of the Triune God. Therefore, we must resist relying on them.

Importantly, the New Testament does not attempt to construct a philosophical explanation of the Trinity; it simply assumes it. The Father sends the Son. The Son obeys the Father. The Spirit descends and empowers. The Apostles were, in this sense, experiential Trinitarians—they heard the Father's voice from heaven, walked with the Son, and witnessed the Spirit descending upon Him (Matthew 3:13–17). As the New Testament authors wrote, they weren't trying to explain the Trinity systematically; rather, it was woven into their theological framework. This pattern is evident in both worship and practice. Paul blesses the church with

> "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all." (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Christ commands that disciples be baptized

> "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

Throughout the New Testament, the unity of God and the distinct personhood and full deity of the Father, Son, and Spirit permeate [fill] its teaching (John 1:1–3, 14; John 10:30; 1 Corinthians 12:4–6; Ephesians 4:4–6).

The Incarnation

The Scriptures not only reveal that God is Triune; they also proclaim that the eternal Son became man. The One who was with the Father from all eternity entered into His own creation. Sent according to the Father's eternal will, He came to redeem and to unite all things in Himself, both in heaven and on earth. His name is Jesus (Ephesians 1:7–10).

This claim is staggering in its historical reality. If you had lived in the Middle East two thousand years ago, you could have seen Him, heard Him speak, and watched Him walk the dusty roads of Galilee. The eternal Son of God did not remain distant; He drew near. The biblical authors proclaim this boldly—not as myth or metaphor, but as truth—many sealed their witness with their lives. The Apostle John writes with unmistakable clarity:

> "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that

> confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God." (1 John 4:2–3).

The Incarnation is not a peripheral doctrine. It is a dividing line. To deny that the Son has come in the flesh is to reject God's own revelation and to undermine the heart of the gospel. To deny this is to stand in opposition to God.

In the Incarnation, the Son did not cease to be God; He assumed a true human nature. His deity was not diminished, altered, or set aside. Rather, humanity was added to His divine person (Philippians 2:7). The two natures are neither blended nor divided; each remains fully intact in the one person of Jesus Christ. He is fully God and fully man—one Person forever.

This mystery should not intimidate us into silence, nor should its depth cause us to doubt its truth. We receive what God has revealed. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Born of a woman (Galatians 4:4), sharing in our humanity (Hebrews 2:14–18), He entered our world in order to save it. In Christ, God has drawn near—not in abstraction, but in flesh and blood.

The Resurrection

The eternal Son who took on flesh did not remain in the grave. After dying a substitutionary death [one person takes the place of another] on a Roman cross—bearing the punishment foretold in Isaiah 53:5—He rose bodily from the dead on the third day. This was not symbolic renewal or spiritual metaphor; it was a historical event that stands at the very centre of the Christian faith.

The Apostle Paul makes this unmistakably clear:

> "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14).

Without the Resurrection, Christianity collapses. But Christ has been raised. Death did not hold Him. The grave did not defeat Him.

The Resurrection was witnessed, proclaimed, and preserved in Scripture. The Gospels record the empty tomb and the appearances of the risen Christ—to the women who first arrived at the tomb, to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, to the gathered apostles in Jerusalem, and even to Thomas, who doubted until he saw and touched the risen Lord (Matthew 28; Luke 24; John 20–21). For forty days He appeared to many, speaking about the kingdom of God before ascending into heaven (Acts 1:1–11). The Resurrection rests not on legend, but on eyewitness testimony.

Yet the Resurrection is not merely an event to be affirmed; it is the foundation of our hope. Christ is "the firstfruits" (1 Corinthians 15:20). Because He lives, those who belong to Him will also be raised. His victory over death guarantees the future resurrection of all who trust in Him.

When Jesus declared, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25), He was not merely describing an ability to raise people from the dead—He was revealing His identity. He Himself is the source of life now and beyond the grave. In raising Lazarus, He demonstrated in miniature what He would accomplish in fullness through His own triumph over death.

The Resurrection assures us that sin has been conquered, death has been defeated, and salvation is secure. In Christ, hope is not wishful thinking; it is anchored in a risen Lord.

Do you believe this?

A Call to Worship

The doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection are not isolated teachings. They form the foundation upon which every other Christian doctrine rests. Like threads woven into a tapestry, they uphold the integrity [strength, wholeness] and beauty of the entire fabric of the Christian faith.

Because God has spoken, we are not left to speculation or uncertainty. He has made Himself known. To understand these truths is to stand within the stream of historic, orthodox [accepted, true] Christianity, guarded from error and anchored in the revelation He has given.

May these doctrines deepen your worship of the Triune God. May they steady your confidence in Christ and strengthen your assurance of salvation. May they embolden you in personal evangelism, enabling you to speak of Christ with clarity and conviction. May they draw you ever further into the Scriptures, that you might be spiritually mature, rooted firmly in the Word and steadfast in the obedience of faith. And may these truths not only shape your understanding but also stir your heart to love and adore the God who has revealed Himself and redeemed His people.

> "Now to Him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen." Romans 16:25–27

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This article is an edited version of the original by
Michael Franco Smit — Elder in Abu Dhabi, Teacher & Author
Published on *The Gospel Network* — tgnghana.org

Scripture Reflections

The Foundational Oneness of God

1 Corinthians 8:6

"Yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist."

Significance: Within a confession of one God, Paul distinguishes between the persons of the Father and the Son, both involved in creation and redemption.

Deuteronomy 6:4

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."

Significance: The non-negotiable starting point. The Trinity is a triune understanding of the one God, not a belief in three gods.

Also read: Deuteronomy 4:35, 39; Isaiah 43:10–11; 44:6, 8; 45:5–6, 21–22; Mark 12:29; James 2:19

Affirming the Deity of Jesus

John 1:1, 14

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God… And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

Significance: Clearly identifies the pre-existent of Jesus (the Word) as both distinct from God ("with God") and yet fully God ("was God").

Hebrews 1:3, 8

"He [Jesus] is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature… But of the Son [Jesus] He says, 'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.'"

Significance: The Son is the exact representation of God's being, and God the Father Himself addresses the Son as "God."

John 10:30

"I and the Father are one."

Significance: Jesus claims a unity of essence and nature with the Father, which His audience understood as a claim to deity (the response: v. 33: "You, being a man, make yourself God").

Colossians 2:9

"For in Him [Jesus] the whole fullness of Deity dwells bodily."

Significance: A direct statement that Jesus is not merely inspired but is the full embodiment of God.

Titus 2:13

"the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Significance: Paul calls Jesus "God."

Romans 9:5

"and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, Who is God over all, blessed forever."

Significance: In a theological argument by Paul, identifying Jesus as having a human lineage ("according to the flesh") and as God over all. This powerfully unites His true humanity and full deity. It ends with a blessing ("blessed forever"), which in Jewish and early Christian writing is almost exclusively reserved for God alone. Paul is ascribing divine worship to Christ.

Also read: Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:23; John 1:18; 8:58; 20:28; Philippians 2:5–7; 1 John 5:20

Affirming the Personhood and Deity of the Holy Spirit

Acts 5:3–4

"Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit… You have not lied to man but to God."

Significance: Lying to the Holy Spirit is equated with lying to God, affirming the Spirit's deity.

John 14:16, 26

"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper… the Spirit of truth… the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things…"

Significance: Jesus calls the Spirit "another Helper" (of the same kind as himself), a personal pronoun is used ("he will teach"), and personal actions (teaching, guiding) are ascribed to Him.

1 Corinthians 2:10–11

"These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God."

Significance: Attributes the divine, omniscient function of knowing God's depths to the Spirit, demonstrating His divine nature and personhood (having a "mind").

Also read: Genesis 1:1–2; John 3:3–8; 13–14; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 12:13; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 2:22; Hebrews 10:15–16; Revelation 2:7

The Three Persons Together

Matthew 28:19

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"

Significance: A standard blessing placing the three persons on parallel footing, implying their distinct personhood and shared divine authority.

2 Corinthians 13:14

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Significance: A standard blessing placing the three persons on parallel footing, implying their distinct personhood and shared divine essence.

Matthew 3:16–17

"And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"

Significance: A narrative showing all three persons simultaneously active: Jesus (the Son) on earth, the Spirit descending, and the Father speaking from heaven.

Also read: John 15:26; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:3–14; 2:18; 3:14–19

Key Theological Synthesis from These Passages

1. There is **only one true God** (Deuteronomy 6:4).
2. The **Father is God,** Jesus the **Son is God**, and the **Holy Spirit is God** (John 6:27; Titus 2:13; Acts 5:3–4).
3. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are **distinct persons** who relate to each other (Matthew 3:16–17; John 14:16–17).
4. Therefore, the one God eternally exists as three persons. This is the mystery of the Trinity, derived from the totality of Scripture, not from a single "proof text." The passages above collectively rule out the possibilities that God is merely one person (Modalism) or that the Son and Spirit are created beings (Arianism).

Scripture Reading

John 10: 22–42

ENGLISH

I and the Father are One

22 At that time the Feast of Dedication took
place at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus
was walking in the temple, in the colonnade
of Solomon. 24 So the Jews gathered around
him and said to him, “How long will you keep
us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us
plainly.” 25 Jesus answered them, “I told you,
and you do not believe. The works that I do
in my Father’s name bear witness about me,
26 but you do not believe because you are not
among my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice,
and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give
them eternal life, and they will never perish,
and no one will snatch them out of my hand.
29 My Father, who has given them to me, is
greater than all, and no one is able to snatch
them out of the Father’s hand. 30 I and the
Father are one.”
31 The Jews picked up stones again to stone
him. 32 Jesus answered them, “I have shown
you many good works from the Father; for
which of them are you going to stone me?” 33
The Jews answered him, “It is not for a good
work that we are going to stone you but for
blasphemy, because you, being a man, make
yourself God.” 34 Jesus answered them, “Is
it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are
gods’? 35 If he called them gods to whom the
word of God came—and Scripture cannot
be broken— 36 do you say of him whom the
Father consecrated and sent into the world,
‘You are blaspheming,’ because I said, ‘I am
the Son of God’? 37 If I am not doing the works
of my Father, then do not believe me; 38 but
if I do them, even though you do not believe
me, believe the works, that you may know and
understand that the Father is in me and I am
in the Father.” 39 Again they sought to arrest
him, but he escaped from their hands.

40 He went away again across the Jordan to the
place where John had been baptizing at first,
and there he remained. 41 And many came to
him. And they said, “John did no sign, but
everything that John said about this man was
true.” 42 And many believed in him there. (ESV)

ARABIC

٢٢وكان عيد التجديد في اورشليم وكان شتاء.
٢٣وكان يسوع يتمشى في الهيكل في رواق سليمان.
٢٤فاحتاط به اليهود وقالوا له الى متى تعلّق
انفسنا. ان كنت انت المسيح فقل لنا جهرا.
٢٥اجابهم يسوع اني قلت لكم ولستم تؤمنون.
الاعمال التي انا اعملها باسم ابي هي تشهد لي.
٢٦ولكنكم لستم تؤمنون لانكم لستم من خرافي
كما قلت لكم. ٢٧خرافي تسمع صوتي وانا اعرفها
فتتبعني. ٢٨وانا اعطيها حياة ابدية ولن تهلك
الى الابد ولا يخطفها احد من يدي. ٢٩ابي الذي
اعطاني اياها هو اعظم من الكل ولا يقدر احد
ان يخطف من يد ابي. ٣٠انا والآب واحد

٣١فتناول اليهود ايضا حجارة ليرجموه. ٣٢اجابهم
يسوع اعمالا كثيرة حسنة أريتكم من عند ابي.
بسبب اي عمل منها ترجمونني. ٣٣اجابه اليهود
قائلين لسنا نرجمك لاجل عمل حسن بل لاجل
تجديف. فانك وانت انسان تجعل نفسك الها.
٣٤اجابهم يسوع أليس مكتوبا في ناموسكم انا
قلت انكم آلهة. ٣٥ان قال آلهة لاولئك الذين
صارت اليهم كلمة الله. ولا يمكن ان ينقض
المكتوب. ٣٦فالذي قدسه الآب وارسله الى العالم
أتقولون له انك تجدف لاني قلت اني ابن الله.
٣٧ان كنت لست اعمل اعمال ابي فلا تؤمنوا بي.
٣٨ولكن ان كنت اعمل فان لم تؤمنوا بي فآمنوا
بالاعمال لكي تعرفوا وتؤمنوا ان الآب فيّ وانا فيه
٣٩فطلبوا ايضا ان يمسكوه فخرج من ايديهم.

٤٠ومضى ايضا الى عبر الاردن الى المكان الذي كان
يوحنا يعمد فيه اولا ومكث هناك. ٤١فأتى اليه
كثيرون وقالوا ان يوحنا لم يفعل آية واحدة.
ولكن كل ما قاله يوحنا عن هذا كان حقا.
٤٢فآمن كثيرون به هناك (سميث فان دايك)

HINDI

यहूदी यीशु के विरोध में

22 फिर यरूशलेम में समर्पण का उत्सव आया। सर्दी के दिन थे। 23
यीशु मन्दिर में सुलैमान के दालान में टहल रहा था। 24 तभी यहूदी
नेताओं ने उसे घेर लिया और बोले, “तू हमें कब तक तंग करता
रहेगा? यदि तू मसीह है, तो साफ-साफ बता।”
25 यीशु ने उत्तर दिया, “मैं तुम्हें बता चुका हूँ और तुम विश्वास
नहीं करते। वे काम जिन्हें मैं परम पिता के नाम पर कर रहा हूँ,
स्वयं मेरी साक्षी है। 26 किन्तु तुम लोग विश्वास नहीं करते।
क्योंकि तुम मेरी भेड़ों में से नहीं हो। 27 मेरी भेड़ें मेरी आवाज को
जानती हैं, और मैं उन्हें जानता हूँ। वे मेरे पीछे चलती हैं और 28 मैं
उन्हें अनन्त जीवन देता हूँ। उनका कभी नाश नहीं होगा। और न
कोई उन्हें मुझसे छीन पायेगा। 29 मुझे उन्हें सौंपने वाला मेरा परम
पिता सबसे महान है। मेरे पिता से उन्हें कोई नहीं छीन सकता। 30
मेरा पिता और मैं एक है।”

31 फिर यहूदी नेताओं ने यीशु पर मारने के लिये पत्थर उठा लिये।
32 यीशु ने उनसे कहा, “पिता की ओर से मैंने तुम्हें अनेक अच्छे
कार्य दिखाये हैं। उनमें से किस काम के लिए तुम मुझ पर पथराव
करना चाहते हो?”

33 यहूदी नेताओं ने उसे उत्तर दिया, “हम तुझ पर किसी अच्छे
काम के लिए पथराव नहीं कर रहे है बल्कि इसलिए कर रहे है कि
तूने परमेश्वर का अपमान किया है और तू, जो केवल एक मनुष्य
है, अपने को परमेश्वर घोषित कर रहा है।”
34 यीशु ने उन्हें उत्तर दिया, “क्या यह तुम्हारे विधान में नहीं
लिखा है, ‘मैंने कहा तुम सभी ईश्वर हो?’ 35 क्या यहाँ ईश्वर
उन्हीं लोगों के लिये नहीं कहा गया जिन्हें परम पिता का संदेश
मिल चुका है? और धर्मशास्त्र का खंडन नहीं किया जा सकता।
36 क्या तुम ‘तू परमेश्वर का अपमान कर रहा है’ यह उसके लिये
कह रहे हो, जिसे परम पिता ने समर्पित कर इस जगत को भेजा है,
केवल इसलिये कि मैंने कहा, ‘मैं परमेश्वर का पुत्र हूँ’? 37 यदि मैं
अपने परम पिता के ही कार्य नहीं कर रहा हूँ तो मेरा विश्वास मत
करो 38 किन्तु यदि मैं अपने परम पिता के ही कार्य कर रहा हूँ, तो,
यदि तुम मुझ में विश्वास नहीं करते तो उन कार्यों में ही विश्वास
करो जिससे तुम यह अनुभव कर सको और जान सको कि परम
पिता मुझ में हैं और मैं परम पिता में।”
39 इस पर यहूदियों ने उसे बंदी बनाने का प्रयत्न एक बार फिर
किया। पर यीशु उनके हाथों से बच निकला।

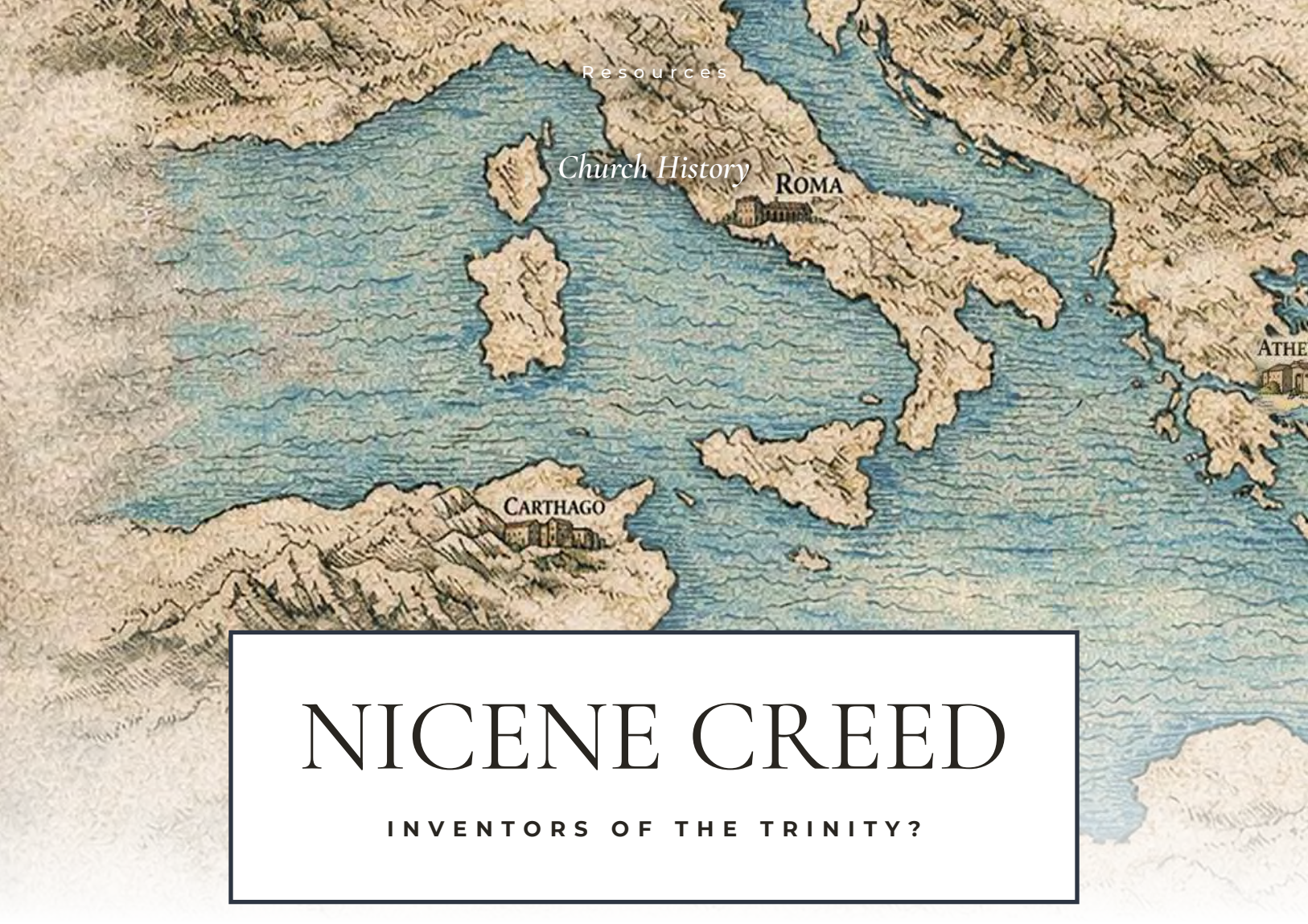
40 यीशु फिर यर्दन नदी के पार उस स्थान पर चला गया जहाँ
पहले यूहन्ना बपतिस्मा दिया करता था। यीशु वहाँ ठहरा, 41
बहुत से लोग उसके पास आये और कहने लगे, “यूहन्ना ने कोई
आश्चर्यकर्म नहीं किये पर इस व्यक्ति के बारे में यूहन्ना ने जो
कुछ कहा था सब सच निकला।” 42 फिर वहाँ बहुत से लोग यीशु में
विश्वासी हो गये। (ERV)

TAGALOG

Itinakwil ng mga Judio si Jesus

22 Taglamig na noon at kasalukuyang
ipinagdiriwang sa Jerusalem ang Pista ng
Pagtatalaga ng Templo. 23 Habang naglalakad
si Jesus sa Templo, sa Portiko ni Solomon, 24
pinaligiran siya ng mga Judio at sinabi sa kanya,
“Hanggang kailan mo kami paghihintayin?
Kung ikaw nga ang Cristo, sabihin mo na nang
maliwanag.” 25 Sumagot si Jesus, “Sinabi ko na
sa inyo, ngunit ayaw ninyong maniwala. Ang
mga ginagawa ko sa pangalan ng aking Ama
ang nagpapatotoo tungkol sa akin. 26 Ngunit
ayaw ninyong maniwala sapagkat hindi kayo
kabilang sa aking mga tupa. 27 Nakikinig sa
akin ang aking mga tupa; nakikilala ko sila,
at sumusunod sila sa akin. 28 Binibigyan ko
sila ng buhay na walang hanggan. Kailanma’y
hindi sila mapapahamak at hindi sila maaagaw
sa akin ninuman. 29 Ang aking Ama na siyang
nagbigay sa kanila sa akin ay lalong dakila sa
lahat, at hindi sila maaagaw ninuman sa aking
Ama. 30 Ako at ang Ama ay iisa.”
31 Muling dumampot ng bato ang mga Judio
upang batuhin si Jesus. 32 Kaya’t sinabi niya sa
kanila, “Marami akong ipinakita sa inyo na
mabubuting gawa mula sa Ama. Alin sa mga
ito ang dahilan at ako’y inyong babatuhin?”
33 Sumagot ang mga Judio, “Hindi dahil sa
mabubuting gawa kaya ka namin babatuhin,
kundi dahil sa paglapastangan mo sa Diyos!
Sapagkat ipinapantay mo ang iyong sarili sa
Diyos, gayong tao ka lamang.”
34 Tumugon si Jesus, “Hindi ba nasusulat sa
inyong Kautusan, ‘Sinabi ko, mga diyos kayo’?
35 Tinawag na diyos ang mga pinagkatiwalaan
ng salita ng Diyos, at hindi maaaring
ipawalang-bisa ang sinasabi ng kasulatan. 36
Ako’y pinili at isinugo ng Ama; paano ninyo
ngayon masasabing nilalapastangan ko ang
Diyos dahil sa sinabi kong ako ang Anak ng
Diyos? 37 Kung hindi ko ginagawa ang mga
ipinapagawa ng aking Ama, huwag ninyo
akong paniwalaan. 38 Ngunit kung ginagawa
ko ang mga ito, paniwalaan ninyo ang aking
mga gawa kung ayaw man ninyong maniwala
sa akin. Sa gayon, matitiyak ninyong nasa akin
ang Ama at ako’y nasa Ama.”
39 Kaya’t tinangka na naman nilang dakpin si
Jesus, ngunit natakasan niya sila.

40 Muling pumunta si Jesus sa ibayo ng Jordan,
sa pook na dating pinagbabautismuhan ni
Juan. Nanatili siya roon 41 at maraming lumapit
sa kanya. Sinabi nila, “Walang ginawang
himala si Juan ngunit totoo ang lahat ng sinabi
niya tungkol sa taong ito.” (MBBTAG)



NICENE CREED

INVENTORS OF THE TRINITY?

A creed is a short statement of faith. The word "creed" comes from the Latin *credo*, which means "I believe." Creeds are written to bring clarity and unity around main Christian teachings (doctrines). But why did church leaders, almost 1,700 years ago, feel the need to write one down? And why were they so focused on defining something as complex as the Trinity? Did they *invent* the Trinity? And does this old creed still matter today? Let's explore the story behind the Nicene Creed—and why it still helps Christians around the world.

The Early Church

After Jesus died, rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, many Christians faced persecution; for nearly three hundred years across the entire Roman Empire. At first, Christians were a small, visible, and often misunderstood minority, receiving opposition from local Jewish authorities (for example, the Bible tells us about the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts.).

Later, as the faith spread, Christians also faced pressure from Roman society and officials. One major reason was that Christians refused to worship Roman gods or treat the emperor as divine—something many Romans believed was necessary to keep the empire safe and blessed. Early persecution was often local and sporadic, depending on the governor and the city.

A well-known turning point came in AD 64, when Emperor Nero blamed Christians for the Great Fire of Rome. After that, persecution became more severe in some places.

Constantine the Great

In AD 313, Roman Emperor Constantine (272–337) helped end official persecution through an agreement known as the Edict of Milan. Christians were now allowed to worship openly. Bishops could travel more safely, churches could be built, and Christian communities could organise their life publicly.

Theological Storm

But new freedom also brought new challenges. When Christians were no longer focused mainly on survival, disagreements became more visible—especially about who Jesus is and how He relates to the Father.



The Nicene Creed (381 A.D.)

We believe in one God[1], the Father[2], Ruler of all, maker of heaven and earth[3], and of all things visible and invisible[4].

And we believe in one Lord Jesus Christ[5], the only-begotten Son of God[6], begotten from the Father before all time[7]; Light from Light[8], true God from true God[9]; begotten, not made[10]; of the same essence (homoousios) as the Father[11], through Whom all things were made[12]; Who for us and for our salvation[13] came down from heaven[14] and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary[15], and was made a man[16]. He was crucified for us[17] under Pontius Pilate[18], and suffered[19] and was buried[20], and rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures[21]. He ascended to heaven[22], and sits at the right hand of the Father[23]. He shall come again[24] with glory to judge the living and the dead[25]: His kingdom shall have no end[26].

And we believe in the Holy Spirit[27], the Lord[28] and giver of life[29], Who proceeds from the Father and the Son[30], Who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and the Son[31], and Who spoke through the Prophets[32]. And we believe that there is one[33], holy[34], universal and apostolic church[35]. We confess one baptism[36] for the forgiveness of sins, and we look for the resurrection of the dead[37] and the life of the world to come[38]. Amen.

[1] Deut 6:4; Eph 4:6
[2] Matt 6:9
[3] Gen 1:1; Rev 4:11; Ps 97:1
[4] Col 1:15–16
[5] Acts 11:17; Rom 1:4; Phil 2:11
[6] Matt 14:33; 16:16; 1 John 4:9; John 1:18
[7] John 1:2; John 1:1–2; John 17:5; John 17:24
[8] Ps 27:1; John 8:12; Matt 17:2,5
[9] John 17:1–5; Col 2:9; Heb 1:3
[10] John 1:18
[11] John 10:30; John 1:18; John 14:9–11; Col 1:15; Phil 2:6
[12] Heb 1:1–2; 1 Cor 8:6
[13] 1 Tim 2:4–5
[14] John 6:33,35; Gal 4:4–5; John 1:14; John 8:23
[15] Luke 1:35
[16] John 1:14
[17] Mark 15:25; 1 Cor 15:3–4
[18] John 19:6
[19] Mark 8:31
[20] Luke 23:53; 1 Cor 15:4
[21] Luke 24:1; 1 Cor 15:4
[22] Luke 24:51; Acts 1:10; Heb 4:14; Acts 1:9–11
[23] Mark 16:19; Acts 7:55; Heb 1:3
[24] Matt 24:27; 1 Thess 4:16
[25] Acts 10:42; 2 Tim 4:1
[26] 2 Pet 1:11; Rev 11:15
[27] John 14:26
[28] Acts 5:3–4
[29] Gen 1:2; John 6:63; Gen 2:7; Rev 22:17
[30] John 15:26; John 20:22; John 14:16, 26; John 16:7; Gal 4:6; John 5:19
[31] Matt 3:16–17; Rev 4:5; Matt 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14
[32] 1 Sam 19:20; Ezek 11:5,13; 2 Pet 1:21; 1 Cor 2:13; 1 Pet 1:11
[33] Matt 16:18
[34] 1 Pet 2:5,9
[35] Acts 2:42; Eph 2:19–22; Eph 4:4–6; Eph 3:10
[36] Eph 4:5; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Rom 6:3–4
[37] John 11:24; 1 Cor 15:12–49; Heb 6:2; Rev 20:5; 1 Cor 15:52
[38] Mark 10:29–30; Titus 2:13

A major debate began in Alexandria (in Egypt). A well-known teacher named Arius (c. 256–336) taught that only the Father is truly God, and that the Son (Jesus) was not eternal like the Father. Arius used verses such as Colossians 1:15 ("the firstborn of all creation") and argued that there was a time when the Son did not exist.

Many people followed Arius. But many church leaders strongly disagreed. They believed the Bible teaches that Jesus is not merely a great created being, but *truly* God.

The Nicene Creed

Emperor Constantine wanted peace in the empire, so he called church leaders to meet and settle the dispute. In AD 325, bishops from across the empire gathered at the Council of Nicaea (in modern-day İznik, Turkey). They studied the Scriptures and affirmed that the Son is fully God, not a created being. They rejected Arius' teaching and produced a statement of faith that became known as the Nicene Creed. The purpose was to protect believers from serious error and to help the church confess the faith with one voice.

So no—the Nicene Creed did not invent the Trinity. It did not add new ideas. It simply explains, in clear words, what the Bible teaches about God. The creed affirms and summarizes the Trinity as it appears in Scripture. It was written because the church needed careful language to answer a wrong teaching.

When we face important questions, we should do what the early Christians did: look to the Bible as our final guide for all of life. Gregory of Nyssa (335–389), debating followers of Arius replied in effect: 'Let God's Word be the judge!"[1]

A Blueprint for Belief

From the Nicene Creed, we can learn several core lessons:

- The Bible is God's authoritative and completely true word; and it is important to believe the right thing.
- Jesus is truly God, and the Trinity is critically important to Christian faith and life.
- Christian faith is about sin and salvation—God's judgment and God's forgiveness.
- Christians look forward to the future: for God to raise our bodies and eternal life in the world to come.
- When false teaching spreads, the church may need clear statements that explain truth and expose error.

1. GREGORY OF NYSSA, 1994. Against Eunomius. Translated by W. MOORE and H.A. WILSON. In: SCHAFF, P. and WACE, H.W. (eds.) Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series. vol. 5. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, p. 104.



Photo by Ales Ustinov — Kyiv

Theology

WITHOUT CEASING TO BE GOD

Every Christian agrees that the incarnation—with its doctrinal emphasis on Christ's *two natures*, one human and one divine, united in *one person*—is one of Christianity's central mysteries. But often, this mystery is neglected for the sake of rhetorical convenience. "Christ was so generous He *left behind His divine attributes*," is how this point typically appears. And to be fair, it sounds attractive on the surface. Isn't this how Christ "sympathizes with our weaknesses" (cf., Heb 4:15)? Doesn't He sympathize with our weakness by *giving up* His divine strength? As shocking as it may sound, we must say *no*.

Some might object with a very important section of Scripture that *appears* to make the very point I intend to reject, however. This passage is Philippians 2:4–8, which says, among other things, that Christ,

> *"though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but* emptied Himself, *by taking on the form of a servant, being born in likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*

There you have it! What else could His "self-emptying" mean but a relinquishing of His divine attributes or divine prerogatives? But the issue is not as simple as that. For one thing, the central phrase of this passage does not provide its own direct object. Christ "empties Himself" … *of what?* To assume that the answer to this question is, "His divine attributes," or "His divine prerogatives," is a bridge too far. The passage simply doesn't make that point. Instead, we see a grammatical tangle, that very intentionally keeps Christ *"in the form of God*"—wherein He "did not need to grasp for equality with God" because He already had it—and yet, while *being* in the form of God, He "self-empties." Paul is very careful with his language precisely to bring us to the very limitations of language itself.

Taking On

Again, we would expect this verb "self-empties" to have a direct object explicitly stated. Instead, we have to look for the direct object from within the context, and the direct object turns out to be a grammatical paradox—which is fitting, given how mysterious the incarnation is. Christ empties Himself, *not by giving anything up*, but specifically by "*taking on the form of a servant.*" The way Christ "empties Himself" is not actually by *getting rid of anything*—how our self-emptying would necessarily work—rather, Christ "empties Himself" precisely by *assuming* to Himself a human nature: His "self-emptying" is a subtraction by assumption—a subtraction *that isn't really a subtraction*!

So, no, Philippians 2:4–8 (and other similar passages) do not teach us that Christ leaves His divine attributes behind when He assumes a human nature. But we can and must reject such a notion not only because it isn't taught in Scripture, but also because it ▸

contradicts important doctrines that *are* taught in Scripture. Let me elaborate with two reasons for rejecting the idea that Christ gave up any part of His divine nature or glory in the incarnation.

Hypostatic Union

First, to say that Christ "gives up His divinity" or "gives up His divine attributes" (or even *some of them*) in the incarnation is to misunderstand the *hypostatic union* (i.e., the doctrine that describes how the divine nature and human nature are united in the Person, Jesus Christ).

The fifth century statement on Christology from Chalcedon emphasizes the hypostatic union by describing how Christ is "truly God and truly man." It goes on to say that Christ is "consubstantial with us *according to manhood*," and "begotten before all ages of the Father *according to the Godhead*." Lest we think that the church fathers at Chalcedon were teaching two Christs—as if there was a *man* Christ, and a *divine* Christ—they go on to confess "one and the Same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten"—and here's where it gets interesting

> *"to be acknowledged in two natures,* without confusion, without change, without division, without separation*; the distinction of the natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son".*

... can we say that God the Son died on the cross? We'd better! The one Person—who exists in two natures—died on the cross. But can we say that Christ's *divine* nature died on the cross? We'd better not! Jesus Christ, who has a divine nature, truly died, but not according to his divine nature.

Now, I know that's a mouthful, but it's very important we get this right. There are not two Christs, one divine and one human. And at the same time, it is not as if Christ is *trading one nature for another*, which is how we treat the incarnation when we describe it as Christ "leaving behind" (at least part of) His divine nature or status or prerogative. Rather, "each nature" is "preserved... inconfusedly."

The theological phrase that describes this point precisely is "the communication of idioms" (or, if you like in the Latin, *communicatio idiomantum*). This concept simply means that whatever we can say about either of Christ's nature, we can say truly about the *person* of Christ, but not everything we can say about one of Christ's natures can we say about the other.

For example, can we say that *God the Son* died on the cross? We'd better! The one *Person*—who exists in two natures—died on the cross. But can we say that Christ's *divine nature* died on the cross? We'd better not! Jesus Christ, who has a divine nature, *truly died*, but not according to his divine nature. When some say that Christ "gives up" part of His divine nature or divine attributes in the incarnation, they are confusing his two distinct natures. That's the first reason we should reject such a conception.

Heavenly Riches

Second, if we say that Christ "gave up" His divine attributes or prerogatives, we actually undermine the gospel itself. To make such an assertion is to strip the incarnation of its benefits. I know this is a stark claim, but hear me out. If it's true that Christ *reveals* the divine nature to us in the incarnation (John 1:18), how could He do that if he "leaves behind" his divine nature or divine attributes in the incarnation? In 2 Corinthians 8:9, Paul says that Christ

[John 1:18: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known."]

> *"was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich."*

This point from 2 Corinthians 8:9 is making the same point of Philippians 2:7—Christ's "poverty" and "self-emptying" amount to the addition of His human nature. They don't constitute the renunciation of His divine attributes or divine nature. If they did, He couldn't show us the glory of the Trinity—because He can't show us what He has left behind—He couldn't make us rich *in Himself*—He can't enrich us with what He no longer has. This is the mystery of the incarnation: Christ, without ceasing to be God, became man, so that in Him, we might become reunited to God. Christ, without ceasing to be rich, became poor, so that in His poverty, we might become rich. Calvin did express it in a very lovely way:

> *"The Son of God descended miraculously from heaven, yet without abandoning heaven; was pleased to be conceived miraculously in the Virgin's womb, to live on the earth, and hang upon the cross, and yet always filled the world as from the beginning."*

Over a millennium before Calvin wrote those beautiful words, the 4th century church father, Athanasius, wrote this:

> *"For he was not enclosed in the body, nor was he in the body but not elsewhere. Nor while he moved that [body] was the universe left void of his activity and providence. But, what is most marvelous, being the Word, he was not contained by anyone, but rather himself contained everything. And, as being in all creation, he is in essence outside of everything by his own power, arranging everything and unfolding his own providence in everything to all things, and giving life to each thing and to all things together, containing* ▸

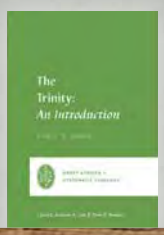
Reflective Questions

1. What two reasons does the author give for rejecting the idea that Christ gave up His divine attributes or divine nature in the incarnation?

   - ☐ It strips the gospel of its power, and it would have made Christ less than the Father.
   - ☐ It misunderstands the self-emptying as subtraction, and it contradicts Scripture's teaching that Jesus reveals the Father to us.
   - ☐ It denies the virgin birth, and His death would not have been sufficient to atone for our sins.
   - ☐ Because Jesus needed to perform miracles, and angels wouldn't worship Him if He were less divine.

2. The author introduces the phrase "communication of idioms"—the principle that attributes of either nature can be ascribed to the person, but not interchangeably to both natures. Try applying this distinction to other actions of Jesus. For instance, was Jesus' obedience to the Father an action of His divine nature or His human nature? Identify other moments in Jesus's life.

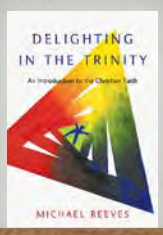
Recommended Books



The Trinity: An Introduction

Scott R. Swain

Biblical foundations, systematic theological structure and practical relevance of the Tinity.



Delighting in the Trinity

Michael Reeves

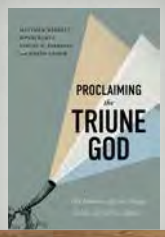
Why do I keep on sinning? This book offers insight and hope for overcoming ongoing sin.



The Deep Things of God

Fred Sanders

Demonstrates engagingly and accessibly the impact of the Trinity on every day Christian life.



Proclaiming the Triune God

M Barrett, R. Kurtz, Samuel Parkison

Demonstrates engagingly and accessibly the impact of the Trinity on every day Christian life.



Biblical Reasoning

R. Jamieson & Tyler Wittman

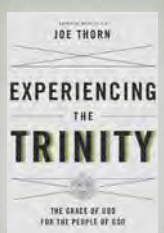
Outlines key theological principles for hermeneutics that help guide exegesis.



Reformed Systematic Theology, Vol. 3

J. Beeke & P. Smalley

Historical Reformed theology, exploring the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation.



Experiencing the Trinity

Joe Thorn

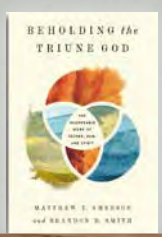
50 Down-to-earth meditations on the Trinity in relation to doubt, fear, and temptation.



Communion with the Triune God

John Owen

Highlights the importance of the Trinity for all believers; encourages to enjoy communion with each Person of God.



Beholding the Triune God

Matthew Y. Emerson & Brandon D. Smith

Easy to read, consice introduction leading readers to deeper wonder and worship.



The Mission of the Triune God

Patrick Schreiner

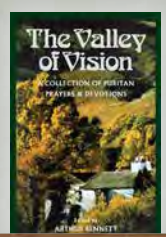
Explaining the Trinitarian heart of Acts: early church, salavation to all, spread of the gospel.



Our Triune God

Philip Ryken & Michael LeFebvre

Explaining roles and relationships within the Godhead while addressing difficult questions asked by ordinary believers.



The Valley of Vision

Edited by Arthur Bennett

Wonderful collection of Puritan prayers to help shape and inform your devotions.

The Cry of Dereliction,

the Cross, and Theology

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (Matt 27:46; cf., Mark 15:34).

The cry of dereliction is often interpreted to bespeak a rupture in the Trinitarian relations. The cost of sin was so great, the thought goes, that paying for it struck death and sadness right up into the very heart of God. If, by "the wrath of the Father is poured out on the Son," we mean something like, "the trinitarian relations are ruptured, and the love and approval between the Father and Son are temporarily replaced with rejection and hostility at the cross," we are gravely mistaken.

Trinitarian Relations and the Cross

Christian orthodoxy insists that the Trinitarian Persons are the one divine essence, personally subsisting. The Father is the divine essence; the Son is that same divine essence; and the same is true for the Spirit. In this sense, the persons of the Trinity can be distinguished conceptually from the divine essence, but not essentially so.

This orthodox view of the Trinity implies that all that God does, God does as Trinity. All that God does is from the Father, through the Son, and in the Spirit

What does all of this imply for Christ's cry of dereliction? It means that whatever else this cry may bespeak, it cannot bespeak a rupture in the happy life of the Trinity. Such a rupture is ontologically impossible: you cannot divide the indivisible life of God the Trinity. God would cease to be God in such a separation. The divine life cannot be against the divine life, and the divine life cannot die.

Christ's Two Natures and the Cross

Does this therefore mean that Christ didn't die? Certainly not! Christ died on the cross, and this was—in the words of the Nicene Creed—"for us men and for our salvation!" But He died in His human nature. Or, to put the matter differently: the Son of God died in a nature that was capable of dying. And this highlights the all-important Christian doctrine of the hypostatic union—hypostasis here speaking to the reality of the single subject (the Son), and union here speaking to the reality of the union of divine and human natures in the single subject.

Holy Scripture and the Cross

Consider that Jesus "commends His spirit" to the Father (Luke 23:46), asks the Father to forgive the sins of his accusers (Luke 23:34), assures the thief on the cross that he will join Christ in paradise (Luke 23:42), and triumphantly declares, "It is finished" (Jn 19:30) all around the same time that He utters the cry of dereliction. If we take Jesus's cry, to be a despairing complaint that His eternally loving Father has stopped loving Him, whence comes these confident assertions and continued dialogue with the Father? Does He so quickly change His mind? Certainly not.

What does Christ mean by this cry of dereliction? Some insight is given by the fact that Christ is quoting Psalm 22. David writes as a suffering King who lays all his hopes on Yahweh being true to the promises He has covenantally granted to David and his household. We can assume, therefore, that Christ was not quoting a single verse from this psalm out of context: He was appealing to the entire thing and was identifying Himself as the covenantal fulfillment of what David longed for in the psalm. Christ is the true suffering, Davidic King, who can say even more emphatically than David could:

> All the ends of the earth shall remember
> and turn to the LORD,
> and all the families of the nations
> shall worship before You.
> For kingship belongs to the LORD,
> and He rules over the nations.
> All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship;
> before Him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
> even the one who could not keep himself alive.
> Posterity shall serve Him;
> it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;
> they shall come and proclaim His righteousness to a people yet unborn,
> that He has done it. (Psalm 22:27–31)

In other words, the cry of dereliction is a claim to royalty. Our Lord identifies Himself as the ultimate fulfillment of what was typified in the life and prayers of David.

Further, the longer we look at these psalms in their wider context, the more Christological they appear to be! For example, Psalm 15 and Psalm 24 contain many parallels. They each ask essentially the same question at their heart: who deserves to come into the presence of God? Both answer with unflinchingly high standards: He who is perfect (Psalm 15:2–5; 24:3–6). These similarities suggest that Psalm 15 and Psalm 24 are bookends of sorts. A chiasm of Psalm 15–24 might look like this:

> A – Psalm 15 – Resurrection/Ascension: who shall ascend?
> B – Psalm 16 – Holy Saturday ("he will not abandon my soul to Sheol...")
> C – Psalm 17 – Good Friday ("Hear a just cry, O Lord; attend to my cry!")
> D – Psalm 18 – Gethsemane: Entrusted to God ("I will call on the Lord")
> E – Psalm 19 – The glory of the Word of God
> D' – Psalm 20–21 – Gethsemane: Entrusted to God ("May he send you help from his sanctuary..." [cf., Lk 23:43])
> C' – Psalm 22 – Good Friday ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?")
> B' – Psalm 23 – Holy Saturday ("... the valley of the shadow of death")
> A' – Psalm 24 – Resurrection/Ascension: who shall ascend? The Lord!

Conclusion

The cry of dereliction does not mark the ontological rupture of the Trinity. It is far more glorious than that! So, let us re-receive Matthew 27:46 as far richer a treasure than we may have at first supposed. The crucifixion is the summit of the Trinity's inseparable work in salvation. God the Trinity saves humanity by assuming humanity and crucifying sin in the human Christ as a divine act of salvation through judgment.

Dr. Samuel Parkison

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the universe and not being contained, but being wholly, in every respect, in his own Father alone. So also, being in the human body, and himself giving it life, he properly gives life to the universe also, and was both in everything and outside of all."[2]

This seems to be a necessary implication from various New Testament passages. For example, in Colossians 1:15–18 and Hebrews 1:1–3, the Son of God is credited not only for the origin of the created universe but also its continual maintenance (". . . and in Him all things hold together" Col 1:17b; ". . . and He upholds the universe by the word of His power" Heb 1:2b). If this is true at *any* point of creation's existence, it is true for every point, including those days in which the earth enjoyed the physical presence of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

The one Triune God—who subsists eternally as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—wills and acts and operates inseparably as one God. There is no exception to this rule, even during the incarnation, which means the beautiful Human who dwells among us in the incarnation reveals divine Beauty to us precisely because He *is* divine Beauty.

The same *Person* who grew and changed *in His human nature* remains immutable and timelessly eternal *in His divine nature*. He can reveal the Trinity's beauty to us precisely because that beauty is *His*. God the Son is infinite in virtue of His divine nature, and God the Son is finite in virtue of His human nature. ■

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by Dr. Samuel Parkison — PhD, Midwestern Seminary; Associate professor of theological studies at Gulf Theological Seminary in the United Arab Emirates.

[1] Calvin, J. (2008) Institutes of the Christian Religion. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, bk. 2, ch. 13, §4.

[2] Athanasius of Alexandria (2014) On the Incarnation. Translated by John Behr. Yonkers, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, ch. 15.

Discipling & Evangelism

NO OTHER GOD MAKES SENSE

A simple way to respond to "The Trinity is nonsense."

Evangelism isn't only about sharing *that* God exists, but helping people see *who* God is—and why the Christian message isn't a random religious option, but the only one that actually holds together. Many people dismiss the Trinity as "nonsense" before they've ever considered what their *own* view of God (or reality) must be to explain things like personality, love, morality, rationality, and the world's mix of unity and diversity. By briefly walking through common alternatives and showing where they collapse, I hope to clear away misunderstandings and move from objection to invitation: from "Christianity sounds weird" to "actually, the Triune God revealed in the Bible makes sense—and Jesus is worth hearing."

Pantheism

Everything is God. Once you say, "Everything is God," you've also said, "Nothing is God." Nothing is distinct or absolute and the divine is as impersonal as the chicken shawarma I ate for lunch. Pantheism can't explain personality or rationality. I might as well call myself a chicken shawarma because all is one and all is God.

Dualism

Two gods at war. This makes a little more sense. We see good and evil in the world. But if two gods are at war, neither of them could be ultimate because each would be limited by the other. And how would we know which one is evil and which one is good? One day the evil god might be on top and call evil good. He might tell me not to pay for my chicken shawarma.

Polytheism

At least three (or more) gods. Multiple gods have more personality but there's still no absolute. And any hope that a third god could arbitrate disputes is dashed when you realize multiple gods tend to breed like rabbits and act like dogs, devouring each other. Polytheism provides lots of personality but very little sanity. My chicken shawarma might be a god, or it might be the offering another god demands; it's hard to keep track.

Unitarian Monotheism

Only one God (singular one). An absolute God but a complete singularity. He would reduce the world to uniformity. He couldn't account for diversity or personality. He would be "Pure Will" and whatever he willed would be right; he could will that I be condemned even if I paid for my lunch. Yet he wouldn't be independent. An absolute singularity has no one to talk to, no one to love, so he would need to create—which means he's not God. He would be a sad and lonely dictator creating slaves like himself.

Trinitarian Monotheism

One God, three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The Triune God revealed in the Bible makes sense of everything. Why do we see so much unity and diversity in the world? Because the Triune God is *Ultimate Unity* and *Ultimate Plurality.* What is the basis for rationality, morality, personality, and truth? The Triune God who is a *Personal Absolute*. Who did God love before He created the world? The Triune God is an eternal community of love. Why does the world exist? The Triune God, infinitely happy in Himself, created the world to display His glory and share His joy. What about evil? The Triune God shines brightest in redemption. What about the chicken shawarma I ate for lunch? Now I know who to thank and why I should pay.

Conclusion

I admit, God is beyond comprehension and we wouldn't know He is Three-in-One unless He revealed Himself to us. But the good news is He has revealed Himself. The Trinity isn't a contradiction; He is the only God who isn't lonely, dependent, or limited. So, the next time someone says the Trinity is nonsense, tell them no other God makes sense, and introduce them to the Triune God of the Bible. He makes sense of everything.

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by Tim Jackson — Associate Pastor in Ras Al Khaimah

MODALISM

TRI-THEISM

ARIANISM

PARTIALISM

MONOPHYSITISM

APOLLINARISM

ADOPTIONISM

NESTORIANISM

DOCETISM

Theology

TRINITARIAN HERESIES

What the Trinity is Not

In the other articles in this issue we have explored what the Trinity is according to the Bible:

> *The one God who exists eternally as three distinct persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each fully God, yet together the one true God.*

It is also good to understand what the Trinity is *not*. Misrepresenting the Trinity distorts the truth of who God is, leading to false worship. Throughout church history, well-meaning believers and earnest teachers have slipped into misunderstandings that obscure the biblical portrait of God. These errors, called heresies, are not merely academic debates. Heretical views of the Trinity often undermine the work of Christ and the Spirit in salvation. If Jesus is not fully God, can He save? If the Spirit is not a person, can He truly indwell and transform us?

We must also acknowledge our human limitations. God's majesty is incomprehensible to us: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9). No analogy, illustration, or creed can fully capture the reality of our eternal God. His nature stands infinitely above our understanding.

Yet what He has revealed, He has revealed truly. The same Scriptures that humble us also teach us to guard the truth. By understanding the common errors—what the Trinity is not—we can better appreciate and worship God for who He has declared Himself to be.

The biblical Trinity calls us not to fully comprehend, but to humbly adore, resting in salvation planned by the Father, purchased by the Son, and applied by the Spirit.

Heresy	Heretical View	Orthodox Response
ERRORS IN THE ONENESS OF GOD		
Tri-Theism	The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three separate gods.	There is only one God in three distinct person, indivisible in their essence or substance (Deut 6:4; Isa. 45:5; John 10:30).
Arianism	The Father alone is God. The Son and Holy Spirit are created beings.	The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are fully divine. The Son is eternally begotten of the Father, not made (John 1:1; 8:58; 1 Cor 2:10; Col 1:16–17).
Subordinationism	The Son and Holy Spirit are inferior to the Father.	The Son and Holy Spirit share the same divine essence and glory as the Father, eternally (Acts 5:3–4; John 5:18; Phil 2:6; Heb 1:3).
Macedonianism	The Holy Spirit is not a person and not God, similar to an angel, not worthy of worship.	The Holy Spirit is fully God and a distinct person, to be worshipped together with the Father and the Son (Matt 28:19; Acts 5:3–4; 1 Cor 2:10–11; 1 Cor 3:16).
ERRORS IN THE THREENESS OF GOD		
Modalism	God is one person who reveals himself in three different modes or roles.	The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct persons who exist and act inseparably (Matt 3:16–17; John 14:16–17; John 17; Eph 2:18).
Partialism	The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each parts of God.	Each person is fully God, not dividing the divine essence while remaining distinct (John 14:9; Col 2:9).
ERRORS IN THE TWO NATURES OF THE INCARNATE SON		
Docetism	Jesus only *appeared* to be human, His physical body and suffering were an illusion.	Jesus was truly human, with a real body, human limitations, emotions, and death. The Incarnation is God the Son taking on real flesh (John 1:14; Luke 24:39; Heb 2:14; 1 John 4:2–3).
Adoptionism	Jesus was born human and adopted as God's Son (given divine power) at His baptism.	Jesus Christ is eternaly the Son of God, He is God the Son who *became* man (Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 14; Gal 4:4; Heb 1:5).
Nestorianism	The human Jesus and His divine nature (Logos / Word) are two separate persons.	Jesus is one Person (hypostasis) with divine and human nature united without confusion, change, division, or separation (Luke 1:43; John 1:14; Rom 9:5; Phil 2:6–8).
Apollinarianism	Jesus is God in His mind and soul (Logos) and human in His body.	Jesus is fully human, including a true human mind and soul, as well as fully divine (Matt 26:38; Luke 2:52; Heb 2:17; 4:15).
Monophysitism	Jesus has only one nature. The human nature was absorbed by the divine nature.	Jesus has two natures (divine and human) existing without confusion, change, division, or separation (John 1:14; John 11:35, 43; Luke 23:46; Phil 2:6–8).

COLUMN

CHRIST, THE ONLY WAY

When I first read God's word, I read it together with my wife. Whenever she got up to take care of something, she would say "Please don't continue without me. Stop at this verse and wait for me to finish, then we can carry on together."

The Almighty Creator revealed Himself and His attributes: Holy, Loving, Just, Faithful, Merciful, and Gracious. The word of God has captivated our hearts, increasing our eagerness to know God and discover the relationship between man and the great Creator, the Giver of Life.

"God honoured Adam greatly. Didn't He?" my wife exclaimed, her face beaming with certainty, mixed with a beautiful smile, her eyes fixed on me. "Absolutely, it is an extraordinary honour," I replied. "Have you noticed in Genesis how God surrounded Adam with highest divine care? He created him in His own image, giving him intellect and free will so that he could choose to love God freely. He gave him dominion over the earth, placed him in the Garden of Eden, and distinguished him with the breath of life."

God gave them commandments so that they might enjoy God's eternal presence. He gave them every tree to eat from, commanding them to avoid only one, warning them if they ate from it, they would die!
However, Adam and Eve committed a sin they could never make right. They disobeyed God and ate from that very tree. At once, sin corrupted their pure nature and brought them under its power. As a result, they were separated from God, fell from His presence and from their original state of glory.

The light of God began to shine on the path before us as we meditated on His word day by day, like a glimmer of hope after wandering in the pitch-black darkness of a deceitful, evil cave. How foolish we were to believe the fallacy that by doing more good than bad, we could return from death to the presence of the Holy God. This false believe blinded us to the truth that no effort of our own could correct the sin rooted in our fallen nature. We did not understand that the sentence for sin is death, and that no one can bring the dead back to life except God Himself through His Holy Spirit. He is God, the Creator of life—the Loving, the Just, the Judge, the Righteous, the Faithful, the Merciful.

> "*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.*" (Ps 145: 3)

"God has revealed the truth so clearly in the Bible", my wife commented. "No matter how many good deeds people do, they cannot save themselves," she added. I affirmed, "Salvation does not depend on our own righteousness, but is entirely God's work—His unconditional love granting forgiveness freely to those who repent."

This is how God's attributes reveal His greatness in the salvation of souls. His holiness and justice go hand in hand with His love, grace and mercy, all fully revealed in Christ Jesus. He came down from heaven and gave Himself on the cross as a sacrifice for many, saving souls from destruction and offering eternal life. (John 3: 16)

from Morocco

FOUAD

Poem



Mystery Revealed

The end began from the beginning;
Not your usual story,
Unity in the Trinity,
Woven into the fabrics of creation.
Our story may often miss the key,
Truth remains—never altered.

That God the Father is One over all
The Master Planner of all that is,
The Creator without limit
Fashioned the world with His Word,
And gives life with His Breath.
He is Love!

Prophecies of old, fulfilled as told.
That the One with the Lord
Is one with the Lord.
Time-past, present, and yet to come,
Revealed in the garment of reality.
That Christ is the Lord,
The mystery resolved.

"In the beginning", says the Word
And the Word was God.

One with the Father
The breath of Life, as in the Garden.

The Breath of Life.
Binds those He justifies,
The Spirit of truth,
Gives eternal life.
The Spirit of light,
Opens these blind eyes.

The end began from the beginning;
One in the Father
One in the Son,
One in the Spirit,
The mystery resolved—
Revealed by the Word.

—

Temi Cotek — church member in Ras Al Khaimah

Reflective Questions

1. Read Isaiah 46:9–10, Ephesians 1:4–11, and Revelation 1:8 and reflect on God's absolute sovereignty over all time and His eternal purpose to unite all things in Christ, who was glorified before the foundation of the world. The poem's line, "The end began from the beginning," echoes the biblical truth that all of history—past, present, and future—is revealed and fulfilled in Christ. This truth confronts our pride by reminding us that our personal kingdoms of status, comfort, and control are temporary and self-serving. Instead of building these small kingdoms, we are called to orient our lives around seeking God's eternal glory. What "small kingdom" are you building? How can you reshape your priorities to seek God's glory rather than your own?
2. Meditate on Galatians 2:20 and 2 Corinthians 3:18. The poem says the Spirit "binds those He justifies," meaning that by faith, the Holy Spirit joins us to Jesus in a living relationship so that we share in His redemption and all its blessings. Union with Christ is both a forever declaration—we are forgiven—and a lifelong transformation into His likeness. Yet we often rely on self-effort to change, instead of depending on the Holy Spirit, our Helper, who unites us to Christ and produces His likeness in us from the inside out. What does it look like practically to live by the Spirit's power in an area where you've been relying on self-effort?

Exploring Scripture

DOES JESUS CLAIM TO BE GOD?

A Closer Look at Jesus's Own Argument for His Divinity in Mark 12:35–37.

If you've spent any time discussing Jesus with Muslim friends, you've likely faced this question: "Where in the Bible does Jesus say that He is God?"

I typically like to respond with something similar to theologian B.B. Warfield's argument that Christ's deity is "in solution" throughout the New Testament. Think of salt dissolved in seawater. You cannot see it, but it is present in every drop, affecting the water's very nature. In the same way, Warfield argued that Jesus's divinity isn't confined to a few proof texts. It is the "presupposition of every word of the New Testament"—the assumed reality behind every page, from the worship Jesus receives to His authority to forgive sins.[1]

But it is also helpful to point to specific instances where Jesus directly teaches about His identity. One such instance is his provocative question in Mark 12:

> "And as Jesus taught in the temple, He said, "How can the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? David himself, in the Holy Spirit, declared, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet."' David himself calls him Lord. So how is he his son?" And the great throng heard Him gladly." (Mark 12:35–37)

This text beautifully illuminates Jesus' identity and offers a glimpse into the New Testament's foundation for Trinitarian doctrine.

The Context: A Day of Questions

This moment is the climax of an eventful day for Jesus in the Temple precincts, a day filled with challenges to His authority (Mark 11:27–12:34). Jesus faced a tricky political question from the Pharisees, a loaded theological question from the Sadducees, and a vital ethical question from a well-meaning scribe. Jesus answered them all with wisdom, leaving the crowd in awe. But then, He turns the tables. He refocuses everyone's attention on the most significant question in the universe: the question of His own identity.

From its very first verse "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," Mark's Gospel has been building a cumulative answer to the question, "Who is Jesus?" Through action, miracle, and teaching, Mark implicitly and allusively presents Jesus as the Son of God, come to establish God's kingdom and save sinners through His own substitutionary sacrifice. Now in Mark 12:35–37, we get a more explicit and direct hint of Jesus' identity.

The Argument: More Than a Son

To address His identity directly, Jesus points to Scripture—specifically, Psalm 110:1. This text is quoted or alluded to nearly 30 times in the New Testament,

making it one of the favourite Scripture passages of Jesus and the New Testament authors. Jesus begins by acknowledging the common teaching of the scribes: that the Christ, the promised Messiah, would be David's son (Mark 12:35). This was the widespread Jewish expectation rooted in the Old Testament, of a king from David's line who would deliver Israel (2 Sam 7:12–16; Isa 11:10; Jer 23:5). Mark has already made this claim explicit, most notably during Jesus's entry into Jerusalem riding on a colt as the people acclaim the arrival of "the coming kingdom of our father David" (Mark 11:10).

But Jesus provokes deeper reflection. Is the Christ only the son of David? Or do the Scriptures promise more? Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1, noting that David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, declared: "The LORD said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet." A careful reader of the Old Testament in English would notice that the first "LORD" in this verse is in small capital letters. In our English Bibles, "LORD" is used to translate God's personal name, YHWH (typically vocalized "Yahweh"). The second "Lord" is a Hebrew word, *adonai*, meaning "master" or "ruler." So David's words can be paraphrased: "Yahweh said to my Master."

This leads to Jesus' penetrating question: How can the Messiah be David's son, if David himself calls him "Lord"? Jesus' logic rests on a self-evident cultural assumption: a son is not greater in rank than his father. A father might call his son "my son," but never "my master." Therefore, the Messiah must be more than merely David's human descendant.

Furthermore, the rest of Psalm 110:1 reinforces Jesus' point. Yahweh invites this messianic figure to "sit at my right hand," a position of supreme authority and shared rule. The king's enemies become God's enemies; his kingdom is God's kingdom. God himself rules through this king. The clear implication is that the Christ is no mere earthly deliverer nor merely a human king. He's not merely David's son. He is a divine King. He is the divine Son. The anointed King presented in Psalm 110:1 has an unimaginably lofty status. He is David's Lord because He is divine, because He existed before David and shares in the identity and status of Yahweh Himself.

The Doctrinal Significance

The weight of Jesus' argument is amplified by its immediate context. Just verses earlier, He unequivocally affirmed Israel's core confession: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Mark 12:29). Yet, in this question about Psalm 110:1, Jesus reveals a distinction of persons within God's oneness. There is a richness and plurality of persons within God's nature. In Mark 12:35–37, we see God the Father speaking to David's Lord (God the Son), while David speaks by the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. Texts like this are the reason why we as Christians believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. Christians, like Jews, are monotheists, but we hold to Trinitarian monotheism—one God in three persons.

This truth confronts us with a glorious mystery beyond full human comprehension. But would we truly expect things to be different? How could we, as limited creatures, fully and perfectly understand God our Creator, who is of a completely different order of being than us? He is God, full of glory and majesty, mystery and wonder. We are mere creatures. The appropriate response to the doctrine of the Trinity is to fall on our faces in worship and adoration and declare the glory of the God we serve.

Finally, Jesus' question prompts another question:

Why did David's Lord become David's son?

The answer is the heart of the gospel. David's Lord became David's son so that He might be our Lord, and so that we might become sons of God[2]. The biblical storyline reveals that only God could save us from sin "Salvation belongs to the Lord!" (Jon 2:9). Yet Scripture also reveals that salvation had to come through a human—the offspring of the woman (Gen 3:15), the promised son of Abraham (Gen 22:18), the righteous son of David (2 Sam 7:13). So Jesus, God the Son, assumed a human nature to become fully and truly man, our Lord Jesus Christ, perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity, truly God and truly man[3]. As David's Lord, who is fully and truly God, He alone could bear the full weight of God's wrath against sin. As David's son, who is fully and truly human, he alone could stand as our substitute, our true and perfect representative. He came to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). Mark's Gospel reveals that Jesus established the kingdom of God *through* the cross[4].

Like the religious leaders of his day, we must beware of any identity for Jesus that falls short of this complete picture. He is not merely a prophet, a great teacher, or a life coach. To miss the essence of who He is—the Divine Saviour and Lord—is to miss everything. It is the difference between life and death, between heaven and hell. Jesus is the Divine Saviour who saves his people from sin and death. He calls us with urgency to repent and believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15). He is the sovereign Lord who calls us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him (Mark 8:34–38).

As we engage our non-Christian friends with the gospel, we need not fear their questions. We can confidently bring them to Jesus in the pages of Scripture, who not only answers their questions but ultimately confronts them—and us—with the most important question of all: "Who do you say that I am?"

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by Aubrey Sequeira — Senior Pastor in Abu Dhabi; Adjunct Professor, Gulf Theological Seminary

[1] B. B. Warfield, "The Deity of Christ," The Fundamentals (1917), accessed March 15, 2026, https://bbwarfield.com/works/the-deity-of-christ/

[2] For the point made in this paragraph, I am indebted to Stephen J. Wellum, God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 111–249.

[3] To use the language of the Chalcedonian Definition (AD 451). See https://www.ccel.org/creeds/chalcedonian-creed.html

[4] See Jeremy R. Treat, The Crucified King: Atonement and Kingdom in Biblical and Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 87–110.



Christian Living

IS GOD THE FATHER LIKE MY FATHER?

I was 25 years old before I could say the word "father" while praying. The word was foreign to me. It didn't roll off my tongue the way it did for many of my Christian friends. It felt like a word from a foreign language. In one regard, it meant nothing. It was jibberish. But in another, it meant a world of things. Amid the cultural barriers, it still struck a nerve, because while it meant nothing, it meant everything. It meant broken things. Scary things. Hurtful things.

How was I supposed to use a word that, for me, brought to mind everything a parent shouldn't be when I was in conversation with a God whom I'd been told was everything my dad wasn't? How was I supposed to call God by a name I hadn't used for most of my life; a name that didn't mean to me what I knew Scripture insisted God is? For me to call God a father was like calling an apple an orange. They didn't mix. Sure, I knew God was a Father, but how was I sure he wasn't like my father?

Fearing the Shadow

In the Bible, the family unit gives us a picture of how God relates to us, his children. We understand that God, like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, welcomes us home to be with him through the sacrifice of Christ. He desires a relationship with his children. He cares for us. We know we're able to understand the nature and character of love because God loved us first. In Christ's prayer in John 17, we learn that God desires us to be with him, together as a family. In this regard, our earthly fathers give us a picture, a shadow, of what God the Father is truly like.

Dads want to be with their children. They want to spend time with them, to care for them, to love them. They want their children to know how much they would risk to protect them. Dads want children to know what they'd do if they lost them. This is what dads do. So for a child of God, it should be pretty great that God is like a dad, right?

For the fatherless, this isn't good news. We're fearful of the shadow God has set in place. The result? We're frightened by God the Father, because we're terrified of our earthly fathers. How can we come to God without fear when we're scared to go home when Dad is there? How can we understand God's love and faithfulness when Dad left town because he loved someone or something more than us? How can God be a mighty fortress of protection when Dad hit instead of hugged? How can God be a firm foundation of trust and assurance when Dad built in us a mountain of disappointment and insecurity?

It's devastating that the very thing God has given to reflect his love and mercy and faithfulness is the very thing keeping many from crawling into their heavenly Father's lap. I'm almost 31, and this is still a daily fight. It's a fight to trust God thinks of me differently than my dad did. It's a fight to not assume God enjoys disciplining me more than blessing me. It's a fight not to think God is mad at me more often than he delights in me. Some days it feels hopelessly exhausting.

Hopeful Way Forward

What changed it all for me was a recalibration. It took a reorientation for me to move forward in trusting the Lord and calling him Father. What do I mean? Instead of looking at my dad and then back at God, I learned to look at God first. I realized if God wasn't my first source of fatherhood, I was always going to be off-balance. If I didn't start with God, then he would always be the replica rather than the original.

This recalibration took turning to Scripture to fill my mind with the true nature of God instead of turning to the empty shadow first. Through his gracious Word, he showed me he delights to lavish mercy. He doesn't stay angry. He takes my wrongs and faults and covers them in his Son. Since his grace and mercy are new each day, I don't have to wake up tiptoeing around in his presence. I can run to him, freely and confidently. Moreover, he doesn't hang my shortcomings over my head; he treats me with constant grace. Through Christ, he has made a way for me to know and enjoy him. He can be found. He isn't hiding. He didn't leave. In fact, he came looking for me to rescue me from brokenness. He hasn't given up on me.

In the Son, I see the Father isn't hiding. On a cross, he proved he came for me. On a cross, he proved that—unlike any shadow we've seen—he alone always keeps his promises and always makes good on his commitments.

Harbour Awaits You

So push into Scripture. Don't run away. I've found my heavenly Father is truly unlike any dad I've ever known. He isn't mad. He isn't coming home waiting to punish me. He's waiting to shower me with mercy and grace.

This doesn't mean it's easy. It's been a scary journey. But God's glorious fatherhood should be, and can be, the great lighthouse that draws us in from dark storms and raging seas. It brings us in from rushing waters.

So step to the helm. Make the move. Turn the ship and go full-throttle toward the shore. Let the fatherhood of God be the beacon that draws you safely into the harbour, not the waves that keep you lost at sea.

Go home. Trust me. It's safe.

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by Jonathan C. Edwards — (MDiv, ThM) director of curriculum for Docent Research Group, lead writer, author of *Left: The Struggle to Make Sense of Life When a Parent Leaves* (Rainer Publishing, 2016).
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New Church Al Qusais

He was quite comfortable in the Philippines and felt no direct need to make a move. But twelve years ago, Allen's wife had the aspiration to move to Dubai for her career, so they decided to give it a try. Today, Allen is the pastor of a new church in the neighbourhood of Al Qusais. We were curious to know more about how he became a pastor and the realities of planting a church in the city.

Words & Photography by Josien Bucarizza

Interview

Meeting Allen for the first time was like talking to someone you've known for years. He is friendly, positive, and refreshingly real—not at all the pastor-type who feels more like a sermon than a person. Even so, my very first question revealed my own bias, as I incorrectly assumed he was already a Christian when he relocated to Dubai.

"No, I was not a Christian. My parents are Hare Krishna and Roman Catholic, but I didn't follow anything. That changed when we moved to Dubai, we stayed with my wife's cousin. He is a pastor. As you can imagine, staying at a pastor's home, you kind of have no choice but to join his church service every Sunday!"

A rather unique way of paying rent...

"Exactly!" he laughs. "I was neutral about it, so I kept attending. It was a small Filipino church, maybe 25 people, and they were very kind to us. Moving to a country where you don't know anyone is a big thing. But suddenly I had a community, a family. I felt welcome, and at home."

How did you go from neutral to Christian?

"The pastor would often preach against idolatry and always urge us to 'read your Bible'. I felt it as a personal attack! 'Clearly,' I was reasoning, 'I'm the only new one here, all the rest are born-again Christians, so he *must* be talking about me! I don't worship idols, but I do have a Roman Catholic background, so who is this guy talking about? It must be me!' He kept insisting 'read your Bible and see whether what I'm saying is right or wrong.' So I did. I downloaded a Bible app, had no clue about translations, and ended up with a very old English version. I started in Psalms. But that didn't make sense to me: 'what *is* this? I don't understand anything here! There is no logic.'" Allen laughs at the memory, "Psalms are Hebrew poetry," he explains. "Then I said to myself, 'Let's start at the beginning'. In Genesis 1 I recognized creation, Adam and Eve, 'Okay,' I thought relieved, 'now we are talking.' But then I came to a part where there are *so* many names—this guy begets this guy, and this guy begets that guy, etc. 'What are all these names for?' and I kept wondering, 'Where is Christ in this story? I though we are Christians, where is Jesus here? I don't see Jesus.' Then I learned there are two Testaments. So, I started with the New Testament, opened the book of Matthew, and lo and behold, it starts with a genealogy! Again lots of names, this guy begets this guy, etc. 'What are all these things?' I pressed on, and in chapter two, there's the birth of Jesus." Allen smiles, "'Ok, great, there is Jesus!' But then I reached Matthew 5–7, the Sermon on the Mount. That's when it first hit me."

Allen has a natural gift for story telling, and as he talked about this pivotal moment in his life, I found myself on the edge of my seat.

"Jesus is saying radical things. He says if you look at a woman with lust, you've committed adultery in your heart. He says to pluck out your eye if it causes you to sin! 'Honestly!' I thought, 'Why would someone say that?' Also I read, 'love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you'. It opened my eyes to God's standard—His holiness—and I saw how dirty I was. Man, I thought I was a good person, but then Jesus is saying this..." Allen lifts his hand high above his head to illustrate the standard. "And I'm somewhere..." He glances down. "...far below. Nowhere—really nowhere near that!" He pauses. "That's when I was convicted of my sin, my terrible life, and just how holy God is."

Listening with intense fascination, I felt no urge to interrupt as Allen continued,

What books do you enjoy reading?

""I love *Delighting in the Trinity* by Michael Reeves. Right now, I'm enjoying James Hamilton's books: *Typology* and *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*. Also, Stephen Dempster's *Dominion and Dynasty*. Biblical theology books are my favourite."

"During that time, my Muslim friends at work would say they believed in Jesus, but not that He was God. Back at church, the pastor *would* say, 'Jesus is God.' I started researching online and found sites arguing that Jesus wasn't God. I was very confused, 'What now, is *this*?' I kept reading my Bible on the long metro commute from Al Nahda to Jebel Ali, wrestling with it all.

On the verge of giving up, I prayed plainly: 'Who are You, Jesus, really? I'm just confused.' That day, in the Lord's providence, I was reading Matthew 16. In verse 13 Jesus asks His disciples who people say He is. After they answer, He turns to them and asks, 'But who do you say that I am?'" Allen's voice grows more intense with the memory. "It was as if Jesus was right there in the metro, asking me! 'Who do you say that I am, Allen?' In confusion I thought, 'Wait, I asked *You* first!' Thankfully, Peter answered for us, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' (Matthew 16:16) Boom. Game over. That was my answer right there. I acknowledged, the Bible is true. Jesus is the Son of God. I couldn't un-see it. I will follow Him, no matter what."

Still on the edge of my chair, Allen continues, sharing how his repentance led to his baptism and a deeper commitment to the life of the church. ▷

"My wife and I were so amazed by Scripture, seeing everything for the first time, so we started gathering small groups to read and study the Bible together: 'Let's read Mark!' 'Let's read Romans!' We desired to learn, and be amazed together by what the Bible says."

When did you first sense God calling you into ministry?

"After coming to faith, my desire for God's word was *so* strong! Within months, I had a burden to help others in the church see what I just had begun to see and to encourage their appetite for Scripture. As my wife's faith deepened, we grew together into a shared passion for ministry. Not knowing how that would look like, we knew that we had to be faithful, whatever the Lord had for us.

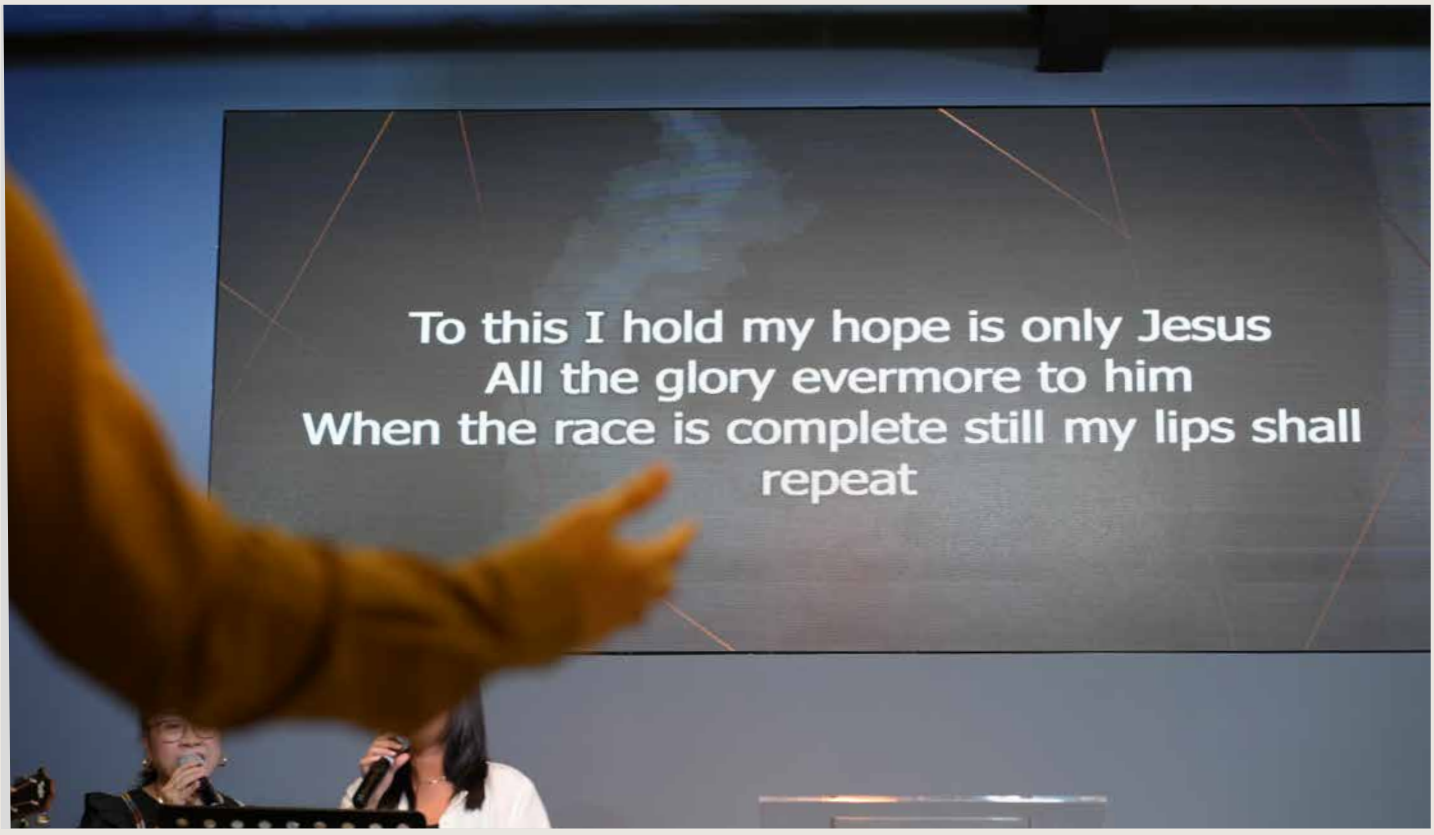
A few years later, while teaching our small group, I was struck by the thought: 'I'm teaching the words of eternal life! Either I'm leading people to eternal life, or I'm leading them into eternal death if I'm getting this wrong.' I had never been mentored, never been discipled, no one taught me anything, and yet I was *teaching*. I trembled. The weight of that accountability was immense. In God's providence, He led us to a church that would pour into me for the next eight years. As I was completing my studies at Gulf Theological Seminary, I was invited to join the church staff full-time. I said yes immediately—yes to leaving my job, yes to serving full time, whatever the role. I didn't even ask, 'Will I be paid?' I just wanted to do ministry."

And church planting, how did that come about?

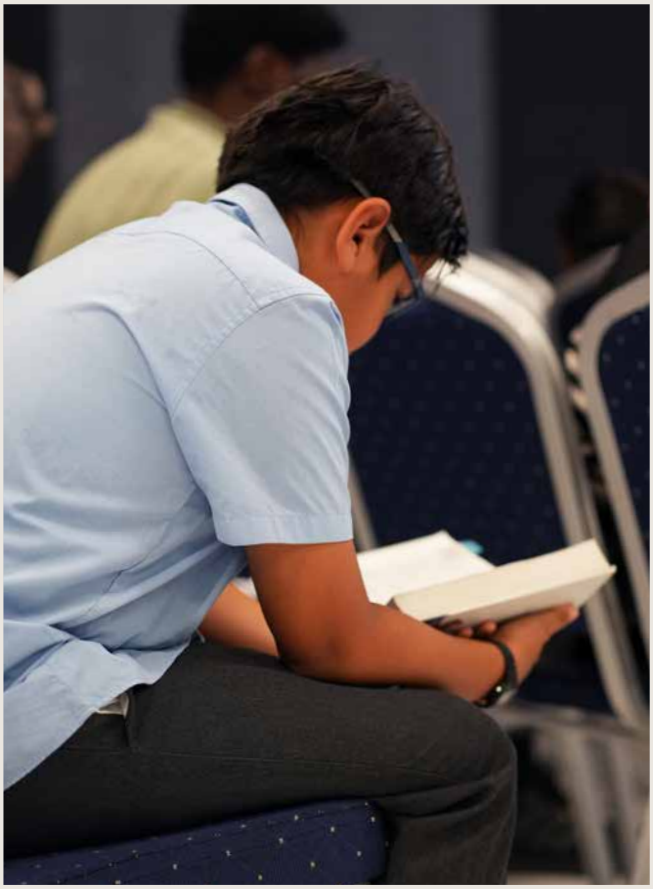
"With our church's intentional focus on church planting, along with formal training, I began to see the city's need more clearly. During my time serving as an elder, those around me affirmed my gifts in preaching, and a couple of influential men in my life encouraged me to consider church planting. I had never thought about it before. But after prayerfully processing it, I said to my wife, "I think it's becoming clear what the Lord has been calling us to—to plant a church." I remember asking, "Do you have any questions or thoughts?" She was terrified, but she still replied, "I don't have any questions. If this is where the Lord is leading us, I'm going to support you." I prayed she would not only support it, but desire it too, and the Lord was kind—within six months, I saw her heart grow warm."

I'd message people for support, and they would see it but not reply. We got seven rejections from venues. Only four people joined. The bank account was empty. I thought, 'Okay, what is happening?'

Allen adds, "It's not only important that others confirm your calling, but also that you ask wise questions. I went through an assessment process at my church—whether God was truly calling me, whether I was fit for the task, prepared and equipped."







Planting a church comes with obvious challenges. What were your biggest fears?

"Oh, plenty! Two main ones. First, finances: I would have to raise support for both the church and my own salary. I'd never done that!" he laughs. "For a Filipino, that's not common. I can't go back to the Philippines and say, 'I'm planting a church, can you give me money?' They'll say, 'You should give *us* money—you're in the Middle East!'

The second was people. If it's just me, my wife, and my kids, that's a family, not a church. Then there's everything else—leading a team, finding a venue, the logistics. I often found myself thinking, 'They didn't teach me *that* in seminary!'"

How has pastoral leadership in a new church plant shaped your walk with God?

"There was a season of deep discouragement. I'd message people for support, and they'd see it but not reply. We got seven rejections from venues. Only four people joined. The bank account was empty. I thought, 'Okay, what is happening?' I can work hard and sow seeds, but I cannot produce growth. I had to learn to trust God for that. It doesn't mean I can stop working. It means I work hard, trust God, and then work hard again, and let the Lord give the growth in His time.

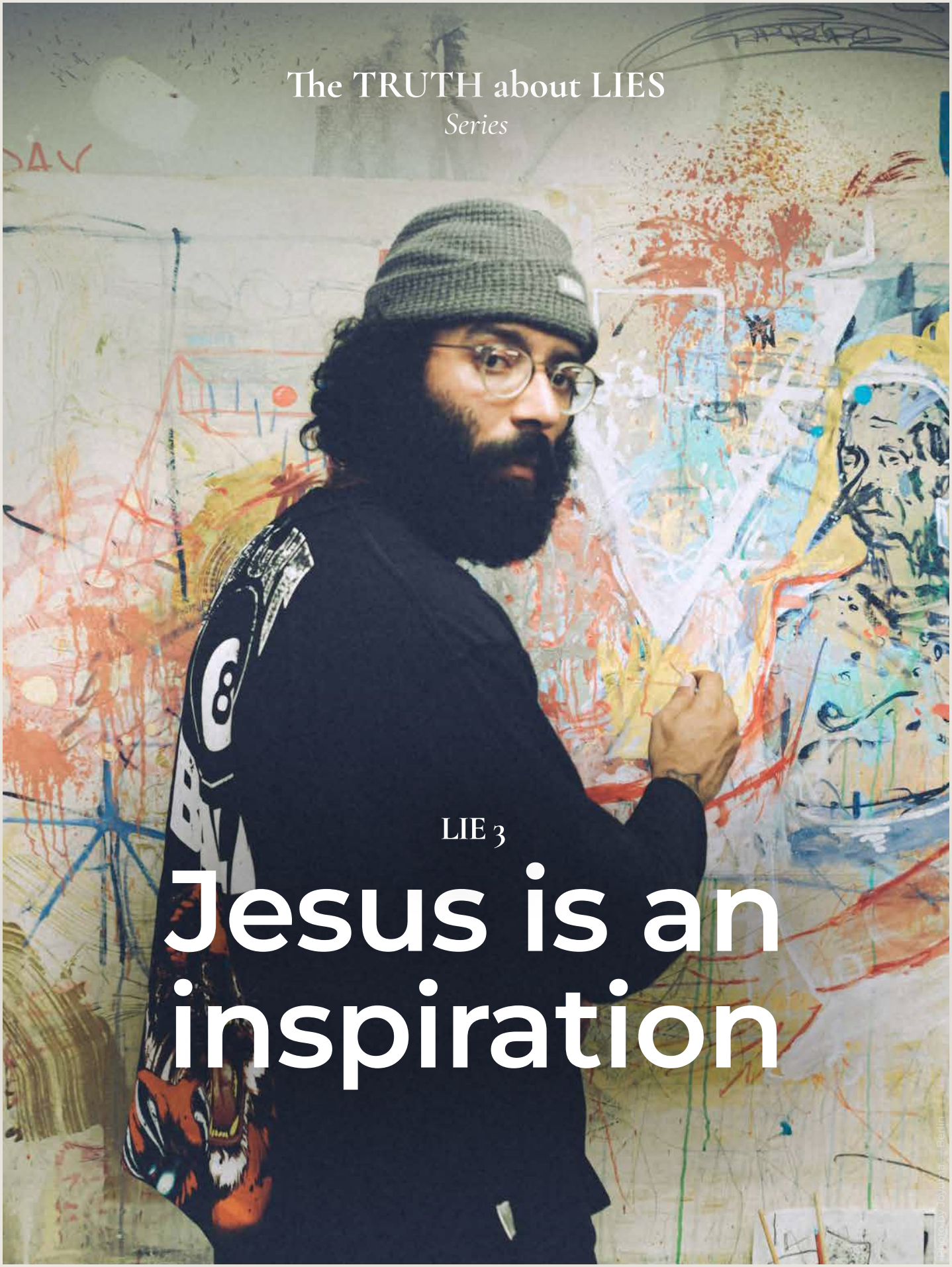
That season also showed me our need to pray. I was good at teaching the Bible, but our prayer time was always rushed. So we changed it. After our Bible study, the men and women would separate and spend a full, unhurried 30 minutes in deliberate prayer, week after week. And we saw God answer. Funds came in. A few more people joined. We found a venue. The Lord has proven Himself to be such a generous provider. I couldn't have fabricated any of this. It's Jesus who is building this church, not Allen. That reality has changed my perspective and drawn me so much closer to Him."

How would you encourage someone with a desire to do ministry but feels unqualified?

"First, know that we are all unqualified. We are only ever qualified because Jesus is, and He makes us qualified. Second, examine your motives. Why do you want to do this?
Third, don't go at it alone. Be open with people you trust. Ask them, 'What gifts do you see in me? What should I be thinking about?' If you're married, your spouse must affirm your calling, otherwise it's unwise to press on alone. And you need people from your church speaking into your life, giving you points for growth. Whatever the ministry, you need to prepare for it. It's hard work, but if it's for the kingdom of God, I will be worth it." ■

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The TRUTH about LIES
Series



LIE 3

Jesus is an inspiration

Scriptural Reflections

Jesus usually rates pretty highly in people's estimation. He was a good man, a prophet even; an amazing teacher to learn from, an inspiration to humankind. It's a lie. At least, it's a lie if you think that's all He was.

The Pharisees knew better than to think Jesus was a good man. They knew better than to think they could just give Him the thumbs up and then carry on as before. They knew Jesus' actions and words disrupted everything they stood for. Even the intrigued Pharisee Nicodemus wanted to set Jesus straight.

Jesus was making these religious men deeply disturbed as He declared Himself able to forgive people—blasphemy!—to be "the Son of Man" and "Lord even of the Sabbath" (Mark 2:28). These weren't inspirational words, this was heresy. And far from easing off as the pressure mounts, Jesus picks a fight:

"Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched Him closely to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath. Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, 'Stand up in front of everyone.'

Then Jesus asked them, 'Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?' But they remained silent.

He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored." (Mark 3:1–5)

ABOUT

The Truth about Lies

Series

Each series covers a chapter of the book *The Truth about Lies* by J. Mack Stiles which focuses on an individual encountering Jesus from the New Testament. During each interaction Jesus exposes a lie that many of us have been brought up to believe as self-evident truth. Every exposé contains a common thread: The truth is more relevant to you than feels comfortable.
The encounters all come from one of four Bible books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. These accounts are biographies recording Jesus' time on earth—the same story captured from four unique perspectives. And what they show runs to the heart of what it means to be human. For you. For me. Jesus meets our greatest need.

We don't know anything else about the man who gets healed, but we know a lot about those looking on with "stubborn hearts."

Pharisees combined politics and a strict interpretation of religious law. In modern terms, they would be like a US congressman or British MP but undergirded with righteous religious practice. They never met a law they didn't like. And they especially liked the ones about keeping the Sabbath—their holy day—so much so they'd add to God's commandment to rest for a day each week with details about exactly what fell under the definition of "work." Even carrying a mat or walking further than three-quarters of a mile were two of the many strictly forbidden.
Was it right for Jesus to heal on a Sabbath day? They didn't need to debate for long:

> "Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus."
> (Mark 3:6)

No appreciation for the man's healing. No amazement that Jesus could perform this miracle. No doubts about their doubts. Only one thing: this Man had to die.

Jesus knows they will seek to kill Him. That's why He asked them if it was wrong to kill on the Sabbath. If ever there was a full-blown picture of hypocrisy, here it is: the Pharisees plan to murder—on the Sabbath.

As rigorous as the Pharisees were about the laws of God, they had forgotten that the law was about doing good and saving life, about loving God and loving others. Jesus knew this. He was motivated ▷

by more than just love for the man in need of healing.

Jesus could have healed him quietly after the meeting was over, or on any other day of the week, but He wanted to expose the lies of the Pharisees. He saw their hard hearts, anticipated their treachery, and healed the man anyway.
Jesus knows it's as if He has signed his own death warrant. But He does not stop because He knows it's our only hope. This story is bigger than the healing of one man's hand. It is an image of what Jesus came to do.

... we tend to judge the Pharisees, but just like them, we can stumble over what Jesus teaches about Himself.

We are this broken man. We are in desperate need. We long to be made whole. And Jesus gives him more than a new hand. Jesus sacrifices His life to make him complete.
Moreover, Jesus gave His life for the truth to be revealed. From our twenty-first-century viewpoint, we tend to judge the Pharisees, but just like them, we can stumble over what Jesus teaches about Himself.

The Lie: Jesus is an Inspiration

I lived in Dubai for sixteen years with my family. It's a crossroads of the world with people from all backgrounds living together. There, I formed a friendship with a white South African named Basie. He grew up in South Africa during the days of Apartheid. During those days, Basie believed the white leadership to be right and good. He and his family benefited from Apartheid.

But the Basie I knew in Dubai was very different; it was clear he had rejected Apartheid. He loved all people and treated everyone with equal respect. As I probed about his past Basie said something that I have never forgotten:

> "Mack, you cannot imagine how horrible it was to wake up one day and realize that everything that you have believed, everything you have staked your life on, everything that you lived for is a lie, and Apartheid was a lie."

Could it be that you have believed a lie about Jesus—that you have bought into a system of disbelief that may say some nice things about Jesus, but that allows you to live how you want?
Jesus is far more than mere inspiration; to think that puts you in dangerous Pharisee territory.
The Gospel of John gives us a bit more detail on one of the many Sabbath debates between Jesus and the Pharisees following another healing:

> "So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute Him. In His defense Jesus said to them, 'My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I too am working.' For this reason they tried all the more to kill Him; not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God." (John 5:16–18)

Gradually, as the Pharisees realized that Jesus was claiming to be equal to God, they had their religious reason to do what they had already decided. Even if they had been pro-Jesus before, to claim to be on the same footing as the Almighty Creator God was unthinkable. They didn't hide their anger.
Far from backing off, however, Jesus piled on the claims. He has the same life and death power as God the Father, he does the divine work of judgment and he demands the same honour:

> "Jesus gave them this answer: '... For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom He is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent Him.'" (John 5:19, 21–23)

Jesus believed He was the divine Son of God, sent by God the Father into the world. He taught He wasn't merely a good man or even a God-sent prophet. He declared Himself to be so much more than a person to admire or a motivational figure. He's either the Son of God, or he is a liar.

The Truth: Jesus is the Son of God

We all know people who talk the talk but don't walk the walk. But Jesus never betrayed a friend.

We can't keep Him at arm's length by thinking of Him as merely a good man or an inspiring moral example. He is the One with all "authority, glory and sovereign power." We need to come to Him with our worship as our God.

Sex, money, power, or acclaim never seduced Him. He didn't gossip. He loved the young and the old; He respected rich and poor. He treated women and those of different nationalities with dignity and respect. He never took advantage of anyone for anything. He never made a promise He didn't keep.

When the crowds shouted His praises, Jesus was humble. When the mob shouted for his death, Jesus stood firm. His life perfectly aligned with His teachings and convictions. No mere man could do this. No fake could pull this off.

One of Jesus' favourite titles for Himself was "the Son of Man." It's a reference to the Bible book of Daniel in the Old Testament where "one like a son of man" approached God the Father:

> "He [the Son of Man] was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." (Daniel 7:14)

Jesus will one day be seen for who He truly is and worshiped by all. The Son of Man is the Son of God.

We can't take Him or leave Him. We can't keep Him at arm's length by thinking of Him as merely a good man or an inspiring moral example. He is the One with all "authority, glory and sovereign power." We need to come to Him with our worship as our God. ■

Extract from *The Truth About Lies* by
J. Mack Stiles — former pastor in Iraq, author and international speaker
10 Publishing, 2023 — a division of 10ofThose.com

Reflective Questions

1. The author warns that treating Jesus as "mere inspiration" can put us in "dangerous Pharisee territory." When we reduce Jesus' authority in our lives, we are often just protecting our own independence—and it is dangerous because it is a way of rejecting Jesus while still feeling as though we are following Him.

   What is the one area of your life you are keeping in the grey—the part that doesn't quite match what Jesus teaches? And what do you sense is keeping you from obeying God?

2. Which truths does the Daniel 7 reference support?

   - ☐ The Son of Man is another name for an angelic messenger.
   - ☐ All people will one day worship the Son of Man.
   - ☐ Jesus was a prophet fulfilling a prediction about a suffering servant.
   - ☐ The Son of Man is mainly a title for a political liberator.
   - ☐ God gave the Son of Man authority and power.

Conversation Starter

When you are with your family or Christian friends, ask them: "How would you give a biblical response to someone who says, 'I believe in God, and I think Jesus was a great teacher, but I'm not really into organized religion'? Would you say something, or stay silent to keep the peace? And what do you think Jesus would say?"

C. SP URG EON

CHARLES SPURGEON'S
MORNING AND EVENING

DEW ARABIA

Photo by Fiza H

Readings by C.H. Spurgeon

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost."

John 14:26

The time we live in now is the time of the Holy Spirit, more than ever before. Jesus encourages us not by being physically with us—as He will be one day—but by the Holy Spirit living inside us and staying with us continually. He is the constant Comforter of the church. ***His role is to encourage the hearts of God's people. He makes us see our sin; He brings understanding and educates us. But the main part of His work is to bring joy in the hearts of those who have new life in Christ,*** *to strengthen the weak, and to lift up all who are struggling. He does this by helping them see and know Jesus. The Holy Spirit bring you comfort, by bringing you to Jesus, as Jesus is the comfort itself. To use an example: the Holy Spirit is like the doctor, and Jesus is like the medicine. The Spirit heals the wound by applying the healing balm of Christ's name and grace.* ***The Spirit does not point people to Himself—He takes what belongs to Christ and gives it to us.***

So if we use the Greek name for the Holy Spirit—Paraclete, meaning "Comforter" or "Helper"—then we could say that Jesus is the Paraclesis: the Comfort itself. ***The Spirit is the Comforter; Jesus is the Comfort.*** *With such a great help available, why should any Christian be sad or lose hope? The Holy Spirit is graciously committed to be your Comforter. Do you think, you weak and trembling believer, that He will neglect this holy responsibility? Do you think He has promised to do something that He cannot do, or will not do? If His special work is to strengthen you and comfort you, do you think He has forgotten His task, or that He will fail you in this loving care?*

No—do not think so badly of the gentle and blessed Spirit whose name is "the Comforter." ***He delights to give the oil of joy to those who are sad,*** *and to cloth those with praise whose spirits are heavy. Trust Him, and He will certainly comfort you until all mourning is gone forever and the wedding feast has begun!*

Modern translation of Charles Spurgeon's Morning and Evening daily readings; evening 12th October

واما المعزي الروح القدس يوحنا ١٤:٢٦

إن الزمن الذي نعيش فيه حاليًا هو زمن الروح القُدس، أكثر من أي زمن آخر. لا يُشجِّعنا يسوع بكونه معنا بالجسد – مثلما سيَحدث يومًا ما– بل بواسطة الروح القُدس الذي يَسكن فينا ويَمكث معنا على الدوام. إنه المُعزي الدائم للكنيسة. إن دوره هو أن يُشجع قلوب شعب الله. إنه يُرينا خطيتنا؛ ويُعطينا الفَهم ويُعلِّمنا. لكن الجزء الأساسي في عمله هو أن يَجلب الفرح إلى قلوب الذين لديهم حياة جديدة في المسيح، وأن يُقوِّي الضعفاء، وأن يَرفع كل مَن يُعانون. يقوم بهذا بأن يُساعدهم أن يَروا ويَعرفوا يسوع. إن الروح القُدس يُعطيك التعزية، عن طريق إحضارك إلى يسوع، حيث أن يسوع هو التعزية. إذا أردنا استخدام مثال توضيحي، يُمكننا أن نقول إن الروح القُدس مثل الطبيب، ويسوع مثل الدواء. الروح القُدس يَشفي الجراح بأن يُقدِّم البلسمَ الشافي المُتمثل في اسم المسيح ونعمته. لا يُوجِّه الروحُ القُدس الناسَ إلى نفسه – إنه يأخذ ما يُخص المسيح ويُعطينا إياه.

فإذا استخدمنا اللقب اليوناني للروح القُدس – الباركليت، الذي يعني «المُعزي،» أو «المُعين» – فإنه يُمكننا أن نقول إن يسوع هو الباركليسِس: التعزية. إن الروح القُدس هو المُعزي؛ يسوع هو التعزية.

في ضوء وجود هذه المعونة الهائلة، لماذا قد يُصبح المؤمنُ حزينًا أو يائسًا؟ لقد تعهَّدَ الروح القُدس في نعمته بأن يكون مُعزيك. هل تعتقد، أيها المؤمن الضعيف والمهزوز، أنه سيتخلَّى عن هذه المسؤولية المُقدَّسة؟ هل تعتقد أنه وَعَدَ بأن يَفعل أمرًا لا يستطيع فِعله، أو لن يَفعله؟ إذا كان عمله الخاص هو أن يُقوِّيك ويُعزيك، هل تعتقد أنه نَسى مُهمته، أو أنه سيُخيب آمالك من جهة هذه العناية المُحِبة؟

كلا – لا تُفكِّر بأمر سيئ مثل هذا بخصوص الروح القُدس الوديع والمُبارَك الذي اسمه «المُعزي.» إنه يُسَر بأن يُعطي زيت الفرح للحزانى، ويُسَر بأن يُغطي بالتسبيحَ الذين أرواحهم مُثقَلة. ثِق به، وبالتأكيد سوف يُعزيك، إلى أن يَختفي كلُ الحزن إلى الأبد ويَبدأ عشاء عُرس الحَمَل!

تشارلز سبرجن – ١٢ أكتوبر، تأمل مسائي

Church & Life Practices

TEACHING KIDS

TO KNOW, LOVE AND ENJOY THE TRINITY

"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."

Deuteronomy 6:6–7

The Bible is clear: we are called to pass down the truth of God's Word to the next generation. This is not a suggestion only for the pastors, professors, or theologians; it is a command for every believing parent. Yet, when it comes to the doctrine of the Trinity, many of us hesitate. We shy away from the topic for various reasons.

Usually, we shy away for two reasons: inadequate knowledge and underestimating our children's ability to understand.

Inadequate Knowledge

First, we feel inadequate in our own understanding. We worry that if our children ask, "How can one be three?", we won't have a clever enough analogy to satisfy them, and it will just expose how little we know about the Trinity.

Do not be discouraged. Many of the most brilliant saints throughout church history spent their lives marvelling at the mystery of the Trinity without ever exhausting it. However, don't be content and stop there. The Trinity is the foundation of all Christian doctrine. As Michael Reeves beautifully puts it in his book Delighting in the Trinity, "God is love precisely because He is a Trinity—a Father eternally loving His Son in the Spirit, and that love overflowed in creation."

In other words, to know God is to know the Trinity, and to know the Trinity is to know God. Knowing this Triune God deepens our joy and satisfaction in Him.

While the doctrine is profound, there are several basic ways to deepen our understanding of the Trinity:

1. **Love and savour the Bible**, reading it every day, paying close attention to how God is progressively revealed as three Persons in one God.
2. **Read good books about the Trinity.** I encourage you to check out the recommended resources found in this third edition of *Dew Magazine*.
3. **Commit to a healthy church,** where the Trinity is worshipped. This includes a holistic diet of corporate Scripture readings, expositional sermons from both the Old and New Testaments, Trinitarian corporate prayers, and ordinances that display the Trinity. This does not mean every sermon is on the Trinity, but rather that each message is sensitive to the text whenever it reveals something distinct about the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit.

Underestimating our Kid's Ability to Understand

Second, we assume that children simply cannot grasp a complex doctrine. We decide to wait until they are "older," but in doing so, we miss the foundational years of their spiritual formation.

We are mistaken if we think children cannot understand the Trinity. While they may not grasp the technical Latin terms, they can understand the language of relationship—of a Father who loves, a Son who saves, and a Spirit who dwells within.

With these convictions in mind, here are some practical ways to teach our children to know, love, and enjoy the Trinity.

Teach while They are Young

When my son, Abraham, was just three years old. I asked him, "Who are the persons of God?" and he answered confidently, "Father, Son, and Spirit." Then I asked, "Why did God make us?" In his sweet three-year-old tatter voice, he answered, "For His laundry!" We laughed, but even in that adorable mispronunciation of "glory," a seed was being planted. By the time he was eight he conversed confidently with his classmates about God, Jesus and creation, able to stand up for it in conversations with non-believers.

In your prayer, model a Trinitarian prayer by mentioning each Person specifically. Instead of always using the generic name "God" or "Lord," try to be specific about whom you are praying to.

If we wait until they are "old enough," we miss the years when their hearts are most receptive. As Proverbs 22:6 reminds us,

> "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

Start with the Basics

Teaching the Trinity doesn't have to be complicated. You don't need a Master's from the *Gulf Theological Seminary*; you just need to be intentional. (Although if you can do both, by all means, do it.) You can begin with the historic tools the church has used for centuries: creeds, confessions, and catechisms. These provide an easy-to-remember grammar that helps children categorize what they see in the Bible.
You can also use your church's statement of faith as a starting point and build from there. Read it together and look up the supporting verses.

Another great exercise is to read the Gospel of John with your children. John's Gospel is uniquely focused on the relationship between the Father and the Son. As you read, ask them: "What is the Father doing here? What is the Son saying about the Father? How will the Spirit comfort the disciples or convict the world of sin?" We often treat the Trinity like a theological calculation. But the Trinity is not a math problem for us to solve, but a glorious fellowship to be enjoyed. Imagine if our kids could truly see this.

Model it in Family Worship

Theology is often "caught" as much as it is "taught." Our children need to see that the Trinity matters to us in our daily lives.

In your Bible reading, when you encounter the Father, Son, or Spirit, pause and highlight their distinct roles. Help your children see that the Father plans, the Son accomplishes, and the Spirit applies our salvation.

In your singing, introduce songs that celebrate the Triune God.

In your prayer, model a Trinitarian prayer by mentioning each Person specifically. Instead of always using the generic name "God" or "Lord," try to be specific about whom you are praying to. For example:

> "Father, thank You for choosing us and sending Your Son, Jesus, to live and die to save us. Lord Jesus, thank You for Your perfect obedience and Your sacrifice on the cross. Holy Spirit, thank You for removing our hearts of stone and giving us new hearts to believe in the person and work of Jesus. Thank you for helping us understand the Bible today. We pray this in Jesus' name."

Be Creative

We named our daughter 'Trinity'! Noting that her brother's name is in the Bible, she would ask, "Is Trinity in the Bible?" One of her favourite songs became "Holy, holy, holy" as it mentions the blessed "Trinity."

Conclusion

Teaching our children about the Trinity is one of the greatest gifts we can give them. It protects them from a "generic" or "unitarian" view of God that can feel distant or cold. Instead, it introduces them to a God who has been loving and relational for all eternity.
Our kids might start out thinking God made us for His "laundry," but as we diligently teach them, they will grow to see that we were made for His "glory"—the shared, overflowing glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

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by Allen Mandap — Senior Pastor in Dubai

Photo by Pawel Czerwinski

Prayer of Confession

Lost in a Digital Desert

Almighty and faithful God, we come before You humbled to confess our sins. We remember You spoke to Abraham. You told him to leave home, family, and security. You asked him to trust Your promises even when the way was unknown. Today, You speak to us, through Your Word.

Yet, Lord, we confess that we **fail to trust and obey Your Word**. We follow our own plans. We chase comfort, convenience, and the glitter of our city. We fail to spend time in Your Word, distracted by social media, entertainment, and fleeting pleasures. We excuse ourselves by saying we have no time. Often, our priorities are checking out YouTube shorts and useless videos on social media. While we could be in discipling relationships, we choose instead to **waste time on entertainment**. Forgive us, Lord, for giving so much of our attention to what is temporary rather than eternal.

Forgiving God, we confess that we often **delay obedience**. So often, we trust our own timing more than Yours. We make decisions based on **financial convenience** rather than to prioritise the fellowship of the church. Like Abraham, we **struggle to wait** for Your promises. Like Lot, we rush toward what seems good, secure and instantly gratifying. We follow the **desires of our eyes.**

We confess our **feeling of entitlement**, thinking we deserve what we see around us. We confess our **covetousness,** desiring what belongs to others instead of trusting Your provision. Even though You hold everlasting treasures for us, we live for the perishing wealth of this world. Forgive us for our impatience, for our doubts, and for our lack of faith in Your faithfulness.

Our heavenly Father, we confess our **fear of suffering**. So often, we avoid trials or sharing the gospel because of fear and hesitation. Many times, we live just like the world, avoiding hardship, even though Christ has warned us that trials *will* come. Like Abraham, we are called to trust You in uncertainty—to trust You in the situations You ordain in our lives. But we **show reluctance** even to enter into discomfort for the sake of Your gospel. Forgive us, Lord, for so often failing to trust Your sustaining grace in difficulty, and for lacking the courage and faith for evangelism.

And Lord, we confess our **failure to worship You**, giving thanks and praise for Your work of salvation. Like Abraham, we should build altars of gratitude, but often **we grumble** as we worship our own idols of prosperity, wealth, and desire. We let feelings of entitlement blind us to Your blessings, as if we deserve Your salvation. We **cling to our own goodness** rather than repenting of our wretchedness.

Forgive us and help us respond to You with hearts of
praise, gratitude,
introspection, repentance,
and obedience.

We pray this through Jesus, the fulfilment of Your promises.
Amen.

by Philip Johnson — church member in Dubai

Testimony

God Changed the Channel



Growing up Gen Z also meant this for me: hours of zoning out to reality TV, binging Netflix, and doom-scrolling on my phone. How else could you keep up with pop-culture conversations without knowing what everyone was watching?

I was born in the Middle East, raised in a Muslim family where faith was inherited. I thought to be smarter than that and put my faith in science. "I'm progressive," I told my mom, "your thinking is old fashioned."

Without realizing it, the internet culture shaped my personality and moral standards. It defined for me what it meant to be "good": LGBTQ and visiting the Pride Parades? Fine. Partying? Only on weekends, so fine. People-pleasing? That's how to be kind.
I thought I was a light in people's lives. But looking back? I was completely dark. I looked like I had it together, while sin had me spinning out of control. From the outside, I was independent. Inside, I was utterly lost without knowing it.

Then I met someone else who was lost too: a Christian boy who was dating a non-believer—me. When we broke up, he left his Bible behind, the one his mom gave him. Over winter break, I started reading it, day and night. And somewhere along those pages my dark-night heart became light as day.
God opened my eyes. Every verse breathed living truth—raw, undeniable. God poured His love over me. He saw me. Not just looked—loved. Me, the darkness. Him, the Light. Me, the sinner. In Him, saved.

He renewed my heart. I confessed my sins. I turned from my ways and couldn't step foot into the same places I used to. Light has no business in darkness. The pull was gone. Reality TV, Netflix shows, music, clubs—no more. Forgiven. New life. Into the Light!

God brought me home—to Himself. He's all I think about. All I want. Jesus is the Christ, God in the flesh, who died for every sin I committed. And He rose—victorious over the grave, promising eternal life with Him.

"When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory." — *echoing Isaiah 25:8*
"O death, where is your victory?
O death, where is your sting?" — *Hosea 13:14*

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Corinthians 15: 54–57

by

Lina

Catechism

What is a catechism?

In a Christian context, it means to teach Biblical truth and often this is done in an orderly way with questions, answers and biblical support.

Why?

A catechism helps believers, and children, understand the Bible more clearly through inter-pretation, selection, organization and completeness:

Interpretation: It provides a big-picture understanding of how individual Bible verses fit together within the larger message of Scripture.

Selection: It highlights the most essential parts of Scripture for knowing God and living faithfully, helping believers prioritise what to focus on.

Organization: It arranges biblical truths in a logical, progressive way, preventing confusion that can come from learning disconnected verses.

Completeness: It ensures a more comprehensive grasp of the "whole counsel of God", offering a solid foundation of truth.

As we are required to continue in the faith, stable and steadfast (Col 1:23) we are urged to "attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, … so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Eph 4:13–14) as there will be many deceivers (1 John 2:26).

Let's continue!

In the previous editions we had a look at the first eighteen questions, to study and memorize it with our family and friends. Let's continue with the 'New City Catechism' from the Gospel Coalition (available on newcitycatechism.com, in app and book version, in different languages incl. Hindu and Urdu).

As with memorizing the Bible itself, God's truth will equip you as a Christian for daily life.

NEW CITY CATECHISM

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ENGLISH

Question 19
Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favor?

Yes, to satisfy His justice, God Himself, out of mere mercy, reconciles us to Himself and delivers us from sin and from the punishment for sin, by a Redeemer. ISAIAH 53:10–11

Question 20
Who is the Redeemer?

The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, in whom God became man and bore the penalty for sin Himself. 1 TIMOTHY 2:5

Question 21
What sort of Redeemer is needed to bring us back to God?

One who is truly human and also truly God. ISAIAH 9:6

Question 22
Why must the Redeemer be truly human?

That in human nature He might on our

TAGALOG

Tanong 19
Mayroon pa bang paraan upang makaiwas tayo sa kaparusahang darating at muling maibalik sa pabor ng Diyos?

Oo, para mabigyang kasapatan ang Kanyang katuwiran, ang Diyos mismo, ayon sa Kanyang kahabagan, ay ipinagkasundo tayo sa Kanyang sarili at iniligtas tayo sa ating mga kasalanan at sa kaparusahang kalakip nito sa pamamagitan ng isang Manunubos. 1 TISAIAS 53:10–11

Tanong 20
Sino ang Manunubos na ito?

Ang tanging Manunubos na ito ay ang Panginoong Jesu-Cristo, ang walang hanggang Anak ng Diyos, na sa Kanyang katauhan ang Diyos ay naging Tao at inako ang kabayaran ng kasalanan sa Kanyang sarili. 1 TIMOTEO 2:5

Tanong 21
Anong katangian mayroon dapat ang Manunubos upang tayo ay maibalik sa Diyos?

Siyang Manunubos ay dapat ngang tunay na Tao at tunay ring Diyos. ISAIAS 9:6

Tanong 22
Bakit kinakailangan na ang Manunubos na ito ay tunay na Tao?

ARABIC

سؤال ١٩
هـل هُناك أي وسـيلة للنجاة من العقاب والرجوع مـرة أخرى إلى الرضا الإلهي؟

ج١٩: نعـم، إن الله نفسـه، من خلال رحمته الخالصـة، لكي يُرضي عدالته، صالحنا لنفسـه وأنقذنـا من الخطية ومـن عقوبة الخطية، بواسـطة الفادي. إشعياء ٥٣:١٠،١١

سؤال ٢٠
مَن هو الفادي؟

إن الفادي الوحيد هو الرب يسـوع المسـيح، الابن الأزلي للـه، الذي فيه صار الله إنسـانًا وحمل عقوبـة الخطية بنفسـه. ١ تيموثاوس ٢:٥

سؤال ٢١
مـا نـوع الفادي الذي نحتاج إليـه ليُعيدنا مرة أخرى إلى الله؟

يجـب أن يكون الفادي حقًا إنسـان وأيضًا حقًا الله. إشعياء ٩:٦

behalf perfectly obey the whole law and suffer the punishment for human sin; and also that He might sympathize with our weaknesses. HEBREWS 2:17

Question 23
Why must the Redeemer be truly God?

That because of His divine nature His obedience and suffering would be perfect and effective; and also that He would be able to bear the righteous anger of God against sin and yet overcome death. ACTS 2:24

Question 24
Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die?

Since death is the punishment for sin, Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God. By His substitutionary atoning death, He alone redeems us from hell and gains for us forgiveness of sin, righteousness, and everlasting life. COLOSSIANS 1:21–22

Question 25
Does Christ's death mean all our sins can be forgiven?

Yes, because Christ's death on the cross fully paid the penalty for our sin, God graciously imputes Christ's righteousness to us as if it were our own and will remember our sins no more.
2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

Question 26
What else does Christ's death redeem?

Christ's death is the beginning of the redemption and renewal of every part of fallen creation, as He powerfully directs all things for His own glory and creation's good. COLOSSIANS 1:19–20

Question 27
Are all people, just as they were lost through Adam, saved through Christ?

No, only those who are elected by God and united to Christ by faith. Nevertheless God in His mercy demonstrates common grace even to those who are not elect, by restraining the effects of sin and enabling works of culture for human well-being. ROMANS 5:17

Question 28
What happens after death to those not united to Christ by faith?

At the day of judgment they will receive the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them. They will be cast out from the favorable presence of God, into hell, to be justly and grievously punished, forever. JOHN 3:16–18, 36

Upang sa Kanyang kalikasan bilang tao ay maging kahalili natin na kayang tuparin ang buong Kautusan at magdusa para sa kaparusahan ng mga kasalanan ng tao; at gayundin ay makisimpatya sa ating mga kahinaan. HEBREO 2:17

Tanong 23
Bakit kinakailangan na ang Manunubos na ito ay tunay na Diyos?

Upang sa Kanyang kalikasan bilang Diyos, ay maging sakdal at epektibo ang Kanyang pagsunod at pagdurusa; sa gayon ay makayanan Niya rin ang matuwid na poot ng Diyos laban sa kasalanan, ngunit kaya ring mapagtagumpayan ang kamatayan. GAWA 2:24

Tanong 24
Bakit kinakailangan na si Cristong Manunubos ay mamatay?

Dahil nga ang kamatayan ang siyang kabayaran ng kasalanan, si Cristo ay nagkusang mamatay sa ating lugar upang Kanya tayong mailigtas sa kapangyarihan at kabayaran ng kasalanan, at muli tayong maibalik sa Diyos. Dahil sa Kanyang buhay na namatay upang gawing handog, Siya lang ang may kakayahang tumubos sa atin sa impiyerno, at magkaloob ng kapatawaran sa ating mga kasalanan, katuwiran, at buhay na walang hanggan.
COLOSAS 1:21–22

Tanong 25
Ang kamatayan ba ni Cristo ay makapagpapatawad sa lahat ng ating mga kasalanan?

Oo, dahil ang kamatayan ni Cristo sa krus ay sapat, at nabayaran na nito nang buo ang lahat ng ating mga kasalanan, at dahil sa kahabagan ng Diyos ay ipinagkakaloob Niya sa atin ang katuwiran ni Cristo, anupa't itinuturing Niya itong sa atin na, at hindi na Niya inaalala pa ang ating mga kasalanan.
2 CORINTO 5:21

Tanong 26
Ano pa ang tinubos ni Cristo doon sa Kanyang pagkamatay?

Ang kamatayan ni Cristo ang siyang naging pasimula ng katubusan at pagpapanibago ng bawat nilalang na nahulog sa kasalanan, at sa pamamagitan ng Kanyang makapangyarihang salita, ay pinasusunod Niya ang lahat ng mga nilikha para sa Kanyang kaluwalhatian at sa ikabubuti ng lahat ng mga nilalang.
COLOSAS 1:19–20

Tanong 27
Ang lahat ba ng tao, na naligaw sa pamamagitan ni Adan, ay maaaring maligtas kay Cristo?
Hindi, bagkus sila lamang na hinirang ng Diyos at pinag-isa kay Cristo sa pamamagitan ng pananampalataya. Gayunpaman, dahil ang Diyos ay mahabagin, patuloy pa rin Niyang ipinapalasap ang Kanyang biyaya sa kanilang hindi naman Niya hinirang.
ROMA 5:17

Tanong 28
Ano ang mangyayari pagkatapos ng kamatayan doon sa mga hindi nakipag-isa kay Cristo sa pamamagitan ng pananampalataya?
Sa Araw ng Paghuhukom, matatanggap nila ang nakakikilabot ngunit matuwid na hatol ng kapahamakan na ipapataw sa kanila. Sila ay aalisin sa harapan ng Diyos, at sila'y itatapon sa impiyerno at parurusahan doon nang may katuwiran magpakailanman. JUAN 3:16–18, 36

سؤال ٢٢
لماذا يجب أن يكون الفادي حقًا إنسان؟

لكي يستطيع بطبيعة بشريّة نيابة عنّا أن يطيع الناموس كله بشكل كامل، وأن يتحمّل العقوبة بسبب خطية البشريّة؛ وأيضًا لكي يكون قادرًا أن يرثي لضعفاتنا. العبرانيين٢:١٧

سؤال ٢٣
لماذا يجب أن يكون الفادي حقًا الله؟

لكي تكون طاعته وآلامه كاملة ومؤثرة وفعّالة بسبب طبيعته الإلهيّة؛ وأيضًا، لكي يكون قادرًا على تحمُّل الغضب الإلهي العادل ضد الخطية ومع ذلك يهزم الموت. أعمال٢:٢٤

سؤال ٢٤
لماذا كان ضروريًا للمسيح، الفادي، أن يموت؟

بما أن الموت هو عقوبة الخطية، مات المسيح بإرادته بدلًا عنّا لكي يُنقذنا من قوة الخطية وجزائها ولكي يردنا مرة أخرى إلى الله. فمن خلال موته البديلي الكفّاري، هو وحده يفدينا من الجحيم ويقتني لنا غفران الخطايا، والبر، والحياة الأبديّة. كولوسي ١:٢١،٢٢

سؤال ٢٥
هل موت المسيح يعني أنه يمكن غفران كُل خطايانا؟

نعم، لأن موت المسيح على الصليب دفع بالكامل ثمن عقوبة خطيتنا، فقد احتسب الله لنا برَّ المسيح بنعمته وكأنّه برُّنا الشخصي، ولن يعود يذكر خطايانا فيما بعد. ٢ كورنثوس ٥:٢١

سؤال ٢٦
ما الذي افتداه أيضًا موت المسيح؟

إن موت المسيح هو بداية فداء كل جزء من الخليقة الساقطة وتجديدها، إذ هو يوجِّه بقوة كل الأشياء لمجده الخاص ولصالح الخليقة.
كولوسي ١:١٩،٢٠

سؤال ٢٧
هل كل الناس، مثلما ضلّوا بواسطة آدم، يخلصون بالمسيح؟

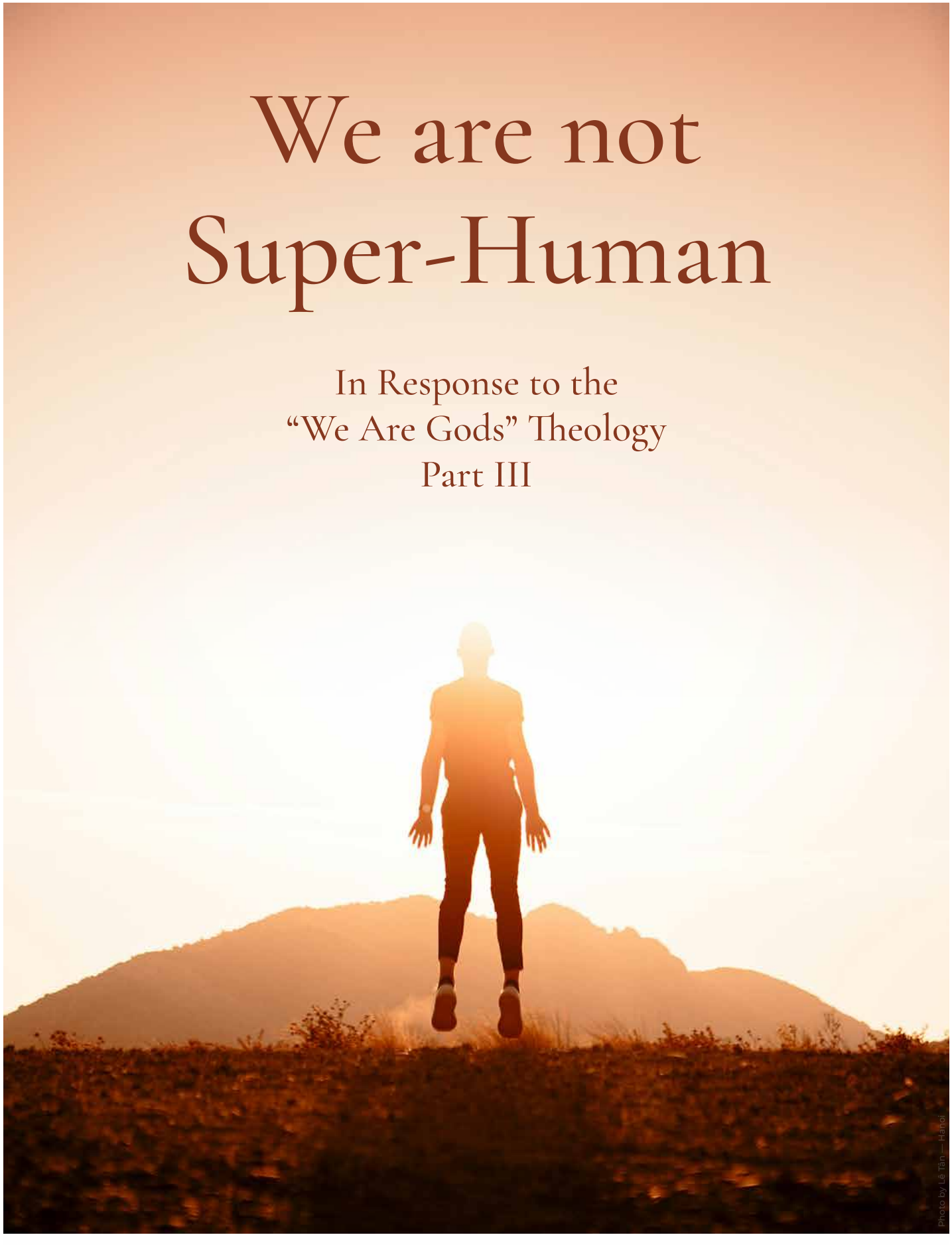
لا، فقط أولئك المُختارون من قِبَل الله، الذين اتحدوا بالمسيح بالإيمان. ومع ذلك، أظهر الله في رحمته النعمة العامة حتى لغير المُختارين، عن طريق الحدّ من آثار الخطية وتمكين الأعمال الثقافية لخير الإنسان. رومية ٥:١٧

سؤال ٢٨
ماذا يحدث بعد الموت لأولئك الذين لم يتّحِدوا بالمسيح بالإيمان؟

سوف ينالون في يوم القضاء الحكم المرعب ولكنه العادل بالدينونة الصادرة ضدهم. سوف يُطرَدون خارج إحسان حضور الله، إلى الجحيم، لينالوا العقاب العادل والمؤلم، إلى الأبد يوحنا ٣:١٦،١٨،١٩،٣٦.

We are not Super-Human

In Response to the "We Are Gods" Theology Part III



In the two previous articles, I examined a few of the claims of the 'New Creature' or 'We are Gods' theology, which falls under the bigger umbrella of the 'Word of Faith' movement.

In the first part, I examined their statement that God created humans as gods. The assertion is that being made in God's image means we share His divine nature. We examined this claim in light of the Scriptural teaching and rejected this false claim.

In the second part, I examined their belief that being children of God entitles us to health and wealth—stemming from an erroneous understanding of the biblical doctrines of regeneration and adoption.

In this final part, I would like to revisit the origins of this false doctrine and show that it is an old heretical claim wearing a different cloak. One that was dealt with and rejected by historic Christianity.

Tracing the history of this false doctrine

Essek William Kenyon is considered the 'high priest' of this movement. Most proponents of the 'we are gods' theology hold him as the one who 'unlocked the revelation' that we can live above sickness as a class of superhuman beings.

Contemporary students of Hagin, such as Kenneth Copeland, Creflo Dollar, Joyce Meyer, Frederick K. Price, Joel Osteen, Chris Oyakhilome, Morris Cerullo and many others, have continued to spread these false teachings. You can identify them by carefully examining their preaching through the lens of holy Scripture.

A lofty view of man at the expense of God

The glaring problem with the 'we are gods' theology is its low view of God and the lofty self-aggrandisement of humanity. Listen to depictions of this from some of the adherents:

> "The believer is as much an incarnation of God as Jesus Christ… the church hasn't realized yet that they are Christ. That's who they are. They are Christ." (Kenneth E. Hagin)

> "Man… was created in terms of equality with God, and he could stand in God's presence without any consciousness of inferiority… He made us the same class of being that He is Himself." (ibid).

> "God came from heaven, became a man, made man into little gods, went back to heaven as a man." (Benny Hinn).

> "I am a little god. I have His name. I am one with Him. I'm in covenant relationship. I am a little god. Critics be gone!" (Paul Franklin Crouch).

> "You are gods because you came from God, and you are gods." (Creflo Dollar).

> "When I read in the Bible where He says, "I AM," I smile and say, yes, I Am too." (Kenneth Copeland).

> "You don't have a god in you. You are one." (ibid).

> "Until we comprehend that we are little gods and we begin to act like little gods, we cannot manifest the Kingdom of God." (Earl Paulk).
> "The whole purpose of God was to reproduce Himself. … you're not looking at Morris Cerullo, you're looking at God, you're looking at Jesus." (Morris Cerullo).

> "And therefore you are gods; you have been purchased by the blood of Jesus." (Rory Alec).

> "I live above the elements of this world. I live above sickness, disease, and death. I'm immune to anything that ravages the lives of men; I belong to God's class of divine beings. I am a partaker of the divine nature; my body is sustained by a force that the ordinary man cannot perceive. My kidneys, lungs, heart, all tissues and every organ in my body function properly." (Chris Oyakhilome).

None of these claims are true, of course. You are not a god, not even close. Neither are you above sickness, disease, or death. Not on this side of eternity. Everything on earth grows old, dies and decays. God Himself caused it to be so after the fall (Rom 8:18–23).

An old heresy repurposed in a new cloak

The 'we are gods' theology resembles the ancient Monophysite heresy. The term Monophysite has its roots in Greek, monophysis, meaning 'one nature or substance'. Eutyches propagated this position in the fifth century. He argued that Jesus had one nature, comprising a mixture of divine and human attributes. In other words, Jesus' nature could be viewed as a deified human nature. This was rejected by the Council ▷

of Chalcedon in AD 451. The council was at pains to prove that any mixture of the two natures of Christ that would result in a deification of his human nature or a humanization of his divine nature was a distortion of the Biblical teaching. "Jesus is fully man and fully God", the council of Chalcedon affirmed, yet his two natures were not mixed or confused.

This is how they explain away the fact that believers in the New Testament could fall ill (2 Tim 4:20)**, even to the point of death** (Phil. 2:2) **(...) Paul hadn't yet 'caught the revelation' that he could live above sickness.**

Jesus was fully God and fully man; one person, two natures. We see this clearly articulated in Scripture. As a man, he got tired, hungry, slept, was bruised, sweated, didn't know all things and died. As God, He knew all things, could perceive the thoughts of others before they spoke them, could raise the dead, walk on water, give sight to the blind, create new life by bringing from the dead and restoring a severed ear, etc. To be sure, Jesus' divine nature could communicate information to his human nature, but it did not communicate attributes. Otherwise, Jesus as a man wouldn't have needed to rest, eat or sleep (God does none of these). The Council of Chalcedon stated, "Each nature retains its own attributes." In other words, the divine nature retains divinity in every respect, while the human nature, similarly, retains its humanity in every respect.

If not even Christ, then why us?

The 'New Creature' doctrine followers seek to be like Christ in every sense. If we are like our Lord, then we can do what He did and live like He did. They quote 1 John 4:17, which says, "As He is, so are we in this world." At first glance, this seems like a very pious and noble thing for every Christian to do—to aspire to be like our Lord. However, careful consideration will reveal the grave errors in this line of thinking.

As we have established above, Christ had two distinct natures. We don't. He was both God and man at one and the same time. We are not. We are human, and nowhere does the Bible teaches that when we become born again, we somehow cease to be human and become divine or super-human.

Idolatry camouflaged as hyper-spiritual talk.

God has always been a jealous God. He jealously guards His glory. Countless times in the Bible He declares, "I do not share my glory", "I alone am God", "There is none beside Me" and "Have no other gods but me" (See Ex 20:2–3; 34:14; Deut 4:39; 5:7; 32:39; 1 Sam 2:2; 2 Sam 7:22; 1 Kings 8:60; 1 Chron 17:20; Isa 42:8; 45:21; 46:9; 48:11). Would God break His own Word to make gods out of those He has saved? This is plainly inconsistent with the entire Biblical teaching.

Grossly inconsistent with the NT

Perhaps the most audacious claim of this heretical teaching is that believers in the New Testament did not exhibit attributes of deity nor lay claim to deity because they had not yet grasped the reality of who they were as 'super beings'. Some go as far as to say that the apostles were wrong, and the early church did not 'catch' this revelation till now! Pastor Chris Oyakhilome is on record to have said that when the people in Lystra (Acts 14:15) wanted to make sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas, and they refused, rejecting any homage with the claims, 'We too are only human, like you', they were wrong.

This is how they explain away the fact that believers in the New Testament could fall ill (2 Tim 4:20), even to the point of death (Phil 2:2), or suffer chronic symptoms (1 Tim 5:23): Paul hadn't yet 'caught the revelation' that he could live above sickness. We have no words to say in response to this level of pride.

Why should we care?

Why should we be concerned about the flagrant distortion of Scripture? First, if we promise what God has not, we set people up for disappointment. When the unrealistic expectations of this cancerous theology are not met, believers become disillusioned, and their trust in God and the integrity of His teachings are undermined.

Next, this kind of teaching hinders spiritual growth. Faithful Scriptural teaching, rooted in an exalted view of God, His glory and His holiness, is pivotal for spiritual growth and maturity. Misinterpretations misguide believers, hampering their spiritual growth and leading them to adopt unscriptural beliefs and practices.

Finally, such false teachings compromise outreach. The efficacy of the Christian mission in the world is grounded in the authenticity and accuracy with which Scripture is presented. Distortions detract from the church's credibility, obscuring the gospel's true essence and beauty for others. ■



by Ebenezer Foster-Nyarko
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Biography

Amy Carmichael

UNGLAMOROUS MISSIONARY WORK

When we think of missionaries, we often imagine extraordinary people with dramatic stories and remarkable achievements. Yet faithfulness to God usually looks very different: ordinary work, hidden struggles, and perseverance over many years. Amy Carmichael's life is a beautiful example of this. Have you heard of her?



Amy Carmichael (1867–1951) was an Irish Christian missionary best known for her long, quiet, remarkably courageous work in South India—especially her protection and Christian upbringing of vulnerable children.

In her mid-twenties, Amy applied to the China Inland Mission but was turned down for health reasons. She then went to Japan with the Japanese Evangelistic Band, but illness forced her to leave. About a year later, she arrived in India to serve with the Zenana Missionary Society. She worked hard to learn Tamil and travelled from village to village with other women, sharing the gospel. Amy expected this travelling ministry to be her life's work, but everything changed when a seven-year-old girl escaped from a Hindu temple—where she was being prepared to be "married to the gods"—and found her. Amy came to see that this was no harmless custom, but a religiously framed system in which girls could be exploited from a very young age. This discovery confronted her with the spiritual darkness of child abuse, and it redirected the course of her ministry.

From that point onward, Amy focused on protecting and caring for children who needed refuge. In 1901, she founded the Dohnavur Fellowship in Tamil Nadu (South India). It became a long-term home where children were sheltered, educated, and raised within a Christian community.

Amy also wrote widely in books and poetry. In *Things as They Are*, she described the hardships and realities of missionary life. She once called missionary life "a chance to die," not to glorify suffering, but to warn against romantic, adventure-driven ideas of missions. She meant that following Christ often involves a steady dying to personal preferences: comfort, control, reputation, and even cherished godly plans—and a readiness to pay a real price.

What we can learn from Amy Carmichael

1. Faithfulness is often quiet, and shaped by long-term obedience.
   (Luke 16:10; 1 Cor 15:58; Gal 6:9) Amy's impact didn't come through quick wins or public attention, but through years of steady, unseen service. Don't be discouraged if your work feels small. Focus on following Jesus faithfully and growing in love for God.
2. Let love be practical and specific
   (Jas 2:15–17; 1 John 3:18) Amy didn't only feel compassion, she built systems of care. Love isn't just impulse; it is intentional, consistent action. When you see a need, turn love into a concrete next step (a meal, transport, discipling relationship).
3. God may guide through redirections
   (Prov 16:9; Acts 16:6–10) Amy faced closed doors (China) and forced changes (Japan), yet those detours did not stop her faithfulness. Hold plans loosely, but keep obedience non-negotiable. Let constraints shape your calling rather than cancel it. Let setbacks refine your motives, and let prayer be your engine.
4. Don't romanticize suffering—but don't waste it either
   (Rom 5:3–5; Jas 1:2–4) Amy did not seek pain, but when it came, she treated it as a place to trust God and serve anyway. Hardship doesn't disqualify you; it can reshape how you serve, often with more humility and empathy.
5. Don't avoid God's calling, even when it's costly.
   (Luke 9:23; Heb 12:1–2) Amy's life was a call to courage. In any setting—family, workplace, church, ask: What will it cost me, and am I willing? View hardship as an opportunity to cling to God's Word, rely on prayer, and grow in faith.

Testimony

God Spoke into My Silence



Born and raised in Shanghai, China, I grew up in a quiet spiritual emptiness. The subject of belief was no topic in our home. Outside our home, I heard distant whispers of Buddhism and atheism.

From the outside, my life looked fine—carefree, even. But inside, my heart was full of discontent. My desires were many. I wanted to be prettier, get perfect grades, build a successful career, and become as rich as possible. Anxiety followed me like a shadow. Whenever reality showed me what I didn't have—a flaw on my face, average grades, classmates landing better internships—my confidence collapsed. My broken self-image made me believe lies.

He reminded me that my worth does not come from appearance or achievements, but from the fact that I was made in God's image.

Trying to change the feeling that my life was only a footnote in the grand story of existence, I began searching for wisdom. I turned to philosophy, but it gave me "vanity of vanities," mistaking my own echo for enlightenment. I turned to Buddhism, but it tried to pick pocket my desires, one after another, until I had nothing left to want. But as a human being, with no desire to hold, staring at self, I began losing hope and motivation for life. Who would answer me, "What is the meaning of life?"

An exchange program took me to Abu Dhabi. I was impressed with the faith of my roommates—across various religions—and listened to their teaching. Eventually, one friend shared the teaching of the Bible with me. I was especially amazed by how his faith shaped his character. Out of curiosity, I went to church for the first time.

As I kept attending church and Bible studies, I learned about Jesus: how He healed the sick, cleansed the unclean, and showed mercy without asking for anything in return. I read that He lived a perfectly holy life yet chose to die to save sinners like me.

One day, I was staring at myself again—this time literally in the mirror—and a wave of unworthiness came over me. But instead of spiraling, the Holy Spirit brought Scripture to mind. He reminded me that my worth does not come from appearance or achievements, but from the fact that I was made in God's image.
For the first time in my life, truth didn't just enter my mind—it poured into my heart. Warm truth. Deep love. In that moment, I desired to follow Christ as my Lord and Savior.

Slowly, my questions about the meaning of life,and my frustration with myself, began to fade. I now have a King to serve! My feelings do not govern my direction anymore; God's will does. And when that path is hard, He supplies not only the will to walk it, but also the strength and joy to press on. Though I still stumble, I now turn to Christ, not to myself. My soul sings with Psalm 62:6

> "He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken."

by

Sienna

Song

Come Praise and Glorify

This song is based on Ephesians 1:3–14 which forms a doxology. It describes salvation as a Trinitarian act: the Father plans, the Son accomplishes and the Spirit applies. The goal of God's utlimate plan? That we glorify Him! The song mentions unique actions of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit; can you highlight them for each one? Let us give praise as we have been chosen, redeemed and sealed!

A doxology, literally translated "a word of glory" from the Greek doxa ("glory") and logos ("word"), is a brief expression of praise to God. It is often used to end a worship service, a hymn, or a prayer.

Come praise and glorify our God, the Father of our Lord
In Christ He has in heav'nly realms His blessings on us poured
For pure and blameless in His sight He destined us to be
And now we've been adopted through His Son eternally

To the praise of Your glory
To the praise of Your mercy and grace
To the praise of Your glory
You are the God who saves

Come praise and glorify our God, Who gives His grace in Christ
In Him our sins are washed away, redeemed through sacrifice
In Him God has made known to us the myst'ry of His will
That Christ should be the head of all, His purpose to fulfill

To the praise of Your glory
To the praise of Your mercy and grace
To the praise of Your glory
You are the God who saves

Come praise and glorify our God for we've believed the Word
And through our faith we have a seal: the Spirit of the Lord
The Spirit guarantees our hope, until redemption's done
Until we join in endless praise to God, the Three in One

To the praise of Your glory
To the praise of Your mercy and grace
To the praise of Your glory
You are the God who saves

Music and words by Tim Chester and Bob Kauflin. © 2011 Sovereign Grace Worship/ASCAP (adm. by Integrity Music) a division of Sovereign Grace Churches. All rights reserved.

Church Leadership & Outreach

HERMENEUTICS & MISSIONS

Hermeneutical principles derived from a firm commitment to the sufficiency of Scripture should drive faithful missions. Poor hermeneutics lead to the poor exegesis of Scripture that has fueled common, unbiblical practices in and ultimately does damage to disciple-making among the nations. Missionaries should master sound hermeneutical principles and exegetical skills before and throughout their service to continuously evaluate their methods and goals against Scripture.

Christians are committed to obeying Jesus and his word. God commands his people to obey him, neither adding to or taking away from his word (Deut 4:2). This claim wouldn't stir much controversy with God's people down through the ages. Yet, the interpretation of what exactly God means to command through his word is where Christians begin to differ. If hermeneutics are the principles of interpreting Scripture, then it makes sense that our hermeneutics play a crucial role in understanding how we should obey our Lord's command to make disciples of all nations. Sound hermeneutics are the foundation of faithful missions practice. Bad hermeneutics will lead us to be unfaithful to his call to take the gospel to the nations.

Wayne Grudem defines hermeneutics in his Systematic Theology:

> "In order to help people to avoid making mistakes in interpreting Scripture, many Bible teachers have developed "principles of interpretation," or guidelines to encourage growth in the skill of proper interpretation. The word hermeneutics (from the Greek word hermēnēuo, "to interpret") is the more technical term for this field of study: hermeneutics is the study of correct methods of interpretation (especially interpretation of Scripture)."

Wherever there is unbiblical missions work happening, bad hermeneutics is almost always at the root of the problem. Consider this list of bad mission practices rooted in bad interpretation of Scripture:

- Some Muslim converts are taught that they should continue to visit the mosque and publicly identify themselves as Muslims based on 2 Kings 5:18–19 rather than identify themselves as Christians and claim Christ as Lord.
- Rapid church planting movement strategies are justified based on a poor understanding of Matthew 24:14 or efforts to manufacture the rates of growth seen in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. These methods often run the risk of placing new converts in leadership, which contradicts Scripture and doesn't allow enough time for new Christians to mature and demonstrate the fruits of repentance.
- Some missionaries wrongly use 1 Corinthians 9:18–23 to argue that some sinful practices could be justified in order to "identify with" or "relate" to a people group they're trying to reach with the gospel.
- Some missionary methods are prescribed solely based on historically descriptive passages in Acts. For example, some argue that missionaries must give their energies to fields that are presently showing fruit because Paul went to Macedonia instead of Asia (Acts 16:10).
- The proliferation of the prosperity gospel in missions is often based on bad interpretations of Old Testament promises applied to new covenant believers. Sometimes the context is ignored when interpreting New Testament passages about money and provision from God or God's promises to "ask and you will receive."

Bad hermeneutics is not a new phenomenon. In fact, it's as old as Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. When the Serpent said, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" (Gen 3:1) his intention was to lead Eve into a false interpretation of God's word. Bad hermeneutics played a role in the first act of disobedience in human history. And so it continues to affect missions today.

Bad hermeneutics is not just a modern problem either. The hyper-Calvinism of late 1700s England was rooted in bad hermeneutics and prevented many from even considering being a missionary or giving to missions work. Many are familiar with the (likely apocryphal) story that William Carey's desire to share the gospel among the nations was met with this response:, "You are an enthusiast. When God pleases to convert the heathen, he'll do it without consulting you or me." Thankfully, few evangelicals today would question that the Scripture teaches every Christian's responsibility to care about and support missions in some way.

But before we cast stones at bad missions practices, we need to acknowledge that missionaries doing damaging work almost always have good intentions. They have a genuine desire to see people converted to Christ and churches planted. Many simply follow what they're taught. But their interpretation of Scripture has led them to adopt goals and methods that hinder their intended goals. Consider Paul's warning to the Corinthian church that everyone will have their ministry practices assessed by Christ on the day of judgment (1 Cor 3:14–15). It's right to carefully assess the hermeneutics undergirding any missions practices we support.

To that end, here are four ways bad hermeneutics undermines faithful missions work.

1. **Bad hermeneutics compromises the sufficiency of Scripture**

   Scripture is a sufficient authority for all things related to faith and godliness—and that includes missions work. But God's Word will only be sufficient if it is interpreted properly. Bad hermeneutics renders Scripture functionally insufficient.

2. **Bad hermeneutics often gets the gospel wrong.**

   The gospel is the message of God that leads to salvation. So getting the message wrong will hinder people from being born again and coming to Christ. Any interpretive approach that argues that the gospel primarily means to rescue people from material poverty is deluded. Furthermore, in reality, such assertions tend to enrich clergy and leave the congregation unchanged, both materially and spiritually. What's more, any evangelistic practice that simply requires people to say the words "Jesus is Lord" (Romans 10:9) and then encourages missionaries to move on to the next village will lead to many false conversions.

3. **Bad hermeneutics leads missionaries to teach new converts to disobey God.**

   When 1 Corinthians 9:22 ("... become all things to all people") or other biblical narratives are misinterpreted and Hindu converts are encouraged to call themselves "Hindu Yeshu Bhaktas" rather than "Christians", the missionaries are leading new converts astray. Rapid church planting movements that declare evangelistic Bible discussions a church mislead their people about what the Bible teaches is a true church.

4. **Bad hermeneutics leads to a legacy of unqualified indigenous leaders who teach false doctrine.**

   Missionaries leave a legacy of teaching and discipleship that will affect the churches among a particular people for decades, if not centuries. Paul urged Timothy and Titus to put leaders in place who knew how to rebuke false teaching in the church (1 Tim 1:3, 2 Tim 2:2, Titus 1:10–11). When bad hermeneutics are passed from generation to generation, it will warp a church, which is supposed to be "a pillar and buttress of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15).

What can be done to ensure that missionaries go to the field with good hermeneutical skills?

1. **Missionaries need sufficient biblical and theological training before they are sent.**

   In a church's eager rush to christen someone as a missionary, it's easy to skimp on assessment. But churches should be vigorous in their assessment of potential missionaries. They need to make sure a person has the biblical grounding and interpretive skills to do missions work well. A willingness to go and fund-raising skills are simply not enough. Attending a healthy church where there's faithful expositional preaching will usually offer a great foundation. That's how many future missionaries learn the fundamentals of how to interpret God's Word well.

2. **Missions agencies' theological and methodological commitments should be carefully vetted.**

   If a missionary or church is considering a missions agency, they should carefully vet the agency's statement of faith, philosophy of ministry, and on-the-field strategies. They should ask agency leaders about the most controversial issues in missions: the Insider Movement, disciple-making movements (DMM), orality, and so on. They should make sure their missionaries know what a healthy church is.

   If you don't know what I'm talking about, then do your research. Learn about what's being debated in missions circles today. These issues might seem confusing and not all that important now, but it's better to understand these things on the front-end rather than find out you disagree with the agency you've chosen only after the missionary arrives on the field.

3. **Once they're on the field, make sure missionaries join a true church with faithful preaching.**

   Even missionary teams in remote areas can covenant together as a church and gather regularly for preaching and worship. Regularly sitting under good preaching will help missionaries stay sharp and continue to grow in their hermeneutical skills.

Conclusion

Scripture is God's inerrant and authoritative word. Any faithful missionary must believe this. But merely believing these truths doesn't necessarily mean a missionary will know when a text is being misinterpreted or misapplied. Good hermeneutics grounds and guides all good missions practice. If we want to obey Jesus, we must get our hermeneutics right. After all, every missionary and the sending congregations behind them want to hear those words of commendation from our Lord one day, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt 25:21).

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by Brian Parks — Senior Pastor in Dubai
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This article is available at greatcommissioncouncil.org

[1] Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 109.

Recommended Resources

- *Great Commission Council* article "Know What Your Missionary Is Doing"
- Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics
- Southgate Fellowship Statement (see particular affirmations/denials pertaining to Scripture vis-a-vis Missions)
- *TGC Talk* by Kevin DeYoung — "Why Accurate Bible Interpretation Matters"
- *TGC* article by David Garner — "High Stakes: Insider Movement Hermeneutics and the Gospel"



Challenging a Classic

As a chef, I enjoy to challenge beloved classics. This reinvented french pastry, the éclair, I've created a more crisp and airy shell, filled it with a deep, bitter dark chocolate, and finished it with a crunchy toasted almond topping. Give it a try! – Anand Akula

Would you also like to share your favourite recipe? Email us at contact@dewarabia.com



Recipe

CHEF ANAND'S DULCE ÉCLAIRS

YIELD: 12 ECLAIRS PREPARATION: 45 MIN BAKE: 35 MIN

by Anand Akula
a talented chef at a five star hotel in Dubai

INGREDIENTS

CHOUX PASTRY: **Flour** 150 g; **Milk** 125 ml; **Water** 125 ml; **Butter** 110 g; **Eggs** 4 pc; **Salt & Sugar** pinch
CHOCOLATE DULCE FILLING: **Heavy Cream** 250g; **Dulce de Leche** 200g; **Dark Chocolate** 100 g
TOPPING: **Ganache** 150 g (1:1 ratio—75 g chocolate, 75 g cream); **Toasted Almond Flakes** 50 g

EQUIPMENT: Oven, pan, piping bag with star tip, parchment paper, silicon spatula

INSTRUCTIONS

Choux Shells

- Bring the milk, water, butter, salt and sugar to a rolling boil.
- Remove from the heat and beat in the flour until a smooth ball of dough forms.
- Return to medium heat and cook and stir for 2 minutes, to dry out excess moisture.
- Let the dough cool slightly,. Gradually beat in the eggs until glossy and the choux paste pulls away from the spatula in a V-shape.
- Pipe 10 cm logs onto parchment paper.
- Bake at 200°C for 15 minutes, then reduce to 175°C for 20 minutes until crisp and golden.

Filling

- Whisk the heavy cream to stiff peaks
- Melt the dark chocolate
- Whisk the dulce de leche into the melted chocolate until smooth and emulsified.
- Gently fold in the whipped cream to create a light, airy filling (diplomat-style).
- Transfer to a piping bag fitted with a star tip.

Ganache

- In a small saucepan, heat the cream over medium heat until it is steaming, do not let it boil.
- Pour the hot cream over the chocolate. Let it sit, undisturbed, for 4 minutes to allow the chocolate to melt.
- Using a silicone spatula, stir gently until the mixture is smooth and glossy. Do not use a whisk, as this can incorporate too much air.

Assemble

- Slice the cooled éclairs lengthwise.
- Dip the top halves into the warm ganache, then immediately press into the toasted flaked almonds (or sprinkle your topping of choice).
- Pipe a generous, wavy layer of the chocolate-dulce cream onto the bottom halves, then place the glazed tops on top.

Bon appétite!

TIP!

Complete the éclairs with my signature side: **Velvety Lucuma Gelato!** Find the recipe on dewarabia.com

Word Search

Find every word from the list below. Words may be arranged in any direction and can intersect or share letters with one another. After you've located and crossed out all the words, write down the remaining letters in order from the top left corner to uncover the hidden sentence in the Solution.

F I A N D N T H H M E F J Y A T H L E R
A I R E A E A O I N E E L E K G T A G Z
T O R T S R G A B K K O C P S A G N D O
L S U E V I L P B X H P Y G T U Y G N Z
F R O E P C T X V S A X P L S A S U I D
E S S C O E S P I R I T M G O T B A W T
G T C R E E N W A V U E U T H H M G N V
P E P S Z T T T O B C D U R G T E E Z F
I S O R E O N V A N I T N E R Q U S P O
V N B W A C W E E N D U S T Q F E Y U I
S E U G N O T S P H C E P R O P H E C Y
G V K W U L S I R C V E R O J M L S C G
P K Z U K E P X W A U O Q F W K R A G O
D F V F A T H E R E Y W U M U S X L S D
L A V I T S E F S R P T W O N J D V I Z
F P K G F H I O W P M Z I C B G T A K H
T S O C E T N E P Z N H N N N R J T S I
X D H I R Z U B O O O M W G I P R I G Q
Q G W Q C E P P F U D Y C A V R Z O V J
W I T N E S S W S C X Q F O X Y T N W R

↑ ↓ ← → ↖ ↗ ↙ ↘

Baptise
Comforter
Essence
Father
Fire
God
Harvest Festival
Holy Ghost
Holy Spirit
Jesus
Languages
Nature
Pentecost
Pentecost
Preach
Proclaim
Prophecy
Repentance
Salvation
Son
Tongues
Trinity
Wind
Witness
Wonder

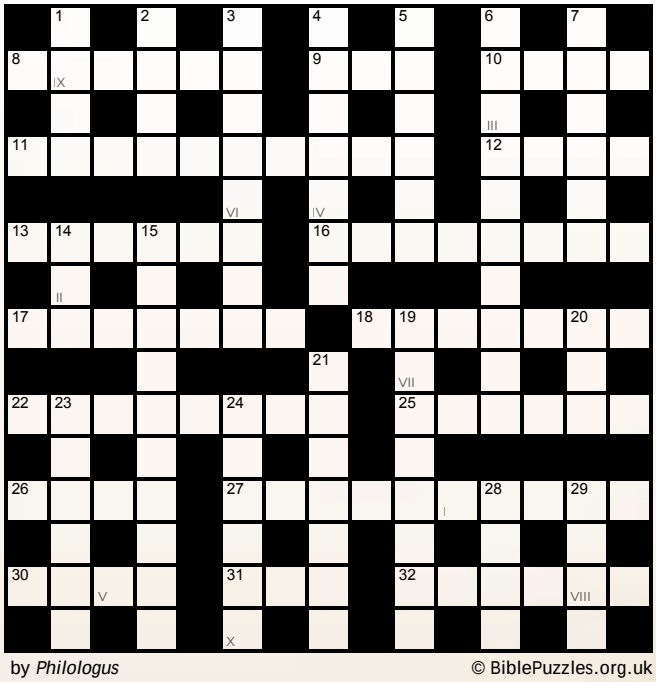
SOLUTION

_____ _____ _____ _

Email your puzzle solutions and quiz answers to contact@dewarabia.com for a chance to win a book!

Crossword

Read the horizontal and vertical clues and identify the words they describe. Fill in the answers based on intersecting letters and word length. Are you able to find the solution as well?



by *Philologus* © BiblePuzzles.org.uk

ACROSS

8 Religious service (6)
9 Vessel (3)
10 Drive forcibly (4)
11 Christ does this for us (10)
12 Bethesda was the name of this (4)
13 Servant of a prophet (6)
16 One who leaves the straight and narrow path (8)
17 Check the money (7)
18 Fragrant offering; make angry (7)
22 Come out from among them (8)
25 Works with clay (6)
26 Main part of text (4)
27 Chucked it too far (8)
30 Treachery sealed with this (4)
31 Simon washed his (4)
32 Migratory grasshopper (5)

DOWN

1 Standard for the tribe of Judah (6)
2 Brother of James; Hardy book (4)
3 Choice by vote (8)
4 Evening glow (5)
5 All sing the tune (7)
6 To reduce deficiency (8)
7 Take no notice of (6)
14 Look at (4)
15 Alternative Revelation (8)
19 Son of Jacob (5)
20 The blind will (3)
21 Regrets; Serpent (anag) (5)
23 Angels by another name (7)
24 Decorates (5)
28 Say it and you will be in danger of the council (5)
29 Cleanse (4)

SOLUTION

What Greek word is often used for "person" in theology?

I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX X

Trivia Quiz

Page through the Bible together to discover the answers to these trivia questions!

1. Which member of the Trinity is associated with grace in 2 Corinthians 13:14?
2. What are three possible translations of the Greek word παράκλητος (Paraklētos)?
3. In John 10:30, when Jesus says, "I and the Father are one," is the word "one" masculine or neuter? And what would the difference in meaning be?
4. What language did Jesus speak in daily life? In what language was the reading of Jewish scripture? In what language where conversations with non-Jews?

TIP! Use the Interlinear tool from *BlueLetterBible.org* to look up the original bible text. Scan the QR code to jump straight to the page you'll need for question 3.

Bonus Question
In John 1:1, what is the Greek word translated "Word"? Use the same the interlinear tool as for question 3.

Answers available at dewarabia.com

Bible Story

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES

[1] Then the day of the Pentecost festival arrived. All the believers were meeting together in one place. [2] Suddenly, a were sitting together, they heard a noise. The noise came from the sky and it filled the whole house. It was like the of a strong wind. [3] Then they saw something that looked like many small fires.

The separate fires moved and went to sit on each person there. [4] All the believers became full with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak in languages that they had not learned. They spoke whatever language the Holy Spirit helped them to speak.

[5] At that time, Jews who came from many different countries in the world were staying in Jerusalem. They were Jews who carefully obeyed God's Law.
[6] When these Jews heard the noise, a large crowd of them came together in that place. As the believers spoke, each person in the crowd could hear the message in their own language. This confused them. [7] They were very surprised and they said to each other, 'These men who are speaking our languages are all from Galilee. [8] But each of us can hear them speak in the language of our own home country. How can this happen?

[9] Some of us are from Parthia, Media and Elam. Some of us live in Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia. Some of us are from Pontus and Asia. [10] Some of us are from Phrygia and Pamphylia. Some of us are from Egypt. Some of us are from the country of Libya, near the town of Cyrene. Some of us have come from Rome to visit Jerusalem. [11] Some of us were born as Jews. Others of us are Gentiles who now obey God as the Jews do. Some of us are from Crete and some of us are from Arabia. But we all hear these people speaking in our own languages. They are speaking about all the great things that God has done.'

[12] All the people were very surprised. They did not understand what was happening. 'What does all this mean?' they asked each other. [13] But some other people laughed at the disciples. They said, 'These people have drunk too much wine!'

Peter speaks to the crowd

[14] Peter was there with the other [11] apostles and he stood up with them. He began to speak to the crowd with a loud voice. He said, 'You people who are Jews like us, listen carefully to me. All of you who live here in Jerusalem, you also listen to me. I will explain to you everything that is happening. [15] Some of you think that my friends here are drunk. But they are not drunk, because it is only nine o'clock in the morning. [16] No, something different is happening here. Long ago, the prophet Joel spoke God's message about all this. This is what he said:

JOEL II

[17] God says "This is what I will do in the last days.
I will give my Spirit to all people.
Your sons and daughters will speak my message to people. Your young men will see visions in their minds.
And your old men will see things in their dreams.
[18] At that time, I will give my Spirit to all my servants, both men and women. Then they will speak my message to people.
[19] I will cause special things to appear in the sky.
I will cause special things to appear on the earth too.
Those things will show how great I am.
There will be blood, fire and thick dark smoke.
[20] The sun will become dark to people.
The moon will become dark red like the colour of blood. These things will happen before the great day of the Lord arrives. That will be a wonderful day! [21] The Lord will save everyone who asks Him to help them."'

Joel 2:28–32

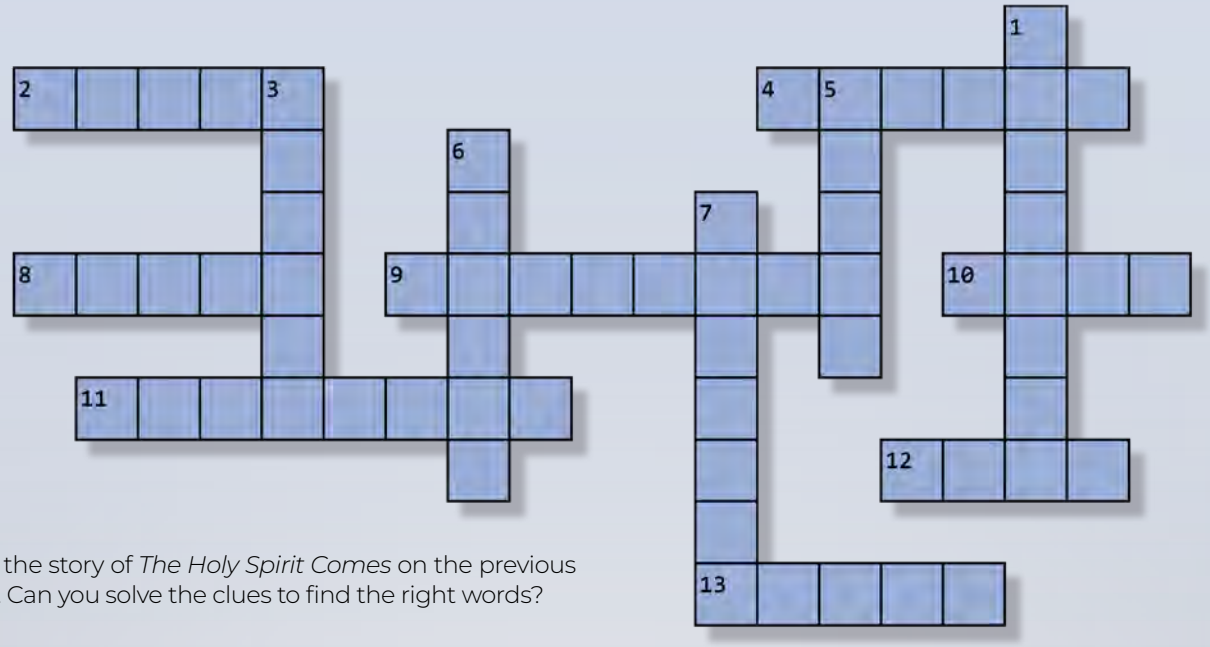
... [38] Peter said to them, 'Each of you must stop doing wrong things. You must change how you live. If you believe in Jesus Christ, then we will baptize you. God will forgive you for the wrong things that you have done. Then you will receive the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to you. [39] God has promised to do all this for you and your children. He has also promised this to people who live far away in other places. The Lord our God will do it for all the people that he has called to come to him.'

[40] Peter also told them many other things. He continued to speak strongly to them. He told them to be careful and he said, 'People who are alive today do not do what is right. Save yourselves from the punishment that God will send on them.'

[41] Many of the people who listened to Peter believed his message. So the apostles baptized those people. About three thousand people who now believed in Jesus joined the group that same day. (Acts 2:1–21, 36–41; EASY)


Colour
me!

Crossword



Read the story of *The Holy Spirit Comes* on the previous page. Can you solve the clues to find the right words?

ACROSS

2 Many ___ rested the believers in the house.
4 Communication with God.
8 The disciples gathered in the ___ room.
9 The disciples began speaking in another ___.
10 A sound of ____ filled the house.
11 About 3,000 people were ____ that day.
12 The nature of the Spirit who came at Pentecost.
13 "What do we need to do to be ______?"

DOWN

1 Jerusalem was celebrating the ___ of Pentecost.
3 The ___ of God descended at Pentecost.
5 Peter preached that Jesus had ___ from the dead.
6 The sound came from ___
7 People from all ___ heard the disciples speaking.

Word Search

Can you find the words in the below list? And can you link each of these words with their matching pair?

L K P E N T E C O S T P
L A N G U A G E S P R R
D E H E L P E R W I E A
B A P T I Z E D I R P Y
T C H U R C H K N I E E
T V F L A M E S D T N R
G J E R U S A L E M T S
P R E A C H I N G R E E

→ ↓

BAPTIZED
CHURCH
FLAMES
HELPER
JERUSALEM
LANGUAGES
PENTECOST
PRAYERS
PREACHING
REPENT
SPIRIT
WIND

Make a pair

- *proclamation*
- *Arabic*
- *water*
- *sound*
- *supplication*
- *on each person*
- *filling believers*
- *festival*
- *Holy Spirit*
- *turn back to God*
- *city*
- *believers*

Email your Word Scramble and Questions answers to contact@dewarabia.com for a chance to win a book!

Word Scramble

Unscramble each clue word. Then use the letters to make the phrase that answers this question:

What did Peter say the people should do?

1	2	3	4	5	6

What does that word mean? _____

_____

In Acts 2:38, what does Peter say you will receive after repenting and being baptized? _____

DIWN

LAMEF

RPTIIS

EZITPAB

SEPARI

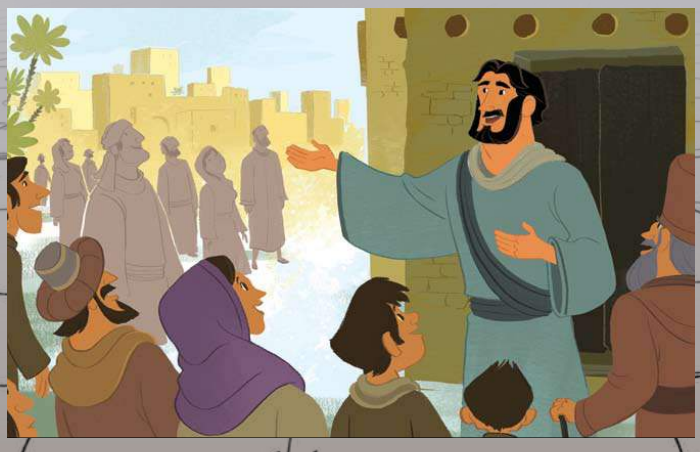
YERSPRA

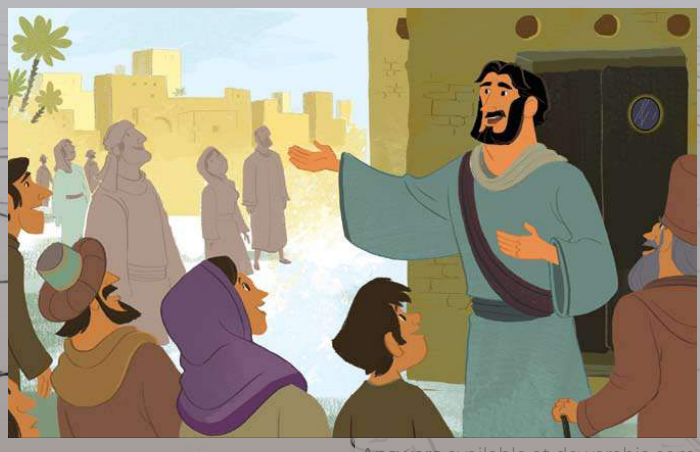
Questions

1. The story of *The Holy Spirit Comes* on the previous page tells us that the believers were together at Pentecost. What did they suddenly hear and see? _____
2. Why were the people from different countries so surpised and confused? _____
3. Peter wasn't afraid to speak anymore. Whad had changed since the day they arrested Jesus? _____
4. Peter said this was the promise made by which Old Testament prophet? _____
5. For what do you need the Holy Spirit's help? _____

Find the Differences

Something's different! Can you can find all 14 changes in the two pictures? Circle each one you discover!





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Answers available at dewarabia.com

“Who then is he
who can stand
before Me?
Who has first
given to Me, that I
should repay him?
Whatever is
under the whole
heaven is Mine.”

– God

Job 41: 10–11