

JUST WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

[Originally by the Ambassador College Theological Team, 1983,
Updated by the Bible Fund editors, 2018]

What does it do and how do you get it? The Holy Spirit, according to the organized, Christian religions of this world, is the third person in the Godhead. BUT IS THAT TRUE?

The belief in the Trinity is often said to be the heart and core – “the CENTRAL doctrine of the Christian religion” (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, article “Trinity”). It is the one point of doctrine where there is the *most agreement*.

Yet, in spite of the great universal agreement, it is still one of the most DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN doctrines of professing Christianity.

Nebulous Foundation

World-renowned evangelists say that the Holy Spirit, the presumed third person of the Godhead, “is not easy to explain in nontheological terms.” Or, “In actuality, the doctrine of the Trinity IS A MYSTERY.” Or, no one can fully understand the “three in one.” It is something *we are asked to accept in faith*.

“The mind of man cannot fully understand the mystery of the Trinity. He who would try to understand the mystery fully will lose his mind. But he who would deny the Trinity will lose his soul” (Harold Lindsell and Charles J. Woodbridge, *A Handbook of Christian truth*, pp. 51-52).

No Mystery to the Apostles

The Bible speaks of the plan of salvation as being a mystery (Greek *musterion*, meaning something now revealed that was previously unknown). But that doesn’t mean that God’s truths are a MYSTERY to *those whom He is calling to salvation*.

Open your Bible to Mark 4:11. Jesus Christ of Nazareth, one of the very members of the Godhead, is here speaking to His disciples. He had just given the multitude the parable of the sower and the seed, and after the multitude left, His disciples came to Him for the interpretation of the parable. “And he said unto them, Unto *you* it is given TO KNOW the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto *them* that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, *and not understand*; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them.”

Jesus Christ is *plainly*, clearly and pointedly showing that the truths of God, the doctrines of salvation or the very *words of life* are a mystery TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT BEING CALLED. Only those who are His very own disciples are privileged TO KNOW THE MYSTERY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. His truth, His way and His teachings aren’t “mysterious, hard-to-define, etc.” to His people. He only spoke in clouded, ambiguous terms to the unconverted.

Yet Jesus Christ never at any time in any way thought, hinted or alluded to the Holy Spirit as a third person in the Godhead. There is absolutely no basis or PROOF whatsoever in His message for the worldwide acceptance of the teaching of the Trinity.

Even the erudite writers of the Catholic Encyclopedia point out that, “the passages which can be cited... as attesting to His [the Holy Spirit’s] distinct personality are few” (ibid.).

Should you just accept “in faith” one of the most important beliefs in Christianity? Christians are commanded to, “Prove ALL things...” (1 The. 5:21). Universal acceptance or reasoning ARE NOT PROOFS of any doctrine. GOD’S WORD, the Bible, is the test of any doctrinal truth – not what MEN say, think or believe. Jesus Christ said, “...Thy word is TRUTH” (John 17:17). He also said in another place, “The word that I [Jesus] have spoken, the same shall judge him [you] in the last day” (1 John 12:48).

What Do You Mean – Trinity?

“The Trinity is ... the truth that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit... The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet these are not three Gods, but one God...co-eternal and co-equal: all alike or uncreated and omnipotent” (The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article “Trinity”).

That is a positive statement. Where is their authority to back it up?

Once source often referred to is the old stand-by – TRADITION. Ancient writers and “early Church fathers” are quoted, often misquoted, to show that for centuries this doctrine has been taught. But not all professing Christians believed it.

Let the record speak for itself.

“We cannot doubt the existence among orthodox Fathers of *different opinions* on this *mysterious* subject until its final definition by the Church” (“Trinity,” *Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology*).

An interesting aspect which is often blatantly overlooked is that many of those to whom they now refer as believing in the “blessed Trinity,” were *anathematized* for their beliefs. They were considered heretics in their day and completely disfellowshipped because of their heretical beliefs. It wasn’t until the Council of Chalcedon, in 451 A.D., that the doctrine of the Trinity finally and permanently became the official formula of orthodoxy.

But the story began a great deal earlier.

The as yet unformed germ of the Trinity idea may be found in such early Christian “Fathers” as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian and Irenaeus – about two hundred years after Christ. But the idea of triune gods was not new. The ancient pagans were quite familiar with triads or trinities of gods, and it is possible, indeed likely, that pagan thought would have had some influence on the developing doctrine of the church.

The first official standing of the Trinity doctrine was given in the decrees of the great Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325. This council was called together by the Roman Emperor. Constantine the Great, who saw in the church a coveted pillar of stability for his rule, and that of his descendants. But seeking to achieve

that state of stability, he insisted that all Christians should agree on and subscribe to a common unified belief, including of course a common view of the nature of God.

It was the formulation for the Trinity of Athanasius, an Egyptian deacon from Alexandria that was adopted by the council.

“The Alexandrian catechetical school, which revered Clement of Alexandria and Origen, the greatest theologians of the Greek Church, as its heads, applied the allegorical method to the explanation of Scripture. *Its thought was influenced by Plato*: its strong point was theological speculation. Athanasius and the three Cappadocians had been included among its members...” (*Ecumenical Councils of the Catholic Church*, by Hubert Jedin, p. 29).

Many were opposed to the creed as adopted. They were led by the priest Arius and others. For Arius, standardization soon led to excommunication and banishment. But it was not long before he was back, with Constantine’s backing and favor, and soon it was Athanasius’ turn to be expelled. Constantine himself, of course, knew little and cared less about the truth of the matter in dispute.

The seesaw continued. Athanasius was exiled three or four times and brought back again. More conferences were held, some deciding one thing, some another. The one thread that ran consistently through it all was politics, striving for power, and strife. And perhaps the real reason that trinitarianism ever prevailed was simply that the majority were not ready to declare that Christ was originally a created being, as maintained by Arius, or merely an ordinary man before being anointed by the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, as maintained by others.

It was not until the Council of Chalcedon at the midpoint of the fifth century that the trinitarian creed was permanently and irrevocably rooted. Even so, individuals and groups have continued to hold differing opinions throughout the ages ever since.

The Holy Spirit is God’s Power

Matthew 28: 19-20 is often cited by the advocates of the Trinity to prove the Holy Spirit is a separate individual.

What this verse actually shows is that when we are baptized, we are inducted INTO A FAMILY. When we are baptized into the name of God, we are simply being baptized *into the family of God*.

All that is shown by the mentioning of the Holy Spirit in this verse is that the Holy Spirit also BELONGS TO THE GOD FAMILY. **It is the essence or power of God**. And just as the seed of life or spermatozoon of a man engenders a child and makes that child his, so God uses His Spirit to engender us, upon baptism, into His family and make us His begotten children

The Holy Spirit then is the power of God which emanates from God. Since this power belongs to God, it is also found to be with all His sons, and to be the joining force which makes them a family.

The truth of the matter in this verse is *positive* proof of the *family relationship* of God. It has nothing whatsoever to do with a triune God.

What the Power of God Can Do.

God is power! His power is the Holy Spirit. It is the power of God or Spirit of God by which all things were created in the very beginning.

How can this be? Genesis 1:1 says: “In the beginning GOD CREATED...” Does that mean that God Himself had to fashion the whole creation with His own hands? NO! God the Father didn’t do the creating personally. Christ was the one who did the actual creating of all things (John 1:3). This truth is again demonstrated in Hebrews 1:2. Here it says, referring to Christ, “...by whom also he made the worlds.”

Does this then mean that it was Jesus Christ only who fashioned all things? Again, the answer is no. The word for God in Genesis 1:1 is *Elohim* which is plural in form and thus can signify a plurality or *family relationship* between the Father and Son.

The *God family* planned the creation, long before it ever took place. Each and every detail was carefully thought out. Just as a contractor will have blueprints drawn up long before he ever lays the foundation for a large construction job, so the family of God planned the universe. After all planning was completed, Jesus Christ executed the plans, through the *power* which is the Holy Spirit. That doesn’t mean that a third party took over and did the job. It simply means the work was done by the power or spirit or authority of the God family.

Take the Panama Canal for example. We say the United States built the Panama Canal. Did all forty-eight, as it then was, of the states go down to the Isthmus of Panama and do the work? Of course not. It was done by the authority and power of the United States. The men, money and power of the United States caused the canal to come into being. In that way, the United States did the job. An exact parallel.

The Holy Spirit is Omnipresent.

In both the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Old Testament, the words for spirit also mean air, wind, atmosphere. And like the atmosphere on earth, the power of God is everywhere. That is how Jesus was able to do all the work of the creation by Himself. David’s prayer in Psalm 139:7-8 shows that he knew God’s Spirit or power was omnipresent. No matter where in the universe you might go, God’s Spirit will still be there. That is how Jesus Christ is “... upholding all things by the word of his POWER” (Heb 1:3). By His authority as God, He keeps all things in the universe in their place. This work is done through the power of the God family and with the express consent of the Father.

Though the Father is SUPREME in the God Family, as witnessed to by Christ Himself (John 14:28), Jesus is the administrator of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26). He is greater than that Spirit. These two Scriptures alone nullify and make void the supposition that the Holy Spirit is a person of equal rank with the Father and the Son. The Spirit is the *very power of God* – the agent by which He does His will. IT IS NOT ANOTHER PERSON!

It is a Gift.

This power of God can be yours as a free gift if you will only meet the preordained requirements. Once you have repented and been baptized [and had hands laid on], God gives you the free *gift* of His Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

If the Holy Spirit were a person, God is being rather presumptuous to go around giving a part of that person to whomever He chooses. Again, in speaking about the gift of the Spirit. God says that in the last days He will pour out His Spirit, which belongs to Him, upon all mankind (Acts 2:17). The meaning of the Greek here is to literally pour out as you would water from a pitcher.

How can you pour out a person? YOU CAN'T! It is impossible!

What Are Its Functions?

We are to learn what God is planning by observing the happenings here on earth (Rom 1:20). Everywhere we look we can see each animal, bird, microbe and plant reproducing itself. In Genesis 1:26, God (*Elohim*) is quoted as saying: "...Let US make man in OUR IMAGE..." *God is reproducing Himself!* How very plain that should be to us rational, *thinking* individuals. We humans ARE TO BE MADE IN THE VERY IMAGE OF GOD! We are to become members of the "God Family"!.

The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, unites with our minds and we are BEGOTTEN AGAIN – This time spiritually as we were once begotten physically. Read it in your own Bible.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath BEGOTTEN us AGAIN unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet 1:3). In verse 23, it says, "Being BEGOTTEN AGAIN, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (Panin translation).

The Holy Spirit impregnates us with the God nature. That spiritual begettal imbues us with the nature and mind of God. Throughout our Christian lives we continue to grow and develop in the understanding and mind of God until we are finally born INTO the God family and made immortal at the return of Jesus Christ to this earth (1 Cor 15:49-52). We will then *rule* this earth as God's sons.

Why the Deception?

Why has Satan palmed off the doctrine of the Trinity on the world? Because he doesn't want YOU to rule in his place. Satan was originally created to carry out God's rule on earth. He rebelled and refused to serve the Creator and was cast out of his position of responsibility (Ezek. 28:11-19 and Isa. 14:12-14). A third of the angels united with Lucifer in that rebellion and were CAST DOWN TO THIS EARTH WITH HIM – having forever DISQUALIFIED themselves and Satan from ruling in the Government of God.

Since they are disqualified, they don't want anyone else to take what had once been their place. They have tried for nearly 6000 years now to hide from all the world the breathtaking TRUTH OF GOD. If they can make you believe in the Trinity, you will be deceived into thinking that the Godhead consists of *only* three persons. You would then never in your wildest dreams ever imagine that YOU were created to be born into the GOD FAMILY and actually share in ruling the universe.

Satan wants you to think that God is a limited Trinity and not a *growing* family or Kingdom into which we may enter. If we look upon the Godhead as being a closed unit, we won't WORK and STRIVE to qualify for that family.

Anyway you want to look at it, the Trinity idea is a false and inadequate view of God. If anyone wants to say that the Trinity is merely three aspects or manifestations of one God, he is taking personhood

away from Christ. But if the Holy Spirit is a person, it (or he) could not be placed as the character and the seed of God into many different human beings to beget and bring each of them individually to birth as “many sons.” And if someone would argue that this could occur – on the ground that with God anything is possible – this is actually making the Holy Spirit to be the Father, which is once more, equivalent to making the Holy Spirit not a separate person.

So, there you have it. There is the truth about the Holy Spirit. God’s family isn’t closed to mankind as Satan would have you believe.

IT’S WIDE OPEN to you, your family and all mankind. If you accept the truth of God and obey Him, YOU can be made in the exact likeness of God at Christ’s return. God wants it.

THE DECISION IS YOURS!

A SIMPLE LESSON IN GRAMMAR

Somebody is going to ask: “What about the fact that John uses the personal pronoun ‘he’ when referring to the Holy Spirit or Comforter in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of his Gospel?”

In the Greek language, like the Romance languages (Spanish, Italian, French, etc.), every noun has what is called gender; that is, it is either masculine, feminine or neuter.

Even such an inanimate object as a glass – being utter devoid of any real life – has masculine gender in Spanish. *El vaso* is the Spanish equivalent of the two words “the glass” in English. The article “el” and the “o” ending to the word *vaso* give the word “glass” masculine gender in Spanish. Yet, by no stretch of the imagination could a glass be considered a male person in the human sense. That would be ridiculous!

La mesa is the Spanish equivalent of the two English words “the table.” The article “la” and the “a” ending give the word “table” (*mesa*) feminine gender in Spanish. Yet, it would be ludicrous to consider a table as a human female personality.

Likewise, in the Greek language, the gender of a word has nothing whatsoever to do with whether the thing designated is *really* masculine or feminine. If it did – what a contradiction in the Bible itself! For in the Old Testament the Hebrew word for spirit – *ruach* – is usually feminine, and only rarely in a masculine form. Gender in language is really nothing more than a convenient grammatical tool. In the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John, the English pronoun “he” is definitely used in connection with the word “Comforter” – but *not* for theological or spiritual reasons.

Grammatically, all pronouns in Greek *must agree* in gender with the word they refer to – or in other words, with the term that the pronoun replaces. The Greek word *parakletos* (“comforter” in English) has masculine gender; hence the translators’ use of the personal pronoun “he” for the Greek pronouns *ekeinós* and *autos*. “It” would have been a far better rendering into the English language – just as in John 1:32 and 6:63, and Romans 8:16 for example.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE POWER OF GOD

The Holy Spirit is the *impersonal power* of God. A few of the scriptures on which we base this statement are Genesis 6:3; Job 33:4; Psalm 139:7; Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1; Ezekiel 36:27; 39:29; Luke 1:15, 35, 67; 11:13; John 20:22; Acts 4:8; 31; 13:9; 15:8; Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 2 Peter 1:21.

Every work of God is accomplished through this great power (Matt 3:11; Luke 2:26; John 1:33; 14:26; 20:22; Acts 1:2, 5, 8, 16; 2:33, 38; 4:8; 10:38, 44, 45). God used His great power to create the heaven, the earth, men and beasts (Gen 1:1; Jer 27:5; 51:15).

Since God has given this same Holy Spirit without measure to His only begotten Son, it is acknowledged that His works are done through this great power (Matt 28:18; John 3:34). Jesus told His followers that the Comforter would proceed from God (John 15:26) and instructed them to wait at Jerusalem for power. Christians are kept by this power (1 Pet 1:5).

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN SYMBOLS

Various symbols designate God's Holy Spirit in the Bible. Among them are breath (Gen 2:7); oil (Psa. 45:7); fire (Matt 3:11); dove (Matt 3:16); wind (John 3:8); water (John 4:14; 7:37, 39); seal (Eph 1:13); sword (Eph 6:17) and lamps (Rev 4:5).

The Holy Spirit's characteristics reveal it to be an impersonal power emanating from God. The Holy Spirit is poured out (Isa 32:15; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17); shed (Titus 3:5, 6); breathed (John 20:22); fills people (Acts 2:4; Eph 5:18); and anoints some (Acts 10:38).

If the Holy Spirit were a person, a member of a "holy trinity," it would be impossible to understand and adequately explain the following scriptures:

- 1) "By the of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath [or spirit] of his mouth" (Psa 33:6).
- 2) "it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]... if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance" (Heb 6:4-6).
- 3) "When he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy [Spirit]" (John 20:22).
- 4) "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3:34).

There is not one prayer, song, or exclamation of praise made to the Holy Spirit in God's Word! Men, however, compose and sing many songs and hymns to the Holy Spirit, as though it were a person.

In the seventeen New Testament Epistles that begin with a greeting of grace and peace, there

is only one greeting that contains a reference to the Holy Spirit, and then only as the means of sanctification (1 Pet 1:2), not as the source of grace. These invocations are appeals in the name of God and His Son, but not in that of the Holy Spirit. This is logical. All the writers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the power of God, recognized that the Holy Spirit was not a person. It can be further observed that there are no mentions of the Holy Spirit in the eleven occurrences of thanksgiving or blessing which follow some of these salutations. Is it not evident that the God-breathed Word does not recognize the Holy Spirit as a person?

When Stephen, being full of the Holy Spirit, was martyred, he saw the heavens opened and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55, 56). No mention is made of the Holy Spirit's presence in this eventful scene in heaven.

In the Book of Revelation, it is recorded that John beheld God upon His throne, a group of elders, the Lamb of God, four beasts, a strong angel, and many other angels around the throne, singing a new song to the Son of God concerning the Lamb who was slain and has redeemed us to God by His blood (5:9). If the Holy Spirit were a person, and equal to God would he not be present, and sitting on the throne? Other similar scenes are recorded in which the Holy Spirit is not pictured, such as Rev 7:10.

DID PAUL RECOGNIZE THE TRINITY?

The Apostle Paul would probably be considered a blasphemer by many Trinitarians today, because in his greetings to the churches he neglected to mention the Holy Spirit. In his introduction to the Romans, he represents himself as an apostle of God the Father and Jesus Christ, but nothing is said about any third person.

He also neglects to mention the Holy Spirit in the greetings of the rest of his letters. His standard greeting is: "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:3). The same greeting is repeated in 2 Corinthians 1:3; Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, Colossians 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:1, 2 Thessalonians 1:2, 1 Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4, and Philemon 1:3.

All of these greetings are without variation: the Holy Spirit is consistently left out, a great oversight, almost blasphemy – provided the Trinity doctrine is correct – and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is called the unpardonable *sin* (Matt 12:32).

Only in 2 Corinthians 13:14 is the Holy Spirit mentioned with God and Jesus and there only in connection with communion or fellowship. The Holy Spirit is not the third member of the Godhead!

In Romans 8:17, Paul identified Christians as heirs of the Father and heirs of Christ, but said nothing about us being heirs of the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians, Christians belong to Christ as Christ belongs to God, but no one is said to belong to the Holy Spirit. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, the man is the head (leader in authority) of the woman, Christ is the head of the man, and God the

head of Christ. But nowhere does the Holy Spirit – as a person – fit in!

Ephesians 5:5 mentions the kingdom of God along with the kingdom of Christ, but never a kingdom of the Holy Spirit. Yet it was this very omission, in the Middle Ages, coupled with the prevailing belief in the Holy Spirit as a person of the Trinity, that gave rise to a major heresy within the Catholic Church. Falsely believing that the Church itself was the kingdom, and since by then the Church had endured more than a thousand years, many people fell for a sort of wildfire, ‘Spiritual’ religion proclaiming the eminent age or kingdom of the Holy Spirit – which idea would indeed logically follow if the Holy Spirit were a person. In fairness to the Catholic Church it must be said that this doctrine was quickly branded a heresy.

In Colossians 3:1, Paul wrote of Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father. But why was the Holy Spirit, if a person, not sitting there too?

But surely 1 Timothy 2:5 is a clincher: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” This means that not even the Holy Spirit – sent to earth specifically to aid and dwell within human beings – is a mediator. Why – if the Holy Spirit is a person?

All these scriptures and many more disprove the teaching that the Holy Spirit is a person.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE

The personality of Jesus Christ is thoroughly provable from the Bible, but there is no such proof for a personality of the Holy Spirit.

“The OT [Old Testament] clearly does not envisage God’s spirit as a person, neither in the strictly philosophical sense, nor in the Semitic sense. God’s spirit is simply God’s Power. If it is sometimes represented as being distinct from God, it is because the breath of Yahweh acts exteriorly (Isa 48:16; 63:11; 32:15).” So say the authors of the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Continuing:

“Very rarely do the OT writers attribute to God’s spirit emotions or intellectual activity (Isa 63:10; Song of Solomon 1:3-7). When such expressions are used, *they are mere figures of speech* that are explained by the fact that the *rūah* was regarded also as the seat of intellectual acts and feelings (Gen 41:8). Neither is there found in the OT or in rabbinical literature the notion that God’s spirit is an intermediary being between God and the world. This activity is proper to the angels, although to them is ascribed some of the activity that elsewhere is ascribed to the spirit of God” (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol XIII, p. 574).

In the Old Testament, God’s Spirit is pictured as His power. The power by which the One who became Jesus Christ, as Executive for the Father, created the entirety of the universe. These theologians also recognize that when the Spirit is spoken of as a person or in a personal way, the Bible writer is merely *personifying* the Spirit, as he would wisdom or any other attribute.

Now what about the New Testament? They say:

“Although the NT [New Testament] concepts of the Spirit of God are largely a continuation of those of the OT, in the NT there is a gradual revelation that the Spirit of God is a person.”

But this would seem true only if you are armed with the preconceived notion that God is a trinity, and there are only a few scriptures that can even remotely be construed as presenting the Spirit as a person, in each case only as the result of a grammatical misunderstanding.

But again, let’s let the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* continue:

“The majority of NT texts reveal God’s spirit as something, not someone; this is especially seen in the parallelism between the spirit and the power of God.”

Though theologians would like the Bible to say that the Spirit is a person, they must admit that the majority of the scriptures connected with it show that it is *not someone*, but *something*. Even the personification of the Spirit is no proof of its personality.

“When a quasi-personal activity is ascribed to God’s spirit, e.g., speaking, hindering, desiring, dwelling (Acts 8:29; 16:7; Rom 8:9), *one is not justified in concluding immediately that in these passages God’s spirit is regarded as a Person*; the same expressions are used in regard to rhetorically personified things or abstract ideas (see Rom 6:6; 7:17). Thus, the context of the phrase ‘blasphemy against the spirit’ (Matt 12:31; Matt 12:28; Luke 11:20) shows that reference is being made to the power of God” (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol XIII, P 575.

1 JOHN 5:7

In a deliberate and deceptive attempt to foist the false trinity doctrine upon the world, a monk copyist in the fourth century A.D. inserted totally spurious words into the Bible in order to “prove” this major doctrine of pagan antiquity.

Turn in your own Bible (King James Version) to 1 John 5:7-8; “For there are three that bear record in heaven, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*”

But did you know that not one of the italicized words is in any of the accepted New Testament Greek manuscripts? Did you know this spurious section was not found in the text of any Greek manuscripts until *after* the invention of printing? Comparison with many of the more modern translations and simple research will prove the point. Verses 7 and 8 should actually read as follows: “There are three witnesses, the Spirit, the water and the blood; and these three agree.” This is how the passage is rendered in the Revised Standard Version, one of the best overall of modern Bible translations.

The editors of both liberal and conservative Bible commentaries (ancient and modern) agree as to the very dubious origin of 1 John 5:7 (as it now stands in the King James or Authorized

Version). Notice a couple of quotes from two commentaries of recent vintage. Says the conservatively oriented *New Bible Commentary Revised*: "... The words are clearly a gloss and are rightly excluded by RSV [Revised Standard Version] even from its margin" (p. 1269). *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, universally recognized as a standard liberal work, is even more incisive with its comments:

"The famous interpolation after 'three witnesses' is not printed even in RSV, and rightly ... No respectable Greek MS [manuscript] contains it. Appearing first in a late 4th century Latin text, it entered the Vulgate and finally the NT [New Testament] of Erasmus [and eventually the King James]" (p. 1038).

The translators of the Revised Version of 1881 immediately spotted the difficulties with 1 John 5:7. The passage occurs in *only* two modern Greek manuscripts, in one or two ancient versions of little value and, of course, in many late copies of the Latin Vulgate. This is the extent of the textual support for this dubious verse.

It is lacking in every manuscript of this epistle written *before* the invention of printing, one excepted, the *Codex Montfortii*, in Trinity College, Dublin.

It is wanting in both the Syriac, all the Arabic, Ethiopic, the Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, Slavonian, etc. – in a word, all the ancient versions but the *Vulgate* – and even the *oldest* manuscripts of the Vulgate omit it.

The fact could not be ignored that not a single Greek manuscript or church-lesson book before the fifteenth century had any trace of 1 John 5:7. Finally no Greek father even quotes it in any discussion concerning the Trinity doctrine itself.

Consequently, the passage was omitted and it does *not* appear in the Revised Version of 1881 – the first scholarly revision of the King James Version of any consequence – or in any modern translation.

F.F. Bruce, a respected British scholar, has this to say about 1 John 5:7: "...A footnote rightly points out that the passage is 'not in any of the early Greek mss, or any of the early translations, or in the best mss of the Vulgate itself' and suggests that it is probably a gloss that has crept into the text" [*The English Bible*, p. 217].

Clearly it is a spurious addition to the New Testament Canon. 1 John 5:7 should be considered nonexistent as far as the Bible is concerned.

MATTHEW 28:19

A grossly misunderstood text often cited to "prove" there is a Trinity is Matthew 28:19; "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

To imply that this verse means that all three (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) are persons

is just not being honest with the Scriptures. Clearly, the first two (God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ) are two separate individual spirit personalities in the Godhead; but that fact does *not* automatically make the Holy Spirit also a person.

People give names to many things that are simply not persons. Nearly everything – whether person, place or thing – *has a name!*

But why did Jesus command the apostles to baptize converts into these three names? And why must they be so baptized in order to receive the Holy Spirit? Scholars translate the Greek expression *eis to onoma*, into the name of, something like “into the possession of.” When God the Father grants human beings *real repentance* (Rom 2:4; Acts 11:18; 2 Tim 2:25) we then belong to Him. We become His sons (literally!) – *the sons of God* (bearing His name) – when we receive and are led by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9, 14, 16-17). We become a part of that God Family to which the Holy Spirit also belongs, though not as a person.

Human beings often bear the names of their forebears, i.e., Johnson, Robertson, Jackson, meaning originally the sons of John, Robert and Jack.

“God” is the *family name* in English of the divine Kingdom of spirit beings. The Father’s name is called “God” in English. Jesus Christ – who was crucified so our past sins may be forgiven – is also called *God* in John 1:1, Hebrews 1:8 and other New Testament texts. The Holy Spirit – which comes forth from God – is the begettal agent by which we receive the earnest of our salvation (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:14; Rom 8:16).

Many religionists do not understand the part that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit each play in the salvation process. The trinity is the result, in part, of such fundamental misunderstandings.

But here is another one of the “famous” biblical opposites. Instead of teaching the pagan doctrine of the Trinity, Matthew 28:19 really tells us that God is a growing family or Kingdom into which we may enter upon repentance, baptism, the receipt of the Holy Spirit and patient endurance to the end of our natural lives and/or Christ’s coming – whichever comes first. A closed Trinity or triad, or triumvirate of three persons is as far from God’s mind and His plan for human beings as the east is from the west.

TO WHOM DID JESUS PRAY?

Can we apply a little plain old biblical “horse sense” to this time-honored doctrine of a three-person God-head? Consider this completely unshakable biblical fact: Jesus Christ of Nazareth – your Savior – was conceived not by a human father as all other human beings (excepting Adam and Eve) – but by the Holy Spirit.

A great angelic being appeared to Joseph, Jesus’ legal father, in a dream and said: “... Fear not to take thee Mary thy wife: for that which is *conceived* in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt 1:20; cf. verse 18). Perhaps the very same angel – in this case the archangel Gabriel (Luke 1:26) – was

sent with similar message to the virgin Mary.

Notice carefully *the wording* of their conversation. “And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, *thou shalt conceive* in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus” (verses 30-31).

Mary’s reply was just exactly what you would expect of a woman in that situation. “Then said Mary unto the angel, *How shall this be*, seeing I know *not* a man? And the angel answered and said unto her. *The Holy Spirit* shall come upon thee, and *the power of the Highest* [this is the real biblical definition of the Holy Spirit; it is a force or power] *shall overshadow thee*; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God... For with God nothing shall be impossible” (verses 34-35, 37).

So if we want to believe the Bible, we are forced to admit that Jesus Christ was conceived through *the agency of the Holy Spirit*.

Yet Jesus calls God His Father – *not* the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ said to Mary Magdalene in the book of John: “...go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend *unto my Father*, and your Father; *and to my God*, and your God” (John 20:17).

Can you begin to see how utterly illogical the concept of the Trinity is? *If* the Holy Spirit were a person, “he” would be Jesus’ father – not God the Father. Yet Christ dogmatically stated, as you have just read, that *God* is His Father.

Consider further. *If* the Holy Spirit were a person, Jesus Christ prayed to the wrong “father.” Since Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit, *if* the Holy Spirit were a person, Jesus’ father would be the Holy Spirit. But throughout the four Gospel accounts, we find Christ praying directly to His Father – God Almighty! Just one example: “These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee... And this is life eternal, that they might know thee *the only true God* [still talking to the Father], and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17: 1, 3).

IS THE HOLY SPIRIT A PERSON?

Is the Holy Spirit a *person*, just like God the Father and Jesus Christ, as the doctrine of the trinity teaches? Let’s examine the plain, clear testimony of Scripture to see what God’s Holy Spirit is.

First, it is the *power* of God. ‘not by might, nor by power [of humans], but *by my spirit*, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zech 4:6). “I am full of *power* by the Spirit of the Lord, and judgment, and of *might* ...” declared the prophet Micah (Micah 3:8).

Second, it is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear (deep reverence and respect – not terror) of the Lord (Isa 11:2).

Third, it is a *gift*. After baptism, you are to receive “the *gift* of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). It is *poured* out. “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit

upon all flesh” (Acts 2:17). “... On the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 10:45).

Fourth, to be effective the Holy Spirit must be *stirred* up. “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou *stir* up the gift of God,” Paul reminded the young evangelist Timothy (2 Tim 1:6).

Fifth, the Spirit of God can be *quenched* (1 Thes 5:19).

Sixth, it is the *begetting* power of God (Matt 1:18; Rom 8:9).

Seventh, it is God’s guarantee to us that He will fulfill His promise to us (Eph 1:14).

Eighth, it sheds the love of God abroad *in* our hearts (Rom 5:5).

Ninth, it must be *renewed* (2 Cor 4:16).

Notice that in all of these scriptures there is not one characteristic even implying a “person.”

Does a *person* do any of these things? Is a person “poured,” “quenched,” “renewed”? Does a person live in someone else or live in people’s hearts?

For further evidence proving that the Holy Spirit is not a person, see Matthew 1:20. Here we read that Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Yet Christ calls *God* His Father, not the Holy Spirit (John 14:16). If the Holy Spirit were a person, it would be Christ’s father – proof positive that the Holy Spirit is not a person but the power God the Father uses – much as a man uses electricity.

Consider further. If the Holy Spirit were a person, Jesus Christ prayed to the wrong individual. Throughout the four Gospels, we find Christ speaking to God – *not* the Holy Spirit – as His Father.