



*UNIQUE  
ATTRIBUTES  
OF GOD*

# CREATOR

- ❑ What are the unique attributes of God that make him God?
- ❑ He is the **source of all life.**
  - Gen 1:1 (NIV) In the beginning **God created** the heavens and the earth.
  - Isaiah 45:18 (WEB) For thus says Yahweh who **created the heavens,** the God who **formed the earth** and made it...



# SELF-SUFFICIENT

- ❑ God is **self-sufficient** - i.e., not dependent on anyone for anything.
  - Acts 17:25a (NIV) And he is not served by human hands, **as if he needed anything.**
  - Ps 5:9-12 (NIV) I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, **for the world is mine, and all that is in it.**

# SELF-EXISTANT

❑ God was **not created**.

- John 5:26 (NASB) For just as the Father has life in Himself...

# PROVIDENCE

❑ The **providence** of God refers to his care for the universe.

- Acts 17:25b (NIV) Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else.
- Jesus "upholds the universe by the word of his power." (Heb 1:3, ESV)

# ETERNAL

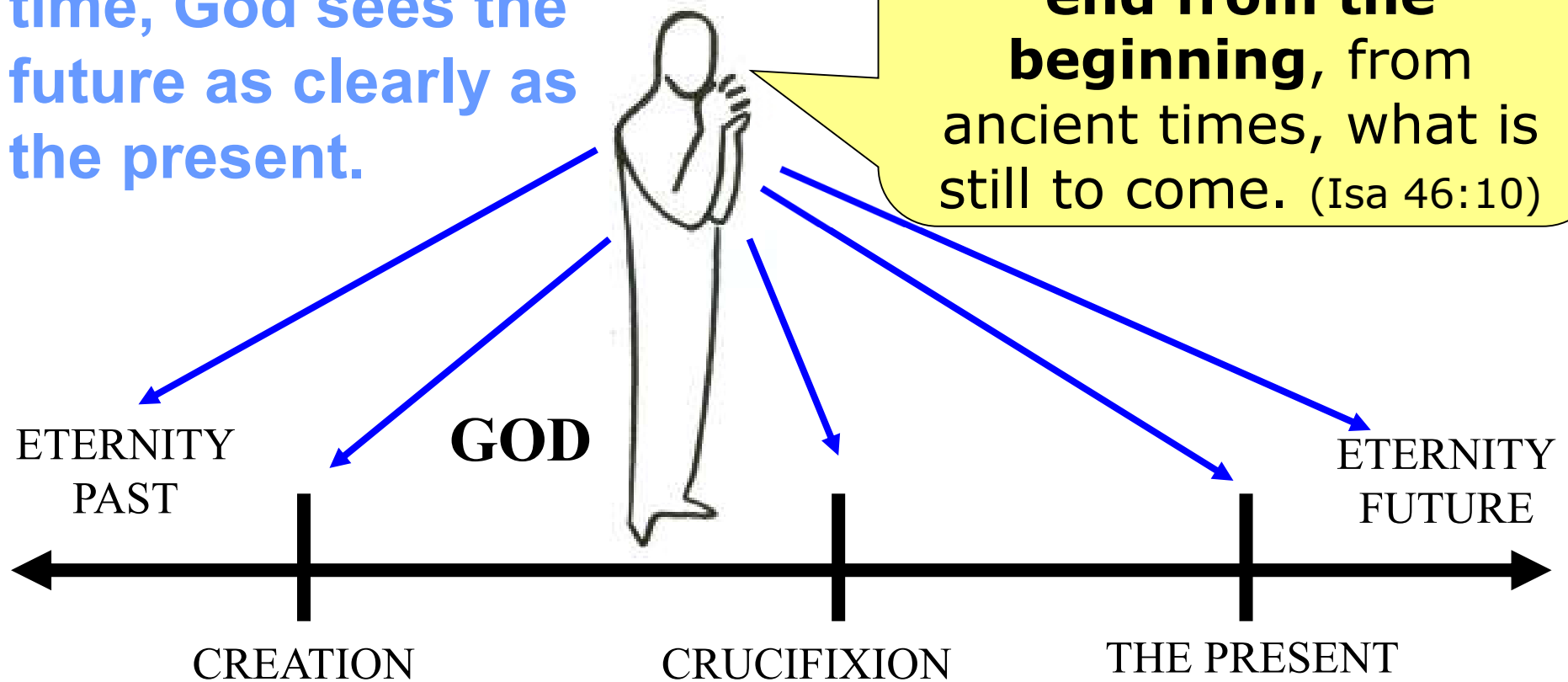
- ❑ **ETERNAL: no beginning or end**
- ❑ The Biblical concept of eternity and the eternal refers to the endless past, the unending future, or to God's present experience of all time. God has no beginning as man can understand beginning and no ending either, but God exists now and knows both the beginning and the end as we perceive them. In the Scriptures, God is thus called "everlasting" and "eternal".
  - Deut 33:27 (WEB) The eternal God is your dwelling place. Underneath are **the everlasting arms**.
  - Gen 21:33 (WEB) Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and called there on the name of Yahweh, **the Everlasting God**.

# ETERNAL

- 1 Tim 1:17 (WEB) Now to the King **eternal**, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.
- 1 Tim 6:16 (NASB) who **alone possesses immortality** and dwells in unapproachable light...
- Ps 102:26-27 (NKJV) They [*the earth and heavens*] will perish, but **You will endure**; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And **Your years will not come to an end**.
- ❑ God exists outside of time:
  - Ps 90:2 (WEB) Before the mountains were made, before you had given birth to the earth and the world, **before time was**, and for ever, you are God.

Being outside of time, God sees the future as clearly as the present.

**I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. (Isa 46:10)**



# IMMANENCE - NEARNESS

- ❑ God is **immanent**: within SPACE / TIME. God is present in nature, and history. He is near to us.
  - Acts 17:28 (NIV) God ... is not far from any one of us.
- ❑ He is a **personal God**, not a force - like the god of the Deists.
  - Ps 34:15 (NIV) The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry





# TRANSCENDENCE - DISTANCE

- ❑ But God is also **transcendent**: outside of SPACE / TIME. He is distinct from his creation (unlike pantheism where God is identical to the entire material universe).
- Jer 23:23 (NASB) "Am I a God who is near," declares the LORD, "And not a God far off?"



# TRANSCENDENCE - DISTANCE

- ❑ To hold to transcendence (distance) but not immanence (nearness) is **deism**, while to hold to immanence but not transcendence is **pantheism**.
- ❑ Transcendence teaches us:
  1. There is something higher than man. Secular humanism is not the answer to our problems.
  2. Salvation is not our achievement. We cannot reach God without his help.
  3. There will always be a gap between the Creator and created beings / things.
  4. We have a sense of awe towards God - our natural response is to worship him.

# INCOMPREHENSIBILITY

- ❑ The **incomprehensibility of God** means that he is not able to be fully known.
  - Isa 40:28 (NIV) ...his understanding no one can fathom.
  - Isa 55:8-9 (NKJV) "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are **My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.**
- ❑ We cannot completely understand God. Louis Berkhof argues that, "in so far as God reveals Himself in His attributes, we also have some knowledge of His Divine Being, though even so our knowledge is subject to human limitations." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Systematic Theology (London: Banner of Truth, 1949), 43.

# OMNIPOTENT

- ❑ **OMNIPOTENT: all powerful**
- ❑ Omnipotence is the attribute of God, which describes His ability to do whatever he wills.
  - Rev 19:6 (NKJV) ... "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"
- ❑ God is all-powerful which is why he is called the "Almighty." There is **nothing that he cannot do but his power is limited by his nature** i.e. he cannot (or rather will not) do anything contrary to his nature as God, such as sinning. God is not controlled by his power, but has complete control over it; otherwise he would not be a free being. To a certain extent, he has **voluntarily limited himself by the free will of his rational creatures.**

# OMNIPOTENT

- Matt 19:26 (NIV) Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but **with God all things are possible.**"
- Job 42:1-2 (WEB) Then Job answered Yahweh, "I know that **you can do all things**, and that no purpose of yours can be restrained."
- Jer 32:17 (WEB) Ah Lord Yahweh! Behold, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm; **there is nothing too hard for you.**

# SOVEREIGNTY

- ❑ The sovereignty of God is related to his omnipotence, providence, and kingship, yet it also encompasses his freedom, and is in keeping with his goodness, righteousness, holiness, and impeccability. It refers to God being in complete control as he directs all things — no person, organization, government or any other force can stop God from executing his purpose.<sup>1</sup>
- Isa 46:10 (NIV) ... I say, '**My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.**'
- (ESV)... '**My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose**'

<sup>1</sup> [https:// en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/ Attributes\\_of\\_God\\_in\\_Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attributes_of_God_in_Christianity)

# OMNISCIENCE

- ❑ **OMNISCIENT: all knowledge**
- ❑ Omniscience is the attribute by which God, perfectly and eternally knows all things, which can be known, past, present and future.
  - Psalm 147:5 (NIV) Great is our Lord and mighty in power; **His understanding has no limit.**
  - Psalm 139:2-4 (WEB) You know my sitting down and my rising up. You perceive my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but, behold, Yahweh, you know it altogether.



# OMNIPRESENT

- ❑ **OMNIPRESENT: present everywhere at once**
- ❑ Omnipresence is the attribute of God, by virtue of which he fills the universe in all its parts, and is present everywhere at once.
  - Jer 23:23-24 (WEB) Am I a God at hand, says Yahweh, and not a God afar off? **Can any hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him?** says Yahweh. Don't I fill heaven and earth? says Yahweh.



# OMNIPRESENT

- Psalm 139:7-12 (WEB) **Where could I go from your Spirit? Or where could I flee from your presence?** If I ascend up into heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, you are there! If I take the wings of the dawn, and settle in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there your hand will lead me, and your right hand will hold me. If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me; the light around me will be night;" even the darkness doesn't hide from you, but the night shines as the day. The darkness is like light to you.

# IMMUTABILITY

- ❑ IMMUTABLE: never changes
- ❑ Immutability is the perfection of God by which He is devoid of all change in essence, attributes, consciousness, will and promises. No change is possible in God, because all change must be to better or worse, and God is absolute perfection.
  - Malachi 3:6 (WEB) "For I, Yahweh, **don't change...**"
  - James 1:17 (NIV) Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, **who does not change like shifting shadows.**

# HOLY AND SINLESS

- Hab 1:13a (NIV) Your eyes are **too pure to look on evil**; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing
- Ex 15:11 (NIV) "Who among the gods is like you, o LORD? Who is like you - **majestic in holiness...**"

## VERACITY

- ❑ The **veracity of God** refers to his truth-telling. Titus 1:2 speaks of "God, who does not lie" and Hebrews 6:18 says that "it is impossible for God to lie."
- Num 23:19 (NIV) **God is not human, that he should lie**, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil?

# GOOD & LOVING

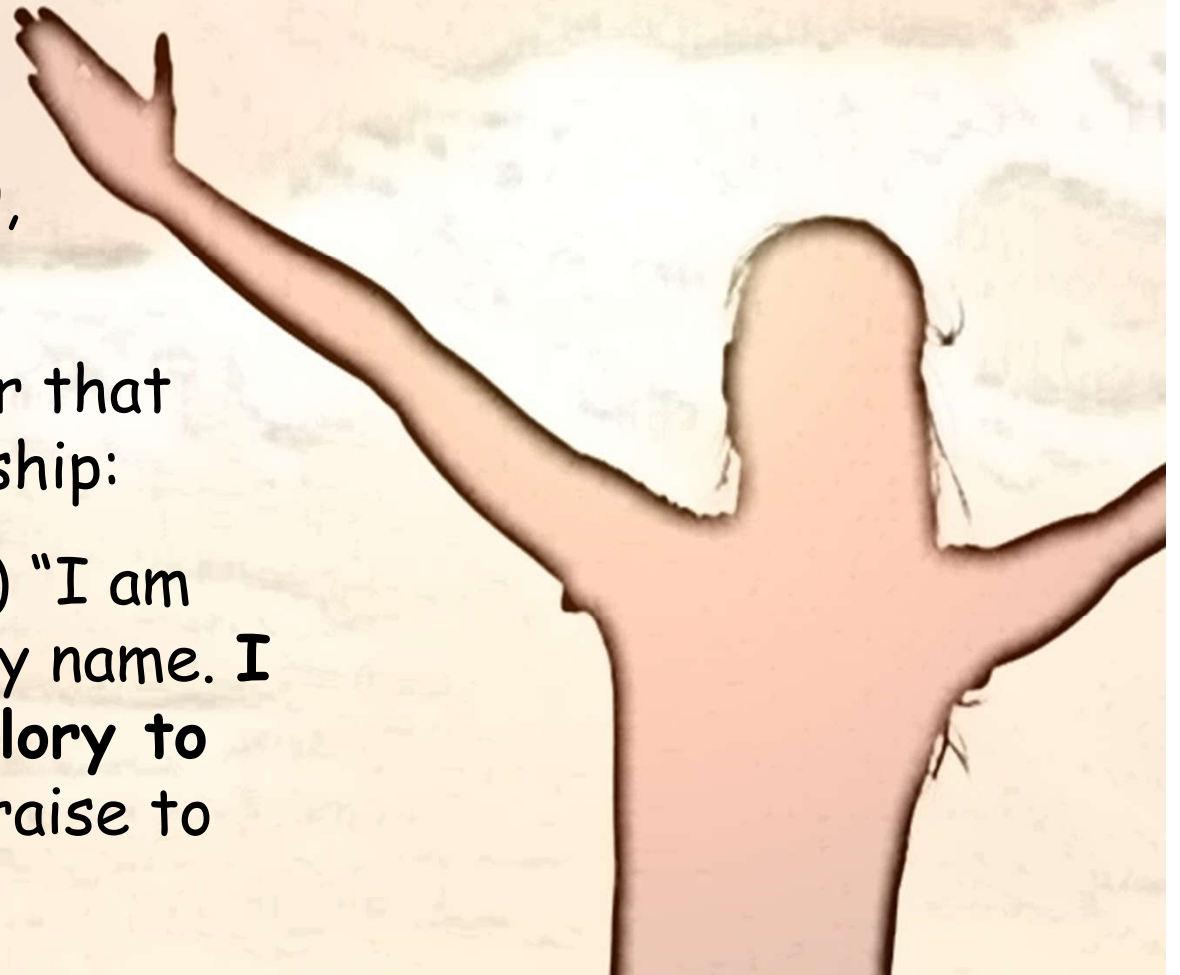
- ❑ The **goodness of God** means that "God is the final standard of good, and all that God is and does is worthy of approval."
- ❑ "**God is love**" (1 John 7:8) and "love comes from God" (4:7).
  - John 3:16 (NIV) For **God so loved the world** that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

# JUST

- ❑ But on the flipside, "**God is just**" (2 Thess 1:6) and "not one to show partiality" (Acts 10:34).
  - Rom 11:22 (NKJV) Behold therefore **the goodness and severity** of God.

# RIGHTFULLY WORSHIPPED

- ❑ Only God is worthy and may be rightfully worshipped.
- ❑ When Satan tempted Jesus to worship him, Jesus responded, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: **'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only'**." (Matt 4:10, NIV)
- ❑ Yahweh makes it clear that only he deserves worship:
  - Isaiah 42:8 (WEB) "I am Yahweh. That is my name. **I will not give my glory to another, nor my praise to engraved images.**"





*THE*

*TRINITY*



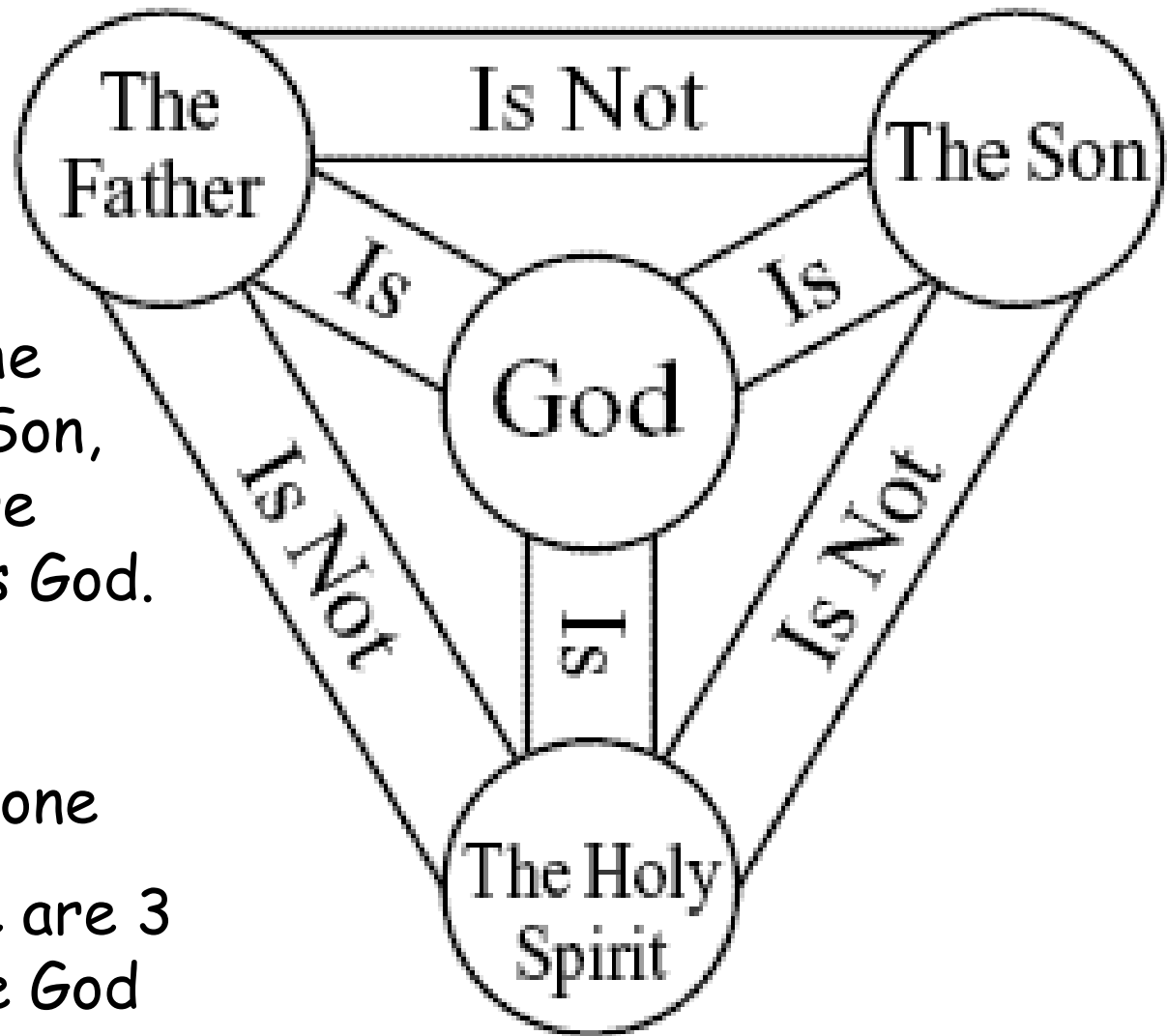
# DEFINITION

- ❑ The Christian doctrine of the Trinity teaches that **“the one God exists in three Persons and one substance, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”**
- Personhood in the Trinity does not match the common Western understanding of 'person' as used in the English language—it does not imply an “individual, self-actualized centre of free will and conscious activity.” Each person is understood as having the one identical essence or nature, not merely similar natures.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https:// en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/ Christian\\_theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_theology)

# THE TRINITY

- ❑ Christianity is unique in claiming that God is one but that there are three persons in the Godhead (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) who are each understood as God.
- ❑ Scripture:
  1. Teaches God is one
  2. Indicates there are 3 persons who are God
  3. Hints to three-in-oneness





# THE BIBLICAL BASIS

## 1. God is one (monotheism)

- Deut 6:4 (KJV): Hear, O Israel, the **LORD** our **God** is **one LORD**.
- James 2:19 (NIV) You believe that **there is one God**. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

## 2. Yet there are 3 persons who are God

### a) No-one will dispute that the Father is God

- Eph 4:6 (NASB) **one God and Father of all** who is over all and through all and in all.

# THE DEITY OF JESUS

b) Jesus is God.

- ❑ The English word deity is from the Latin deus, meaning 'god'. There are many scriptures, which directly affirm the deity of Jesus.
  - Phil 2:5-6 (NIV) ... Christ Jesus: Who, being in **very nature God**, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage
  - Acts 20:28 (NIV) Be shepherds of the church of **God**, which he bought **with his own blood**.
  - Col 2:9 (NIV) For in Christ **all the fullness of the Deity** lives in bodily form
  - Heb 1:3 (NIV) The Son is the radiance of God's glory and **the exact representation of his being...**

# THE DEITY OF JESUS

- Rom 9:5 (ESV) To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the **Christ, who is God over all**, blessed forever. Amen.
- John 1:18 (NASB) No one has seen God at any time; **God the only Son, \*** who is in the arms of the Father, He has explained Him.

\* Some translations read, "the only begotten Son" (e.g. KJV). However, the earliest and best Greek manuscripts along with the quotations of the Church Fathers, support the reading the "only begotten God" (monogenēs theos).

# THE DEITY OF JESUS

- ❑ Let us look at one of the most well-known prophecies about the Messiah. Jesus is called 'God' in no uncertain terms.
  - Isaiah 9:6 (NIV) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, **Mighty God** (El Gibbor), Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- ❑ JW's claim that Jesus is the "Mighty God" but the Father is the "Almighty God".
  - If "El Gibbor" (Mighty God) means something less than the "Almighty God", how is it that Yahweh (Jehovah) is called "El Gibbor" in Isaiah 10:21?
  - In the OT "El Gibbor" was exclusively applied to Yahweh (Deut 10:17; Ps 24:8; Jer 32:18).

# JOHN 1:1

- John 1:1,14 (NIV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was God...** The Word **became flesh** and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only **Son**, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- ❑ This verse has so troubled JW's that they have resorted to re-translating the verse to "the Word was a god" in their New World Translation. However, there is no indefinite article ('a') in Greek. Only the definite article ('the') is used. The word 'a' is inserted by translators to make sense in English.
- ❑ The direct translation of the Greek would be: "In beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and God was the Word."

# THE GOD vs GOD

εν	αρχη	ην	ο	λογος	και
en	Arche	en	ho	logos	kai
In	Beginning	was	the	Word	and

ο	λογος	ην	προς	τον	θεον	και	θεον	ην	ο	λογος
ho	logos	en	pros	tou	Theos	kai	Theos	en	ho	logos
the	Word	was	with	<b>the</b>	<b>God</b>	and	<b>God</b>	was	the	Word

- ❑ JWs try to make a case for their translation of "a god" in John 1:1 from the fact that the first usage of "theos" ("the Word was with the God") is preceded by a definite article ("tou") while the second usage ("God was the Word") has no definite article. They then assert that only the Father is "the God".

# THE GOD vs GOD

- However Thomas called Jesus "the God" with the definite article. When Jesus appeared to him after His resurrection, we read: Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my GOD!" (John 20:28) In the Greek, Thomas is saying to Jesus, "ho kurios mou, kai ho theos mou" i.e. "the Lord of me, and **the God** of me."

<b>Και</b>	<b>Απεκριθη</b>	<b>Θωμας</b>	<b>και</b>	<b>ειπεν</b>	<b>Αυτω</b>
Kai	apokrinomai	Thomas	kai	epo	Autos
And	Answered	Thomas	and	<b>said to</b>	<b>Him</b>

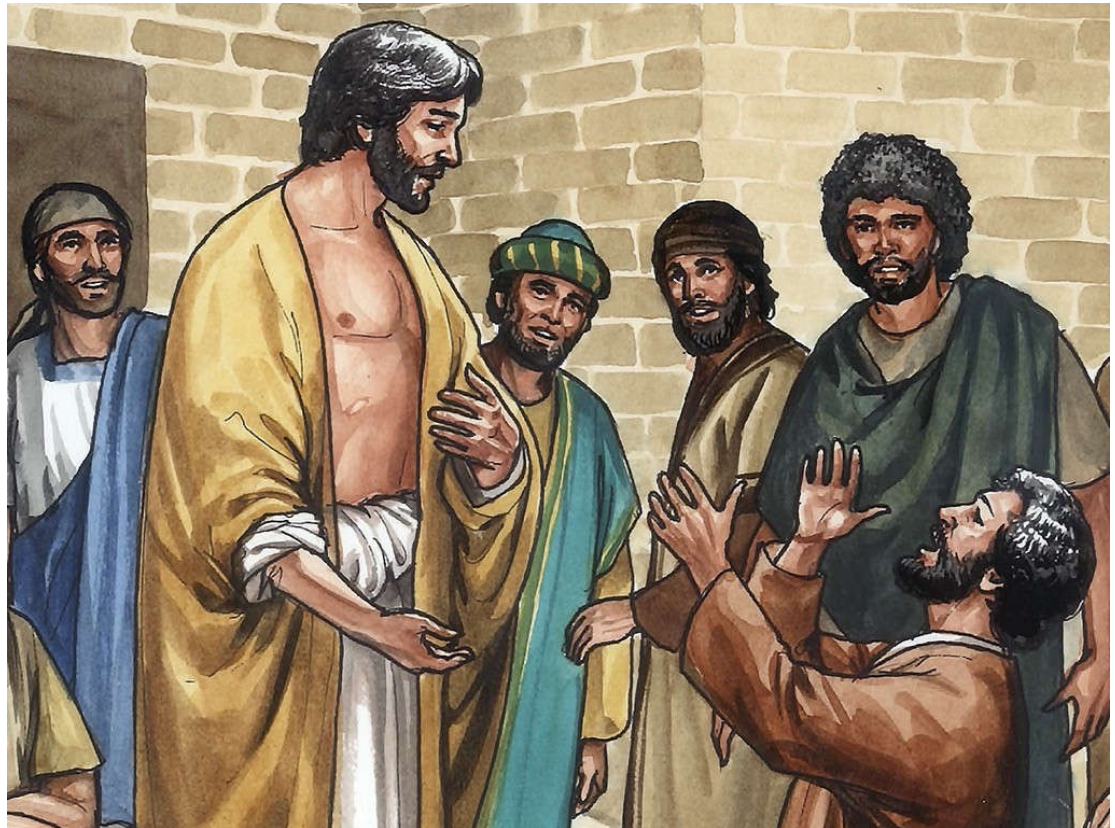
<b>Ο</b>	<b>κυριος</b>	<b>Μου</b>	<b>και</b>	<b>ο</b>	<b>Θεος</b>	<b>Μου</b>
Ho	kurios	Mou	kai	ho	Theos	mou
The	Lord	of me	and	<b>the</b>	<b>God</b>	of me

➤ This verse inescapably affirms that **Jesus is "the God"** even if this sort of distinction was intended.



# JOHN 1:1

- ❑ JWs then clutch at straws by saying that Thomas was so stunned by Jesus' appearance, that he swore. This is ridiculous because it would mean that Thomas, a devout man of God, swore in front of Jesus and used the Lord's name in vain in violation of Exodus 20:7 without even receiving a reprimand from Jesus or a rebuke for blasphemy.
- ❑ In addition **Thomas addressed Jesus directly**: "Thomas said to Him" (nominative being used for the vocative).





# JOHN 1:1

- ❑ Does John 1:1 teach us of 2 'gods' (a greater and a lesser one) as JW's teach, or 2 facets of the same God.
- ❑ Let's see how the early Church Fathers addressed this same heresy.
- a) Hippolytus, the 3rd-generation disciple of John - who spoke and wrote Greek and hence understood the nuances of the language - wrote (c. AD 205):
  - If, then the Word was with God and was also God, what follows? Would one say that I speak of two Gods? **I will not indeed speak of two Gods, but of one.** I speak of **two Persons**, however, and of **a third Economy** - the grace of the Holy Spirit. *[Against Noetus]*

# JOHN 1:1

b) Tertullian wrote (c. AD 213):

- Now, if He too is God, for according to John, 'The Word was God,' then you have two Beings - One who commands that the thing to be made, and the other who creates. In what sense, however, you ought to understand Him to be another. I have already explained: on the ground of personality, not of substance. And in the way of distinction, not of division. **I must everywhere hold only one substance, in three coherent and inseparable {persons}. [Adversus Praxeas]**

# GREEK SCHOLARS - JOHN 1:1

- ❑ What do reputable scholars say about the NWT rendering of John 1:1?
- ❑ Dr Samuel J. Mikolaski of Zurich, Switzerland: "This anarthrous (used without the article) construction does not mean what the indefinite article 'a' means in English. **It is monstrous to translate the phrase 'the Word was a god.'**"
- ❑ Dr William Barclay, a leading Greek scholar of the University of Glasgow, Scotland: "The deliberate distortion of truth by this sect is seen in their New Testament translations. **John 1:1 is translated: '... the Word was a god,' a translation which is grammatically impossible...** It is abundantly clear that a sect which can translate the New Testament like that is intellectually dishonest."

# GREEK SCHOLARS - JOHN 1:1

- ❑ Dr F. F. Bruce of the University of Manchester, England:  
"Much is made by Arian amateur grammarians of the omission of the definite article with 'God' in the phrase 'And the Word was God.' Such an omission is common with nouns in a predicative construction... **'a god' would be totally indefensible.**" *[Barclay and Bruce are generally regarded as Britain's leading Greek scholars. Both have NT translations in print!]*
- ❑ Dr Eugene A. Nida, head of Translations Department, American Bible Society: Responsible for the Good News Bible: **"With regard to John 1:1, there is of course a complication simply because the New World Translation was apparently done by persons who did not take seriously the syntax of the Greek."**

# GREEK SCHOLARS - JOHN 1:1

- ❑ Dr Charles L. Feinberg of La Mirada, California: "I can assure you that the rendering which the Jehovah's Witnesses give John 1:1 is not held by any reputable Greek scholar."
- ❑ Dr J. J. Griesbach (whose Greek text - not the English part - is used in the Emphatic Diaglott): "So numerous and clear are the arguments and testimonies of Scriptures in favour of the true Deity of Christ, that I can hardly imagine how, upon the admission of the Divine authority of Scripture, and with regard to fair rules of interpretation, this doctrine can by any man be called in doubt. Especially the passage, John 1:1-3, is so clear and so superior to all exception, that by no daring efforts of either commentators or critics can it be snatched out of the hands of the defenders of the truth."

# GREEK SCHOLARS - JOHN 1:1

- ❑ British scholar H.H. Rowley stated, "From beginning to end this volume is a shining example of how the Bible should not be translated."
- ❑ In the 19<sup>th</sup> century Dr B. F. Westcott and Dr F. J. A. Hort published an edition of the NT in Greek. This was the result of nearly 30 years labour and is believed to be the most significant critical edition ever produced by British scholars. Westcott (whose Greek text - not the English part - is used in the JW's Kingdom Interlinear Translation) said: "The predicate (God) stands emphatically first, as in IV.24. It is necessarily without the article... No idea of inferiority of nature is suggested by the form of expression, which simply affirms the true deity of the Word... in the third clause 'the Word' is declared to be 'God' and so included in the unity of the Godhead."

# GREEK SCHOLARS - JOHN 1:1

- ❑ Dr Walter R. Martin, founder of the Christian Research Institute and author of "Kingdom of the Cults": "The translation... 'a god' instead of 'God' is erroneous and unsupported by any good Greek scholarship, ancient or contemporary and is a translation rejected by all recognized scholars of the Greek language many of whom are not even Christians, and cannot fairly be said to be biased in favour of the orthodox contention."
- ❑ Dr Ernest C. Colwell of the University of Chicago: "A definite predicate nominative has the article when it follows the verb; it does not have the article when it precedes the verb... this statement cannot be regarded as strange in the prologue of the gospel which reaches its climax in the confession of Thomas. 'My Lord and my God.' - John 20:28."

# GREEK SCHOLARS - JOHN 1:1

- ❑ Dr James L. Boyer of Winona Lake, Indiana: "I have never heard of, or read of any Greek scholar who would have agreed to the interpretation of this verse insisted upon by the Jehovah's Witnesses ... I have never encountered one of them who had any knowledge of the Greek language."
- ❑ Dr Paul L. Kaufman of Portland, Oregon: "The Jehovah's Witnesses people evidence an abysmal ignorance of the basic tenets of Greek grammar in their mistranslation of John 1:1."
- ❑ Dr Bruce M. Metzger, professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Princeton University, calls the NWT 'a frightful mistranslation,' 'Erroneous', 'pernicious' and 'reprehensible'. "If the Jehovah's Witnesses take this translation seriously, they are polytheists."



# GREEK SCHOLARS - JOHN 1:1

- ❑ A non-Christian, **non-Trinitarian scholar**, Dr J. Johnson of California State University, Long Beach: **"No justification whatsoever for translating THEOS EN HO LOGOS as 'the Word was a god.'** There is no syntactical parallel to Acts 28:6 where there is a statement in indirect discourse; John 1:1 is direct... **I am neither a Christian nor a Trinitarian."**
- ❑ Dr Julius Mantey, author of A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, calls the NWT "a shocking mistranslation." "Obsolete and incorrect." "It is **neither scholarly nor reasonable to translate John 1:1 'The Word was a god.'**" In discussion with Walter Martin, he says that "the translators of the NWT are "diabolical deceivers".

# JOHN 1:1

- ❑ Mantey says, "Well, as a backdrop, I was disturbed because they (Watchtower) had **misquoted me in support of their translation.**" \*
- ❑ He also writes, "I have never read any New Testament so badly translated as The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of The Greek Scriptures... it is a distortion of the New Testament. The translators used what J.B. Rotherham had translated in 1893, in modern speech, and **changed the readings in scores of passages to state what Jehovah's Witnesses believe and teach. That is a distortion not a translation.**" \*\*

\* These words were excerpted from the tape, "Martin and Julius Mantey on The New World Translation", Mantey is quoted on pages 1158-1159 of the JW's Kingdom interlinear Translation. \*\* "Depth Exploration in The New Testament" (N.Y.: Vantage Pres, 1980), pp.136-137]

# THE BIBLICAL BASIS

- ❑ Q: Why does Jesus address the Father as "my God"?
  - John 20:17 (NIV) Jesus said, "... Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, **to my God and your God.**'"
- ❑ A: The Father also addresses Jesus as God:
  - Heb 1:5,8 (NIV) For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father" ... But **about the Son he says**, "Your throne, **O God**, will last for ever and ever..."

# DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

c) The Holy Spirit is God

❑ Mary conceived through the Holy Spirit, but Jesus was called the Son of God.

➤ Acts 5:3-4 (NIV) But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the **Holy Spirit**... You have not lied to man but to **God**."



# DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- ❑ Some claim that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force but 6 things are contained within the realm of personality and these are found in the Holy Spirit:
  - 1) Will (1 Cor 12:11)
  - 2) Intelligence (Romans 8:27)
  - 3) Knowledge (1 Cor 2: 10-12)
  - 4) Bestowment of power (Acts 1:8)
  - 5) Capacity for love (Romans 15:30)
  - 6) Capacity for speech (Acts 8:29, 13:2)

# HINTS TO 3-IN-ONENESS

## 3. Hints to three-in-oneness

- ❑ Although 'Elohim' is a plural, it is consistently used with singular verb forms and with adjectives and pronouns in the singular. In this case it is translated 'God'.
- ❑ Consider Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Now look at the Hebrew, which reads right to left. The plural "gods" (elohim) is accompanied by a singular verb (bara).

הָאָרֶץ	וְאֵת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	אֵת	אֱלֹהִים	בָּרָא	בְּרֵאשִׁית
ha-aretz	v'et	ha-shamayim	eth	elohim	bara'	bre'shith
the earth	and	the heavens		God(s)	created	In the beginning
				male plural	male singular	



# HINTS TO 3-IN-ONENESS

- ❑ Every time the word 'God' is used in the OT it is almost always 'Elohim' (plural) in the Hebrew, but used with a singular verb.
  - This was obviously intentional as it is used with a plural verb when referring to heathen 'gods'.
  - If the plural form 'Elohim' was the only form available for a reference to God, then the argument might be made that the writers had no other alternative but to use the word 'Elohim' for both the one true God and the many false gods. However, the singular form for 'Elohim' (Eloah or El) exists and is used in such passages as Deuteronomy 32:15-17 and Habakkuk 3:3... The far greater use of the plural form again turns the argument in favour of plurality in the Godhead. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "JEWISHNESS AND THE TRINITY" by Dr Arnold Fruchtenbaum

# DEUT 6:4

אֶחָד	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	יְהוָה	יִשְׂרָאֵל	שְׁמַע
Echad	YHWH	Elohenu <sup>1</sup>	YHWH	Yisrael	Shema
is one	Yahweh	our God(s)	Yahweh	Israel	Hear
unity		singular			

- ❑ The literal translation of Deut 6:4 is "Hear Israel, Yahweh our **gods**; Yahweh is one". Despite using the plural 'gods' we are told that Yahweh is 'one'.
- ❑ However, when we examine the word '**echad**' translated 'one', comes from a Hebrew root 'achad' which means "to unify" or "to collect together", a "**united one**".<sup>2</sup> It is used in preference to '**yachid**' when a composite unity is indicated.

<sup>1</sup> Elohenu comes from 'Elohim' (Gods) with 'enu' being the plural possessive pronoun-suffix denoting things which belong to us.

<sup>2</sup> [http:// www.blueletterbible.org/ Comm/ mark\\_eastman/ messiah](http://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mark_eastman/messiah)



# DEUT 6:4

echad: unified

אֶחָד

yachid: numeric

יָחִיד

- Gen 2:24 (NASB) For this reason a **man** shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his **wife**; and they shall become **one (echad)** flesh.
- ❑ We see the idea of separate persons viewed as a unified 'one'. The man and woman become "one flesh". The word 'one' here implies a **compound unity**.
- ❑ It is in this sense that we can understand the "God is one" in Deut 6:4 - He is clearly one God, yet he manifests himself in more than one distinct personage.

# HINTS TO 3-IN-ONENESS

- ❑ Before the destruction of Sodom, God appeared to Abraham in person with 2 angels. Later we read:
  - Gen 19:24 (NIV) Then **the LORD** [Yahweh] rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire **from the LORD** [Yahweh] **out of heaven.**
- ❑ Thus Yahweh is simultaneously both on earth in physical manifestation (Jesus) and in heaven (the Father).



# HINTS TO 3-IN-ONENESS

- ❑ While the word "Trinity" is not in the Bible the idea is implicit in the Scripture where the 3 persons of the Godhead are linked in equality.
- Matt 28:19 (NKJV) Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the **name** of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**
- 2 Cor 13:14 (NKJV) The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the communion of the **Holy Spirit** be with you all. Amen.

# HINTS TO 3-IN-ONENESS

- ❑ The attributes exclusive to God are applied to Jesus and the Holy Spirit e.g.
  - Omnipotence: Matt 28:18 (NKJV) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."
  - Omnipresence: Matt 28:20 (NIV) "And surely I (Jesus) am with you always, to the very end of the age."
  - Omniscience: John 21:17 (NIV) ... Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; You know that I love you."
  - Immutability: Heb 13:8 (NIV) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

# HINTS TO 3-IN-ONENESS

- Rightly worshipped: only God is entitled to worship (Luke 4:8) yet in Hebrews 1:6 the Father commands the angels to worship Jesus.
- ❖ Jesus also consistently accepted worship.
  - John 9:38 (NIV) Then the man said (to Jesus), "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him.
- ❖ Jesus accepted worship from the Magi (Matt 2:11), from the leper (Matt 8:2), from the ruler (Matt 9:18), from his disciples (Matt 14:33; 28:16-17, Luke 24:52), from the Canaanite woman (Matt 15:25), from the women witnesses to the resurrection (Matt 28:9), from Thomas (John 20:28), and from all creation (Rev 5:11-14 ).

# HINTS TO 3-IN-ONENESS

- Holy and Sinless: Jesus was "tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin." (Heb 4:15, NIV)
- Eternal: Isaiah 9:6 (NIV) For to us a child is born... And he will be called ... everlasting Father...
- Creator:
  - ❖ Yahweh created alone:
    - Isaiah 44:24 (WEB) ..."I am Yahweh, who makes all things; who **alone** stretches out the heavens; who spreads out the earth **by myself**"
  - ❖ But Jesus created alone:
    - Col 1:15-16 (NIV) ... all things were created by him [Jesus] and for him.

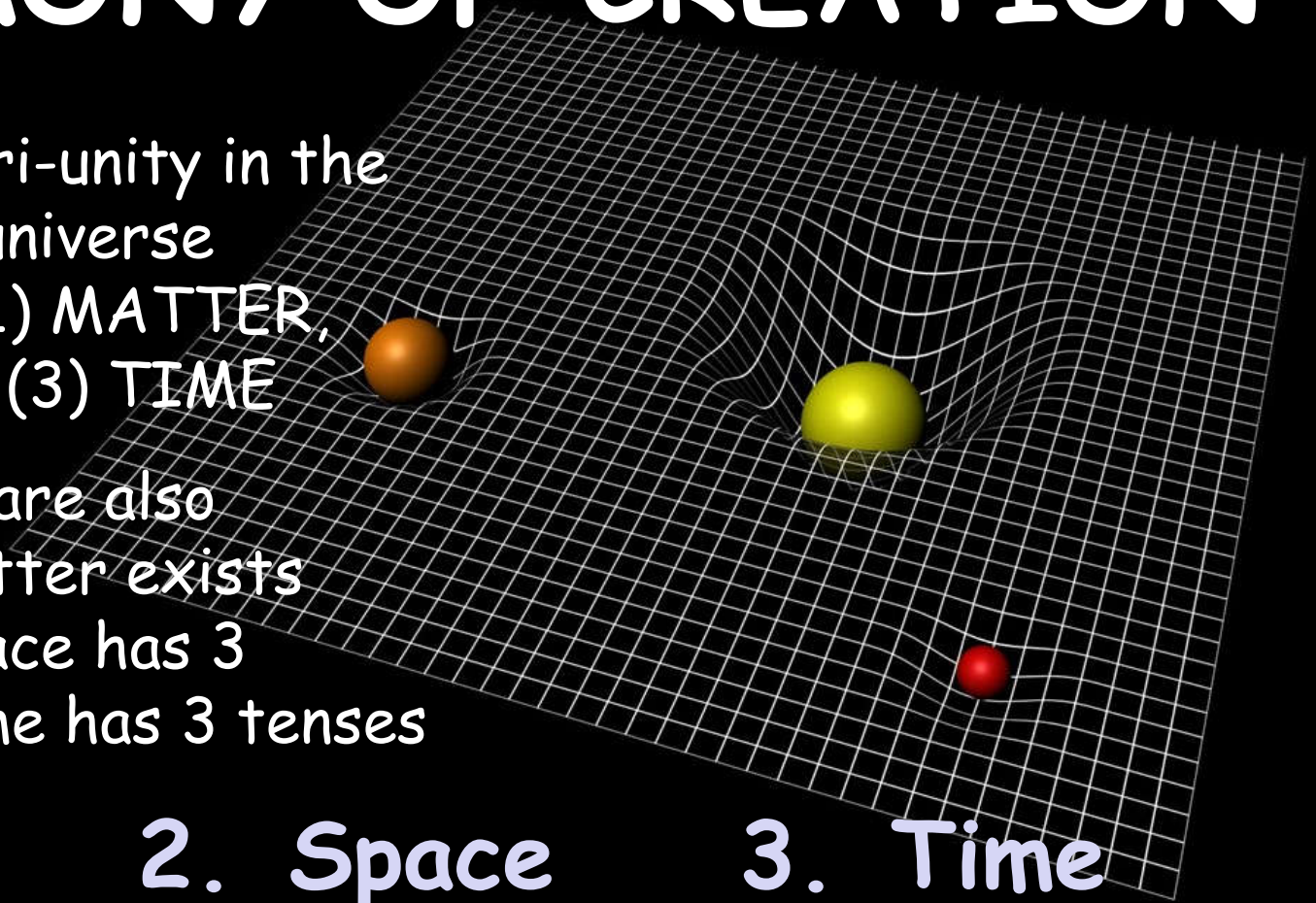


# ETERNAL PRE-EXISTENCE

- Isaiah 44:6 (WEB) This is what Yahweh, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Yahweh of Armies, says: "**I am the first, and I am the last**; and besides me there is no God."
- ❑ When Jesus appeared to John on the island of Patmos, His words to him were, "Do not be afraid. **I am the first and the last.**" (Rev 1:18, NIV)
- ❑ Jesus makes the same statement as Yahweh in the Old Testament. It is impossible for there to be two "FIRSTS". Either one must be FIRST and the other SECOND if they are two separate beings. But Jesus and Yahweh both state, "I AM THE FIRST."

# TESTIMONY OF CREATION

- Consider the tri-unity in the universe. Our universe comprises of (1) MATTER, (2) SPACE and (3) TIME
- Each of these are also tri-unities. Matter exists in 3 states, space has 3 dimensions, time has 3 tenses



## 1. Matter

- a) Solid
- b) Liquid
- c) Gas

## 2. Space

- a) Length
- b) Breadth
- c) Height

## 3. Time

- a) Past
- b) Present
- c) Future



# THE DOCTRINE ILLUSTRATED

❑ God said "Let us make man in our image" (Gen 1:26). But man is a tripartite being.

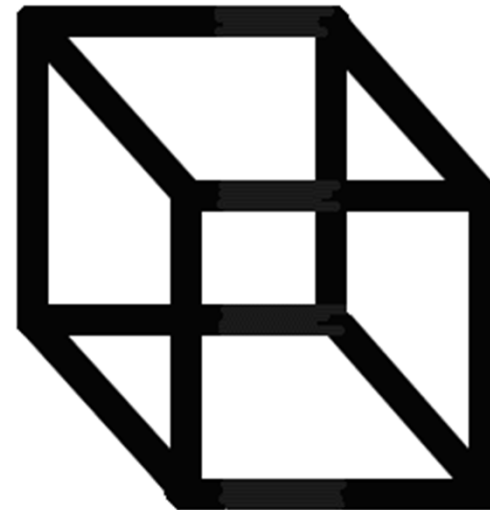
➤ 1 Thess 5:23 (NKJV) ... may your whole **spirit, soul, and body** be preserved blameless ...

1. BODY: makes us conscious of the world
2. SOUL: makes us conscious of self
3. SPIRIT: makes us conscious of God



# THE DOCTRINE DEFINED

- ❑ The doctrine is difficult to understand. C.S. Lewis says:
  - If Christianity was something we were making up, of course we could make it easier. But it is not. We cannot compete, in simplicity, with people who are inventing religions. How could we? We are dealing with Fact. Of course anyone can be simple if he has no facts to bother about."
- ❑ Regarding the Trinity, Lewis writes:
  - If you have three dimensions, you can then build what we call a solid body: say a cube - a thing like a dice or a lump of sugar. A cube is made up of six squares.



# THE DOCTRINE DEFINED

- ❑ Do you see the point? A world of one dimension would be a straight line. In a two-dimensional world, you still get straight lines, but many lines make one figure. In a three-dimensional world, you still get figures but many figures make one solid body. In other words, as you advance to more real and more complicated levels, you do not leave behind you the things you found on the simpler levels: you still have them, but combined in new ways - in ways you could not imagine if you knew only the simpler levels.

# THE DOCTRINE DEFINED

- ❑ Now the Christian account of God involves just the same principle. The human level is a simple and rather empty level. On the human level one person is one being, and any two persons are two separate persons - just as, in two dimensions (say on a flat sheet of paper) one square is one figure, and any two squares are two separate figures. On the Divine level you still find personalities; but up there you find them combined in new ways, which we, who do not live on that level, cannot imagine. In God's dimension, so to speak, you find a being who is three persons while remaining one Being, just as a cube is six squares while remaining one cube. Of course we cannot fully conceive a being like that: just as, if we were so made that we perceived only two dimensions in space we could never properly imagine a cube.

# HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ❑ Anti-Trinitarians claim that the deity of Jesus was a late development originating in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The writings of the Pre-Nicean church Fathers should dispel this myth.
- ❑ Early 2<sup>nd</sup> cent, Polycarp (disciple of John): "... who shall believe on **our Lord and God Jesus Christ** and on His Father that raised him from the dead." (The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians 12:2)
- ❑ 150 AD, Justin Martyr: "The Father of the universe has a Son, who also being the first begotten Word of God, is **even God**." (First Apology, ch 63)
- ❑ c. 165-175 AD, Tatian the Syrian: "We are not playing the fool, you Greeks, nor do we talk nonsense, when we report that **God was born in the form of a man**." (Address to the Greeks)

# HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ❑ In the early 200's Tertullian (Carthage - Tunisia) coined the word Trinity:
  - ... a **Trinity**, placing in their order the **three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three**, however, not in condition, but in degree; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in aspect; **yet of one substance**, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is **one God**, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, **under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.**<sup>1</sup>
  - ... I must everywhere hold only **one substance, in three coherent and inseparable [persons]**<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Against Praxeas ch. 2    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. ch. 12

# HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ❑ Monarchianism: opposed the doctrine of an independent, personal subsistence of the Logos and affirmed the sole deity of God the Father.
- ❑ Modalism (taught by Sabellius) is the belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three different modes or aspects of God)
- ❑ Arianism: Arius (256-336) in Libya asserted that Christ is not of one substance with the Father. Athanasius (c. 296 - 373) in Egypt opposed Arius resulting in Arianism being declared a heresy.

# HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ❑ The doctrine of the Trinity was formally defined in the Nicene Creed (325 AD).
  - We believe in one **God, the Father** Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible...  
And in one **Lord Jesus Christ**, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God,] Light of Light, **very God of very God**, begotten, not made, **being of one substance with the Father**...  
And in the **Holy Ghost**...



# HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ❑ Belief in the Trinity is a mark of all mainstream Christianity including Protestantism, Catholicism, and Orthodoxy. As such, the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church describes the Trinity as "the central dogma of Christian theology".
- ❑ In contrast, heretical Non-Trinitarian positions are held by many cults including the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Unitarians and Christadelphians.
  - Unitarians believe in one deity / one person.
  - Mormons view the Godhead as three separate beings who are one in purpose rather than essence.

# SUPERIOR TO ANGELS

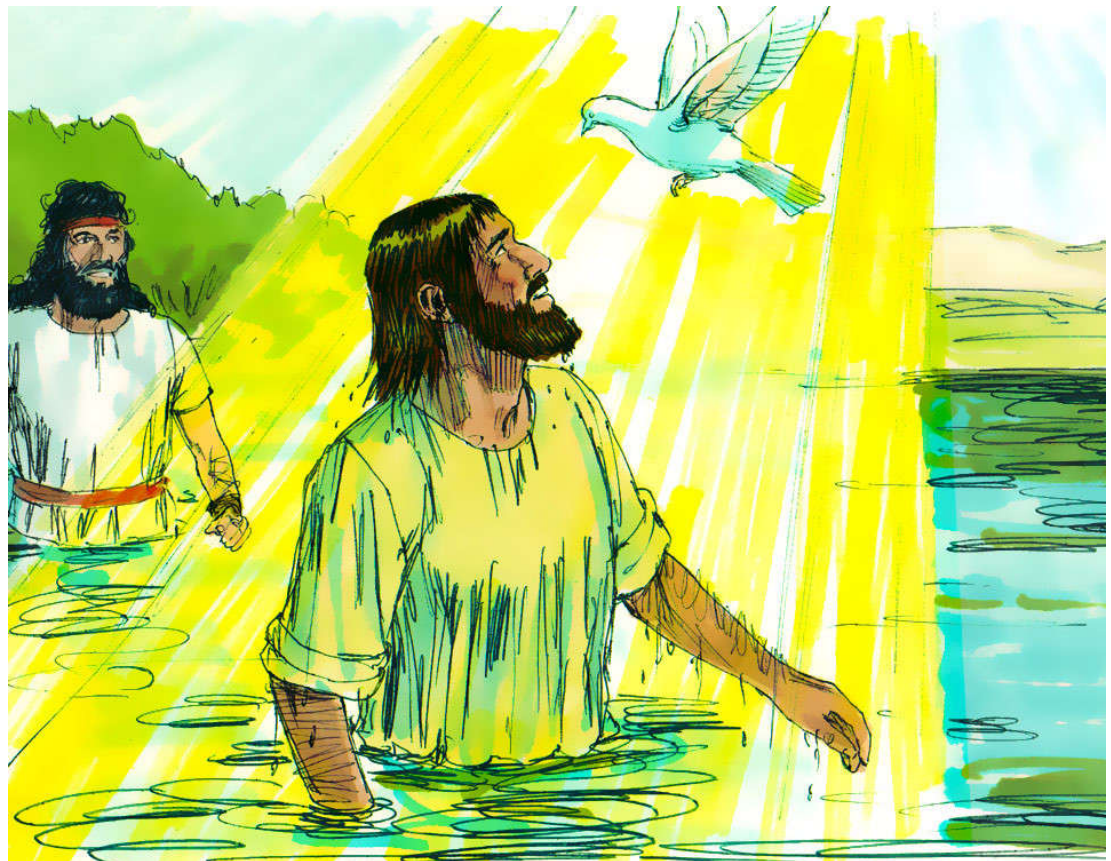
- ❑ JW's teach that Jesus is the archangel Michael, while the Mormons believe that he is Satan's brother. This is curious, as Hebrews 1 has as its central theme the superiority of Jesus over the angels.
  - 1) He has a greater name i.e., Son of God (vs 4-5)
  - 2) Angels are commanded to worship Him (vs 6)
  - 3) The Father addresses Him as God (vs 8-9)
  - 4) He is the Creator (vs 10-12)
  - 5) He is immutable (vs 12 & Heb 13:8)
  - 6) He is eternal (vs 12)
  - 7) He is seated at God's right hand and is the ruler of the coming age (vs 13)

# HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

- ❑ Not common knowledge is that although most Pentecostals are Trinitarian, as early as 1914 there was a split in the Pentecostal movement along doctrinal lines regarding the Trinity.
- ❑ Contrasted with the orthodox doctrine of three distinct and eternal Persons in one divine essence Oneness Pentecostals teach that there is only one being, revealing himself in different ways.
- ❑ As a result, Oneness Pentecostals are regarded by orthodox Christians as subscribing to the heresy of **Modalism** which teaches that God displayed himself in 3 different 'modes' throughout the course of history (in the Old Testament as Father, in the Gospels as the Son, and after the Ascension as the Holy Spirit).

# MODALISM

- ❑ The following passage which explicitly presents all 3 persons of the Godhead simultaneously - must be the most problematic for Modalists.
- Matt 3:16-17 (NIV) As soon as **Jesus** was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw **the Spirit** of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "**This is my Son**, whom I love..."



# *DOCTRINAL SUMMARY*

**There is one God  
who is revealed in three persons:  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy  
Spirit. These are the three eternal  
distinctions in one divine Being.**

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