

Breaking Down the Trinity & Breaking Up False Teachings

Prepared by Michael J. Ghiglia
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Breaking Down the Trinity & Breaking Up False Teachings

1. Why Is the Trinity an Essential Doctrine?

The LORD God Demands Exclusive Worship

1.1 Exodus 20:1-6 (NIV)

¹ And God spoke all these words:

² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

⁶ but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

The LORD God Forbade Intermarriage with Pagans

1.2 Deuteronomy 7:1-4 (NIV)

¹ When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—

² and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.

³ Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons,

⁴ for they will turn your children away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

1. See also **2 Corinthians 6:14**.

"Other Gods" Expose False Prophets

1.3 Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (NIV)

¹ If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a sign or wonder,

² and if the sign or wonder spoken of takes place, and the prophet says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them,"

³ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul.

⁴ It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him.

⁵ That prophet or dreamer must be put to death for inciting rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. That prophet or dreamer tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.

Other Gods Are “False Gods”

1.4 Jeremiah 13:24-25 (NIV)

²⁴ “I will scatter you like chaff driven by the desert wind.

²⁵ This is your lot, the portion I have decreed for you,” declares the LORD, “because you have forgotten me and trusted in false gods.

Which “Christ,” “Jesus” & “Spirit” Is True?

1.5 Matthew 24:23-25 (NIV)

²³ At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it.

²⁴ For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

²⁵ See, I have told you ahead of time.

1. Note that “Messiah” (Hebrew) and “Christ” (Greek) both mean “Anointed One.”

1.6 1 John 4:1-3 (KJV)

¹ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

² Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

³ And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

1. See also **2 Corinthians 11:3-4.**

“Eternal Life” Is at Stake

1.7 John 17:3 (NIV)

³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

1. See also **John 3:16; 3:36; 5:24; 6:40; 14:2-3** and **17:5, 24.**

1.8 **John 8:23-24 (NIV)**

²³ But he [Jesus] continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins."

1. See also **Isaiah 66:24; Mark 9:48; Luke 16:22-26; Revelation 20:13-14** and **21:8**.

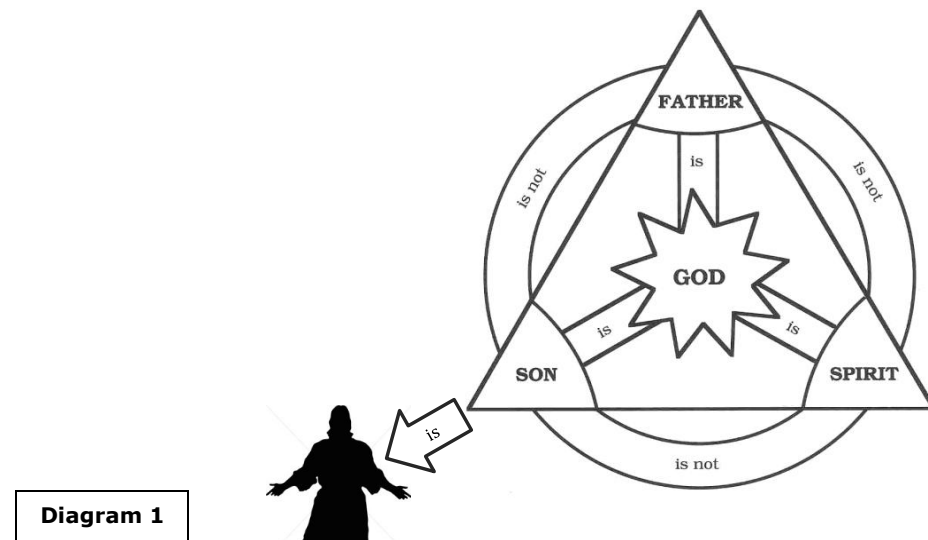
1.9 **John 14:6 (NIV)**

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

2. What Is the Trinity?

A Basic Definition

- 2.1 Within the *one Being*, that is God, there exists eternally *three coequal and coeternal persons*, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



What the Trinity Is Not

- 2.2 The Trinity is not *polytheism* (many gods) or *tritheism* (three gods), *modalism* (only one person at a time), or *subordinationism* (the inferiority of the Son and the Spirit to the Father by divine nature).

3 Truths & 3 Heresies

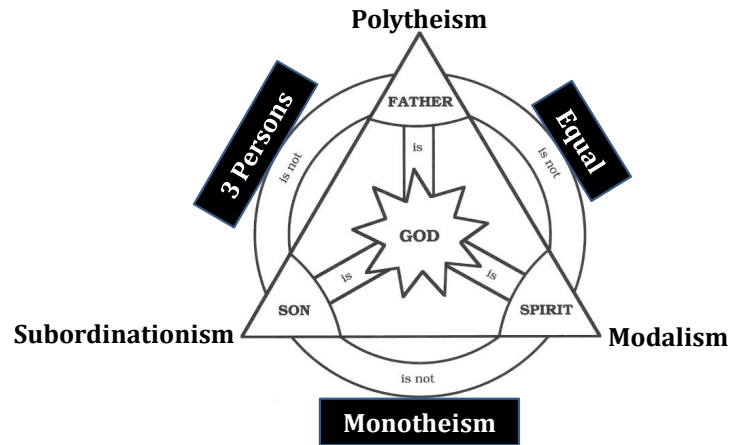


Diagram 2

3. What Is Divine Nature?

Defined

3.1 Galatians 4:8 (NIV)

⁸ Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.

1. Nature (Gk. *physis*) is "the natural character or characteristics of an entity." Divine nature, therefore, refers to the natural characteristics of true deity.

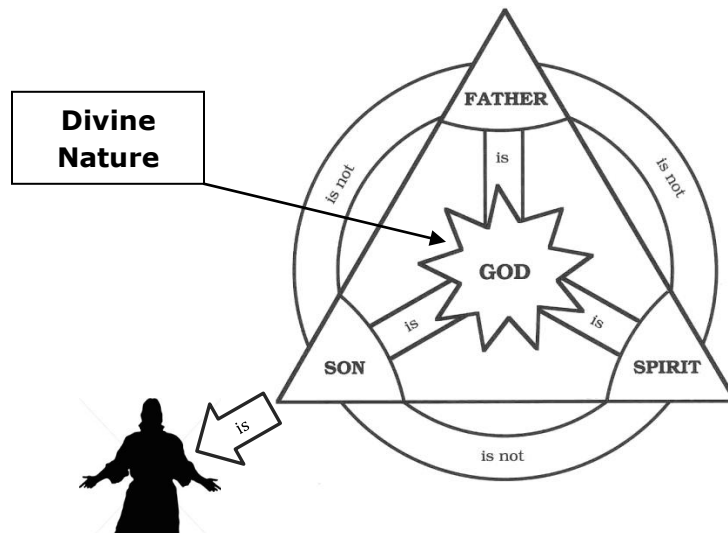


Diagram 3

Non-Exclusive Attributes of Divine Nature (Communicable)

3.2 2 Peter 1:3-7 (NIV)

³ His [God's] divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature [*physis*], having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;

⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;

⁷ and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.

1. See also **Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 3:8-14; Zechariah 12:1** and **2 Corinthians 1:21-22; John 11:25** and **1 Corinthians 15:51-55.**

3.3 1 John 4:8 (NIV)

⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Exclusive Attributes of Divine Nature (Incommunicable)

There Is Only One True God

3.4 Isaiah 43:10-12 (NIV)

¹⁰ "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.

¹¹ I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.

¹² I have revealed and saved and proclaimed— I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God."

1. See also **Deuteronomy 4:35** and **Isaiah 44:6-8.**
2. "I am he" (Heb. *ani hu*; Gk. *egō eimi* in the Septuagint).

The Personal Name of God Is "LORD" (Jehovah or Yahweh)

3.5 Exodus 3:13-15 (NIV)

¹³ Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me

to you.' This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.

1. "I AM WHO I AM" (Heb. *haya asher haya*; Gk. *egō eimi ho ōn* in the Septuagint).
2. "LORD" (Heb. *yhwh*; some Septuagint manuscripts reproduced the Hebrew *yhwh*). *YHWH* is referred to as the Tetragrammaton, which means "four letters."
3. Both "I AM" (*haya*) and "LORD" (*yhwh*) are derived from the Hebrew root *hyh* which means "to exist" or "to be."
4. See also **Exodus 6:3**; **Psalms 83:18** and **Hosea 12:5**.

Only God Creates

3.6 **Isaiah 44:24 (NIV)**

²⁴ "This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, the Maker of all things, who stretches out the heavens, who spreads out the earth by myself,

1. See also **Genesis 1:1** where "in the beginning" is *absolute* and "heavens and the earth" indicate *totality* (source: Victor P. Hamilton, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament—Genesis 1-17*, 1990, pp. 103-108).



Excursus 1—Only God Is Omnipresent Spirit

As the infinite Creator of the universe (including time, space and matter), God necessarily transcends time, space and matter.

1. Therefore, God is *immaterial* spirit.

John 4:24 (NIV)

²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

- a. See also **Isaiah 31:3**.
- b. spirit – "regarded as separate from matter" (source: *Collins American-English Dictionary*).

2. God is everywhere-present.

1 Kings 8:27 (NIV)

²⁷ "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

- a. See also **Psalms 139:7-8**.

3. God is invisible.

1 Timothy 1:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- a. See also **John 1:18**.

When we think of a "person" we tend to envision a finite human person. It may be *less confusing* to think of God as three "personalities" in the one divine Being.

Only God Knows the Hearts of All Men

3.7 **1 Kings 8:37-39 (NIV)**

³⁷ "When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come,

³⁸ and when a prayer or plea is made by any of your people Israel—being aware of the afflictions of their own hearts, and spreading out their hands toward this temple—

³⁹ then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with everyone according to all they do, since you know their hearts (for you [“LORD, the God of Israel” - v. 23] alone know every human heart),

1. See also **Psalm 147:5** and **Isaiah 46:10**.

Only God Is Absolutely Eternal

3.8 **Psalms 90:2 (NIV)**

² Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

1. Note the contrast between the mountains being “born” (Gk. *ginomai* in the Septuagint) or “coming into being/existence” and the eternal existence of the Creator.

Only God Can Forgive Sins

3.9 **Psalms 51:1-4 (NIV)**

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge.

1. See also **2 Samuel 12:13**; **Leviticus 16** (especially vv. 30, 34); **Isaiah 43:25** and **Luke 5:21**.

Exclusive Attributes of Divine Nature:

1. Only 1 “God”
2. Only 1 “LORD”
3. Only 1 Creator
4. Only Omnipresent One
5. Only Eternal One
6. Only Omniscient One
7. Only Forgiver of Sins

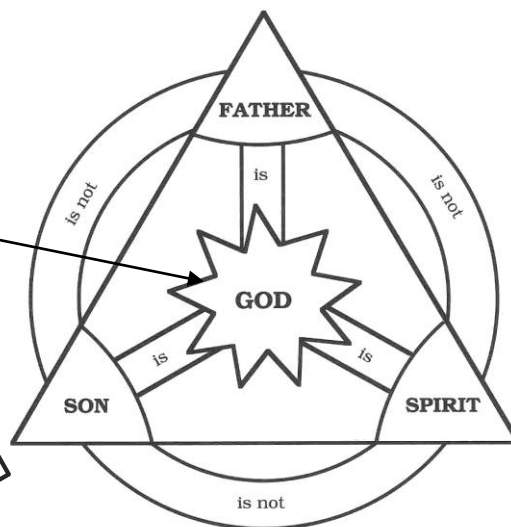


Diagram 4

4. Glimpses of the Trinity

Creation

4.1 **Genesis 1:26-27 (NIV)**

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

1. See also **Genesis 3:22; 11:6-9** and **Isaiah 6:8**.
2. "God" (Heb. *elōhim*) is a *plural* translated as a *singular* when referring to the LORD God of the Bible and is always followed by a *singular* verb—exceptions noted below (source: Terence H. Fretheim, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 1997, 1:405).
3. The plural pronouns "us" and "our" require a *plural* verb in Hebrew.

Jesus' Baptism

4.2 **Matthew 3:16-17 (NIV)**

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

1. *Theophanies* are visible and/or auditory manifestations of God—note here the Father's "voice [only] from heaven."

The Resurrection:

God the Father

4.3 **Galatians 1:1 (NIV)**

¹ Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—

God the Holy Spirit

4.4 **Romans 8:11 (NIV)**

¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit, who lives in you.

1. See also **1 Peter 3:18** and **1 Timothy 3:16**.

God the Son

4.5 **John 2:18-22 (NIV)**

¹⁸ Then the Jews responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

²⁰ They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?"

²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body.

²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

1. See also **John 10:17-18**.

Resurrected by ...



God the Father, God the Spirit & God the Son

The Great Commission

4.6 **Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)**

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

1. Note that "name" (Gk. *onoma*) is *singular* in the context of a *plurality* of persons.
2. See also **1 Peter 1:2** and **2 Corinthians 13:14** (though not for the Great Commission).

5. Jesus Is God the Son by Divine Nature

The LORD God in the OT & NT

OT

“God” (Heb. *elōhim*)

“LORD” (Heb. *yhwh*)

NT

“God” (Gk. *theos*)

“Lord” (Gk. *kurios*)

1. OT – If the context does not refer to a particular Person in the Godhead, it refers to the Being, the LORD God.
2. NT – When the NT quotes the OT, “LORD” (Heb. *yhwh*) is always translated “Lord” (Gk. *kurios*).
3. NT writers usually refer to the Father as “God” and the Son as “Lord.”
4. “god(s)” and “lord(s)” in the OT & NT also refer to *false beings* and/or *creatures with authority* (see context).

Diagram 5

Jesus Is “God”

5.1 Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

⁶ 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 Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

1. Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ (see Mt. 1:23 for “ ‘The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’ ”—which means, “ ‘God with us’ ” [quoting **Isaiah 7:14**]).
2. The LORD is “mighty God” (Heb. *el gibbor*) in **Isaiah 10:21** and **Jeremiah 32:17-18** (KJV, NKJV, NASB). Moreover, *El* in Isaiah is always a name of God.
3. “Everlasting Father” may be a messianic metaphor given the LORD God’s paternal concern for and care of His people (see **Psalms 68:5-6** and **103:13**) (source: J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 1993, p. 102). It may also be a Hebrew idiom for “the Possessor of eternity” (lit. “Father of eternity”) (source: Ron Rhodes, *Christ Before the Manger—The Life and Times of the Preincarnate Christ*, 1992, pp. 40-41).

5.2 Psalms 45:6-7 (NIV)

⁶ Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.

⁷ You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

1. This Psalm has both “near and far” implications—the *near* is implied by the succeeding line of Davidic kings and the *far* is implied by the final establishment of the eternal throne and kingdom of Jesus Christ (cf. **2 Samuel 7:11-16**).

Hebrews 1:8-9 (NIV)

⁸ But about the Son he [the Father] says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.

⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy" [quoting **Psalm 45:6-7**].

1. Incredibly, the Father here addresses the Son as "God" (Gk. *theos*; Heb. *elōhim*)—NOT as a mere *mighty ruler*, but as deity (see v. 3).
2. "therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions" is a reference to the Father addressing the Son according to His human nature (see 2:6-7, 9, 11 and 14; see also **John 20:17** for " 'I am returning to ... my God and your God' ").

5.3 John 1:1 (NIV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1. See verses 14-18, 23, 29 and 35-36 to establish that "the Word" (v. 1) is Jesus.
2. "with" (Gk. *pros*) typically expresses the presence of one person with another in close, intimate relationship (see **2 Corinthians 5:8** for Paul's preference "to be ... at home with the Lord").
3. **Person and Nature:** The first occurrence of "God" refers to *the Father*; the second occurrence of "God" refers to the Word's *divine nature*. In other words, "the Word was with God [the Father] and the Word was God [by divine nature]."
4. See also **John 1:18** (NIV, NASB, HCSB, NET, ESV) and **20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1** and **1 John 5:20**.
5. The Joseph Smith Translation (JST) corrupts John's declaration of the Word's deity with *absolutely no support* in the NT manuscript record.
6. The New World Translation (NWT) of the JWs reads: "and the Word was a god" thereby making Jesus both *a lesser god* and a separate being from the Father.

Jesus Is "LORD" (Jehovah or Yahweh)

5.4 Isaiah 40:3 (NIV)

³ A voice of one calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

John 1:23 (NIV)

²³ John [the Baptist] replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord' " [quoting **Isaiah 40:3**].

1. See **John 1:15-18, 29-31** and **35-36** to establish that the Baptist is preparing the way for Jesus Christ (Jehovah). Moreover, John explicitly refers to Jesus as "God" in **John 1:1** and **20:28**.
2. See also **Mark 1:1-11** and **Luke 3:1-22** for similar accounts of the Baptist's prophetic mission.

5.5 **Joel 2:32 (NIV)**

³² And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, even among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

Romans 10:9-13 (NIV)

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

¹¹ As the Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."

¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" [quoting **Joel 2:32**].

1. See also **Isaiah 45:22-24** cross-referenced with **Philippians 2:9-11**.
2. The apostle Paul also refers to Jesus as "God" in **Romans 9:5** and **Titus 2:13**.
3. The apostle Paul refers to the Father as the "one God" and Jesus Christ as the "one Lord" (**1 Corinthians 8:6**; see also **Revelation 19:16** for "LORD OF LORDS" cross-referenced with **Deuteronomy 10:17**).

5.6 **Psalms 102:24-25 (NIV)**

²⁴ So I said: "Do not take me away, my God, in the midst of my days; your years go on through all generations.

²⁵ In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

1. Note that the Psalmist addresses God as "LORD" (Heb. *yhwh*) 7 times in **Psalms 102**.

Hebrews 1:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ He [the Father] also says [about the Son], "In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands" [quoting **Psalms 102:25**].

1. Incredibly the Father here addresses the Son as "Lord" (Gk. *kurios*).

2. The New World Translation (NWT) of the Jehovah's Witnesses reads: "Lord" instead of "Jehovah" (as it usually does when quoting the OT) thereby obscuring the deity of the Son.

Jesus Is "I am" the Eternal LORD God

5.7 John 8:53-59 (NIV)

⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

⁵⁴ Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.

⁵⁵ Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word.

⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

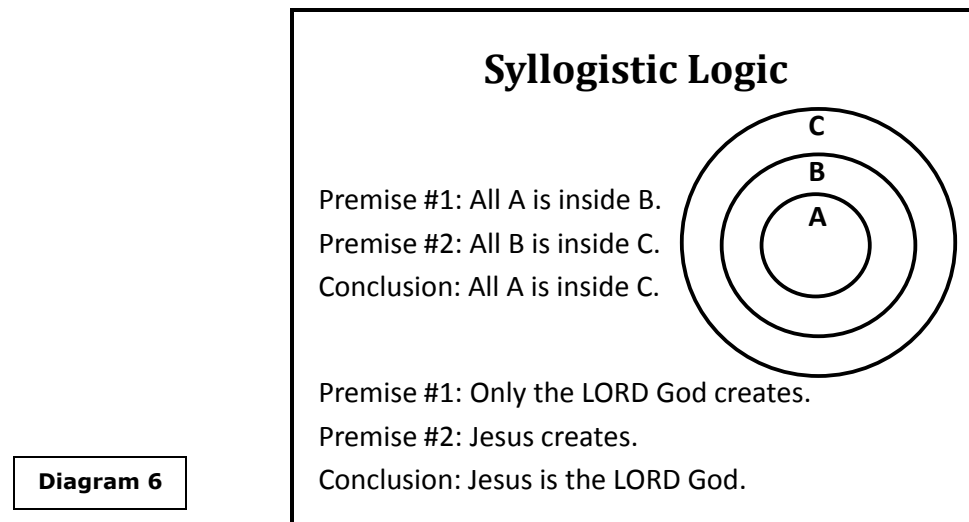
⁵⁷ "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"

⁵⁸ "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

1. Jesus answers "who" he is (v. 53) in the context of His age and time (see vv. 57-58).
2. "I am" (Gk. *egō eimi*) was understood by the Jews to be a self-claim to deity in association with **Exodus 3:14** and **Isaiah 43:10** in the Septuagint (see **sections 3.4 and 3.5**).
 - a. In the Septuagint the LORD God's "I am" (Gk. *egō eimi*) declarations are also found in **Isaiah 41:4; 43:13, 25; 46:4** and **48:12**; cross-reference with **Deuteronomy 32:39**.
3. Note the stark contrast Jesus makes between Abraham being "born" or *coming into existence* (Gk. *ginomai*) and His *eternal existence* as God—NOT "I was" (i.e. expressing mere preexistence), but "I am."
4. Note the unbelieving Jews' attempt to stone Jesus *for blasphemy* (see also **Leviticus 24:16**).
 - a. See also **John 5:16-18** and **10:30-33**.
5. The New World Translation (NWT) of the JW's reads: "I have been" (v. 58) thereby obscuring the connection with the "I am" statements of the LORD God in **Exodus 3:14** and **Isaiah 43:10**.

Jesus Is the Creator of All Things



5.8 John 1:1-3 (NIV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

1. See verses 14-18, 23, 29 and 35-36 to establish that "the Word" (v. 1) is Jesus.
2. "In the beginning" (v. 1) is associated with the Creation account in **Genesis 1:1** and is *absolute* (source: D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 1991, p. 114). Note also that verse 2: "He was with God in the beginning" may be associated with **Genesis 1:26-27** (see [section 4.1](#)).
 - a. JW's resist the association of "the beginning" in **John 1:1** with the beginning in **Genesis 1:1**. This is because **Genesis 1:1** is interpreted to be the absolute beginning of time and Jesus, being a created angelic being according to JW doctrine, could not have existed before time.

5.9 Hebrews 1:1-2 (NIV)

¹ In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

1. "the universe" (Gk. *ho aiōnas*) is literally "the ages."
2. JW's argue that because the Father created "through" (Gk. *dia*) the Son (see also **John 1:3**), Jesus is denied absolute deity. However, if JW's were logically

consistent the absolute deity of the Father must be denied on the same grounds (see **Hebrews 2:10** where everything exists “through” God).

5.10 Colossians 1:15-16 (NIV)

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created through him and for him.

1. LDS doctrine teaches that *all spirits* (including those of Jesus and Lucifer) were procreated by heavenly Father and Mother in “the preexistence.” Most Bible interpreters, however, understand “thrones or powers or rulers or authorities” (v. 16) to refer to *a totality of hierarchical spiritual beings created by Jesus*.
2. The New World Translation (NWT) of the JWs reads: “all [other] things” (v. 16) implying that *after the Father created Jesus* (allegedly as Michael the archangel), Jesus created *all other things*.

Jesus Is Absolutely Eternal

5.11 John 1:1 (NIV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

1. “was” (Gk. *ēn*) is the imperfect tense of *eimi* (“to be”) which conveys here continuous existence with no idea of origin for either the Word or God and is to be contrasted with verse 3: “Through him all things were made [Gk. *egeneto*]” or came into being (source: James R. White, *The Forgotten Trinity*, 1998, pp. 50-51).
2. See also **John 1:1** in **sections 5.3 and 5.8**.
3. See also **John 8:53-59** in **section 5.7**.

5.12 Colossians 1:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ He [Jesus] is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

1. Being that Jesus created “all things” (v. 16), He cannot Himself be a thing (i.e. create Himself). Hence, Jesus is eternally “before all things” and without beginning.
2. The New World Translation (NWT) of the JWs reads: “all [other] things” (see **Colossians 1:15-16** in **section 5.10**).

5.13 Hebrews 7:3 (NIV)

³ Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God he [Melchizedek] remains a priest forever.

1. Melchizedek is a theological *type* (i.e. prophetic foreshadower or copy) of Christ, who is the *antitype*. What was *figuratively true* of Melchizedek—namely, his being “without beginning of days,” is *literally true* of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.
 - a. See **Hebrews 8:5** and **9:24** for *types* of sanctuaries.

Jesus Is the Omniscient (All-Knowing) One

5.14 **Acts 1:23-26 (NIV)**

²³ So they [the eleven apostles] nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.

²⁴ Then they prayed, “Lord [Gk. *kurios*], you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen [Gk. *eklegō*]”

²⁵ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.”

²⁶ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

1. Peter refers to Jesus as “Lord [Gk. *kurios*] Jesus” in verse 21. (See also **Acts 7:59-60** and **1 Corinthians 8:6**.)
2. Jesus *chose* (Gk. *eklegō*) the twelve apostles (see **Acts 1:1-2** and **Luke 6:13**). Conclusion: The “Lord” addressed here is the Lord Jesus.
3. The NWT of the Jehovah’s Witnesses translates “Lord” (Gk. *kurios*) in verse 24 as “Jehovah” while maintaining “Lord Jesus” in verse 21 thereby obscuring Jesus’ identification as Jehovah (i.e. the apostles were NOT praying to Jesus).

Jesus Is the Forgiver of Sins

5.15 **Luke 5:20-25 (NIV)**

²⁰ When Jesus saw their faith, he said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven.”

²¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, “Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

²² Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, “Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?”

²³ Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk?’

²⁴ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

So he said to the paralyzed man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”

²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God.

1. Jesus never corrected His audience when they believed in Him as “God” or accused Him of claiming to be “God” (**John 20:28-29** and **10:30-39**). Rather, He affirmed them (see **John 5:16-24**; see also **8:48-59** in **section 5.7**).
2. It was one thing for the Levitical priests in the OT and the apostles in the NT to *indirectly* communicate the forgiveness of sins (see **Leviticus 4:20** and **John**

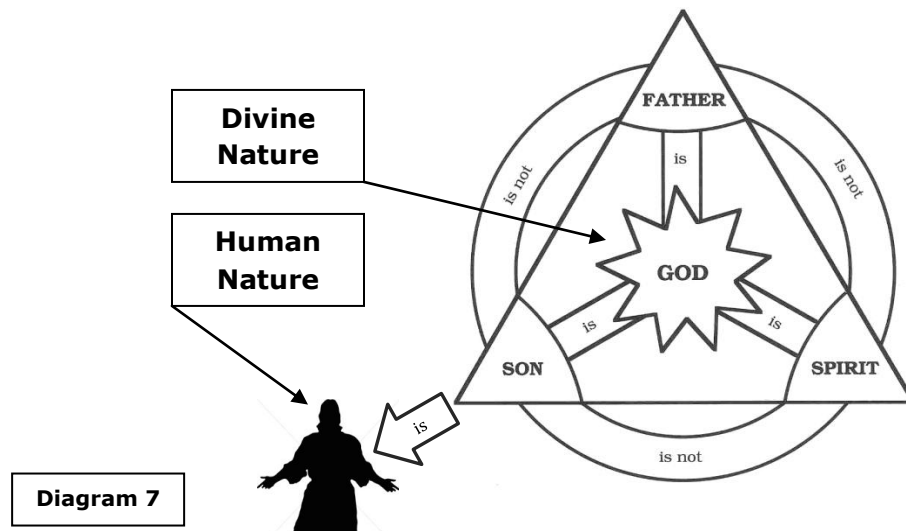
20:21-23)—it was quite another to be accused of forgiving sins *directly*. Again, Jesus here did NOT correct His accusers.

3. See also **Colossians 3:13** (cf. v. 17 and **1 Corinthians 8:6**).
4. The NWT of the Jehovah's Witnesses translates "Lord" (Gk. *kurios*) in **Colossians 3:13** as "Jehovah" while maintaining "Lord Jesus" in verse 17 thereby obscuring Jesus' identification as the Forgiver of sins.

Excursus 2—The Deity of Jesus in Revelation

1. **Who is "coming" and "coming soon"?**
 - a. *Answer:* Jesus (Rev. 1:7; 22:20).
2. **What are the divine titles of Jesus, who is "coming soon"?**
 - a. *Answer:* "the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Rev. 22:12-13; 1:17-18 and 2:8).
 - b. The alpha "Α" and omega "Ω" are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, respectively, and are an expression of *totality*.
3. **Who else is referred to as "the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End"?**
 - a. *Answer:* the Father (Rev. 1:8, cf. 4-5; and 21:3-7; cf. 19:4).
 - b. Note that John the Revelator refers in his Gospel to the Father as "God" over 120 times and to the Son as "God" two times (Jn.1:1; cf. 19:13 and Jn. 20:28).
4. **Who only is referred to as "the first and the last"?**
 - a. *Answer:* the LORD God, that is, the divine Being (see Isa. 44:6 and 48:12).
 - b. See **Diagram 5 on page 15**.
5. **Who is the "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS"?**
 - a. *Answer:* Jesus "the Word of God" (Rev. 19:13-16; cf. Jn. 1:1) and the Father (1 Tim. 6:15-16).
 - b. Compare with **1 Corinthians 8:6** and **Deuteronomy 10:17** for "Lord of lords" (especially in the Septuagint).

6. The Dual Natures of Jesus & the Incarnation



The Holy Spirit Brought About the Conception of Jesus in the Womb of Mary

6.1 Matthew 1:18-23 (NIV)

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."

²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

²³ "The virgin will conceive and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means, "God with us [see **Isaiah 7:14**]").

1. **The Dual Natures of Jesus:** It is conceivable that God could have created Jesus as a human being (without the benefit of any human parent) and sent Him from heaven to earth, but we might then question *His humanity*. Conversely it is conceivable God could have Jesus come into the world with two human parents, but we might then question *His deity* (source: Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1994, p. 530).

a. God ordained a combination of divine and human influence in the birth of Jesus to preserve *His dual natures*.

2. **The Holiness of Jesus:** Because the Holy Spirit brought about the conception of Jesus (and not a human father), He did not inherit the sin nature of man thereby preserving *His holiness* (see **Romans 5:12**; cf. **Luke 1:35**).
3. The controversial and historic doctrine of the LDS Church is that Jesus was NOT begotten by the Holy Ghost but, rather, by the Father (and in a very literal sense).
 - a. Brigham Young, second Prophet and President, forthrightly declared: "When the time came that His first-born, the Saviour, should come into the world and take a tabernacle the Father came Himself and favoured that spirit with a tabernacle instead of letting any other man do it" (source: February 8, 1857, *Journal of Discourses* 4:218). Brigham Young later explained: "The birth of the Saviour was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood – was begotten of his Father, as we were of our fathers" (source: July 8, 1860, *Journal of Discourses* 8:115).

The Son Became Flesh in the Incarnation

6.2 John 1:1 (NIV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ 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.

1. See verses 14-18, 23, 29 and 35-36 to establish that "the Word" (v. 1) is Jesus.
2. The Incarnation is the addition of humanity, NOT the subtraction of deity. "The Word became flesh" (v. 14) means neither that the Word *changed into* nor *merely appeared as* flesh.
3. See also **1 John 4:1-3** and **2 John 7**.

The Son Became Flesh to Die and Destroy

6.3 Hebrews 2:14-15 (NIV)

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—

¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

1. God the Son took on a human nature to conquer sin and death for us through His atoning sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead (see **Isaiah 53:5-6**; **Romans 4:25**; **6:23** and **Ephesians 2:4-6**).

6.4 **Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)**

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage,

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

1. **The Divinity of Jesus:** Due to the difficulty of translating the Greek of verse 6 to English, the following paraphrase is offered: “Christ did not desire to possess equality with God for His own advantage precisely because it was *always* His”

(modified from Gordon D. Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament – Philippians*, 1995, pp. 207-208).

2. **The Humanity of Jesus:** Due to the difficulty of translating the Greek of verses 7 and 8 to English, the following paraphrase is offered: “In becoming fully human, Christ neither ceased to be divine nor did he share man’s sinful nature [cf. Ro. 8:3]” (modified from Gordon D. Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament – Philippians*, 1995, pp. 213).

Excursus 3—The Kenosis Doctrine

Philippians 2:7 (NIV)

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing [Gk. *kenoō*] by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

1. *kenoō* in the Greek means “to empty.”
2. In becoming fully human Jesus *voluntarily set aside* (i.e. metaphorically “emptied” Himself of) *the use* of some of His divine prerogatives.
3. In becoming fully human Jesus experienced many of the limitations of man (see Lk. 2:52; Mt. 8:24; 4:1-2; 24:36-37) thus increasing His dependence upon His Father (see Jn. 5:19, 30; 14:10).
4. The Incarnation made possible the Crucifixion, which made possible the Resurrection (see especially vv. 8-11)!

7. Breaking Down False Teachings on God and Jesus

3 Truths & 3 Heresies

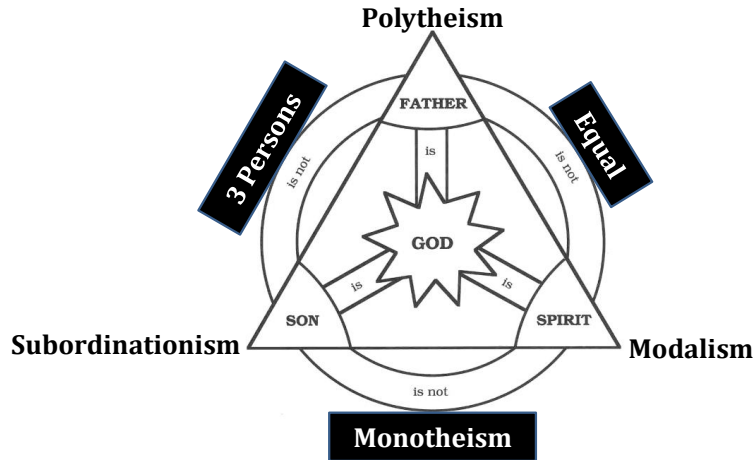


Diagram 8

Polytheism and God Is a Man

7.1 Genesis 1:26-27 (NIV)

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Latter-day Saint (LDS) Interpretation

The plural pronouns "us" and "our" (v. 26) indicate that there is a plurality of Creator gods. Moreover, man is created in God's image; therefore, God is an exalted man.

Biblical Interpretation

1. Monotheism: see [sections 3.4 and 4.1](#).
2. The "image" of God:
 - a. "An image [Heb. *selem*] functions to express, NOT to depict; thus, humanity is a faithful and adequate representation, though not a facsimile" (source: Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis*, 2001, p. 65).
 - b. In the Ancient Near East only the king is in *the image of God*—the emphasis is on *authoritative*, NOT *physical* representation (source: John H. Walton, *The NIV Application Commentary – Genesis*, 2001, p. 130).

- c. As God is the sovereign Creator King, so man is given rule or dominion over God's earthly creation—in this way man is created in God's image.

7.2 **Psalms 82:1 (NIV)**

¹ God presides in the great assembly; he renders judgment among the "gods":

Psalms 82:6 (NIV)

⁶ "I said, 'You are "gods"; you are all sons of the Most High.'

LDS Interpretation

There is a plurality of gods.

Biblical Interpretation

1. Monotheism: see [section 3.4](#).
2. "gods" (Heb. *elohim*) can refer to false "gods" (**Exodus 20:3**), angels or "heavenly beings" (**Psalms 8:5**; cf. **Hebrews 2:7**) or Israel's "judges" (**Exodus 22:9**).
3. God is here addressing His earthly administrators of justice who have failed miserably in their handling of the complaints of the oppressed (see vv. 1-5).
 - a. In this case, "gods" (Heb. *elohim*) is simply doing "double duty," referring not only to God, but also to His civil servants/judges (source: Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 1996, pp. 279-280).

7.3 **1 Corinthians 8:5-6 (NIV)**

⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

⁶ yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

LDS Interpretation

There is a plurality of gods.

Biblical Interpretation

1. Monotheism: see [section 3.4](#).
2. Paul here is referring to *false* "so-called gods" (v. 5) for the following reasons:
 - a. History informs us that Corinth was infested with false gods and the idol-worshipping practices of Greek and Roman mythology.

- b. Verse 1 indicates that the context is "food sacrificed to idols" (see also v. 4).
- c. Paul mentions the "idols" of the pagan Corinthians no fewer than seven times in chapter 8 of 1 Corinthians.

7.4 Colossians 1:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Hebrews 1:3 (KJV)

³ [The Son] Who being the brightness of *his* [God's] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

LDS Interpretation

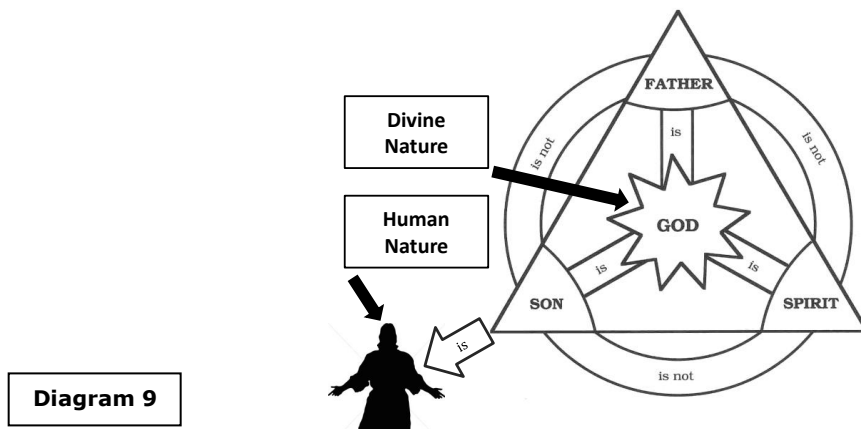
God is a man.

Biblical Interpretation

1. God is Spirit: see **Excursus 1 on page 11**.
2. "God is not a man" (**Numbers 23:19**; see also **Job 9:2, 32**; **Hosea 11:9** and **Romans 1:18-23, 25**).
 - a. **Question:** Jesus is God and Jesus is a man. Isn't it a contradiction to say that God is not a man?

Answer: No. Jesus is "the God-man" precisely because He added a finite human nature to His infinite divine nature in the Incarnation. The essential nature of God, however, is infinite, immaterial spirit.

If God *is* a man, then God and man are of *the same essential nature*. This is NOT the God of the Bible, but it IS the God and gods of LDS theology.



3. For **Colossians 1:15** and “image” (Gk. *eikōn*; Heb. *selem*) see **Genesis 1:26-27** in **section 7.1**.
4. In **Hebrews 1:3** Jesus is the “express image” (KJV) or “exact representation” (NIV) of God in that He is the embodiment or *the physical stamp* of the Father’s *divine nature* (see **John 1:18; 14:9** and **Colossians 2:9**).

“Express Image” (Gk. *Charaktēr*)



From *charassō*; originally the tool that cut,
then the mark or impress made.

- a. Through the Incarnation of God the Son, finite man can more fully experience and know the love of his infinite Creator. To see Jesus Christ in action is to see the *immaterial, invisible, transcendent* God of the Bible in action.
 - b. The “image” of God is also explained NOT in terms of *physical appearance*, but of *spiritual fruit* (see **Colossians 3:9-15** and **Galatians 5:21**).
5. “[T]he right hand” of God is NOT to be interpreted *literally*, but *figuratively*. It is a position of special honor, favor, and power (see **1 Kings 2:19** and **Exodus 15:6**).

Excursus 4—God Has a Body and Was Seen in the OT?

Anthropomorphisms

Even though God *by divine nature* does not have a physical body, Scripture uses various parts of the human body to describe God's activities in a metaphorical way—this is referred to as **anthropomorphic** language.

1. The LORD God set His "**face**" against those who violated His commands (Lev. 17:10; Ezek. 14:8).
2. That the LORD God was seen "**face to face**" is a Hebrew idiom for "up close and personal" (Gen. 32:30; Ex. 33:11).
3. The LORD God has "**eyes**" to see (Gen. 6:8); "**ears**" to hear (see 2 Sam. 22:7); an "**arm**" to save (Isa. 59:1); and a "**mouth**" to breathe (Ps. 33:6).

Theophanies and Christophanies

No one has "ever seen God" (Jn. 1:18; 6:46; 1 Jn. 4:12 and 1 Ti. 6:16) and "no one may see [God] and live" (Ex. 33:20). However, in the OT the LORD God was seen by Abraham (see Gen. 18:1-2, 6, 22) and Moses (see Ex. 33:18-23) and appeared as "the angel of the LORD" to Hagar (Gen. 16:7-14) and Jacob (Gen. 32:22-30; cf. Hos. 12:4-5). Moreover, they lived! How might this be explained?

1. At no time was the fullness of God's *unveiled* essence and glory revealed else they surely would have died (see Ex. 33:18-23). The *non-human form* of the LORD God was typically manifested as a "pillar of cloud" or "fire" (Ex. 13:21; Nu. 14:14). These are referred to as **theophanies**.
2. *Human-form* theophanies were typically associated with "the angel of the LORD." These are thought to be temporary appearances of God the Son (pre-incarnate) and thus are understood to be **Christophanies**.
 - a. The angel of the LORD is spoken of as being "God" (Gen. 16:13); bore the name of the "LORD God" (Hos. 12:4-5); spoke as God (see Ex. 3:2-6); and exercised divine prerogatives (see Gen. 16:10).
 - b. "The angel of the LORD" no longer appears after the Incarnation. ("[T]he angel of the Lord" in Matthew 1:24 is "an angel" in verse 20.)
 - c. The incarnate Son is the ultimate expression of God the Father (see Jn. 14:9; Heb. 1:3).

See James A. Borland's *Christ in the Old Testament* (1999) for more information.

Subordinationism and the Son Is a Creature

7.5 John 14:28 (NIV)

²⁸ "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I."

John 20:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "

1 Corinthians 11:3 (NIV)

³ But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

1 Corinthians 15:28 (NIV)

²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

Jehovah's Witness (JW) Interpretation

Jesus is inferior to the Father by divine nature (i.e. ontologically inferior).

Biblical Interpretation

1. The Son is ontologically *equal* to the Father by divine nature. (See section 5 and Excursus 2 on page 22.)
2. The above passages may be interpreted in the light of the Incarnation and Jesus' *functional* and *positional* subordination **only** to the Father. (See section 6.)

Jesus Is Equal to the Father	Jesus Is Subordinate to the Father
In name	In role or function (the One sent)
In nature	In position (lower)
As God	As man (limitations)

Adapted from *When Cultists Ask* by Geisler and Rhodes, 1997, p. 184.

Table 1

7.6 Colossians 1:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Hebrews 1:6 (NIV)

⁶ And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

LDS and JW Interpretation

The Son was created as a spirit being prior to the Incarnation. LDS doctrine holds that Jesus was literally "born" as a spirit child of Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother in the preexistence. JW doctrine holds that Jesus was first created as Michael the Archangel.

Biblical Interpretation

1. Jesus is eternally God by divine nature. (See section 5 and Excursus 2 on page 22.)
2. "firstborn" or "firstbegotten" (**Hebrews 1:6** KJV) translates the Greek word *prōtotokos*. While it is often used in the literal sense of the first to come from the womb (i.e. first in line), it can also take on the metaphorical sense of *the special status* of the first son born (i.e. first in rank).
 - a. For example, David was the last-born son to Jesse (see **1 Samuel 17:12-14**), yet because of his preeminent status he was the LORD God's "firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth" (**Psalms 89:20, 27**).
3. It is significant that in the first chapter of Colossians and Hebrews, the Son is identified as the Creator of "all things" and "the universe," respectively. The Son is therefore the preeminent One "over all creation," NOT the first one created by the Father.

Modalism (Oneness Pentecostalism) and Jesus Is the Father

Oneness Logic

1. There is only one God.
2. Jesus Christ is God and man.
3. Therefore, Jesus is the Father (in creation), the Son (in redemption) and the Holy Spirit (in regeneration).

Jesus is the Father in His divine nature and the Son in His human nature. There is no eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ!

Diagram 10

7.7 **Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)**

⁶ 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 Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Oneness Pentecostal Interpretation

The LORD God is one Person: Jesus here is the “Everlasting Father.”

Biblical Interpretation

1. The Son is NOT the Father. Consider the following data (source: Gregory A. Boyd, *Oneness Pentecostals & the Trinity*, 1992, pp. 68-69):
 - a. Over 200 times in the NT Jesus is referred to as “the Son”—never is He called the Father;
 - b. Over 50 times in the NT the Father and the Son are juxtaposed in the same verse (see **1 John 1:3; 2:1** and **2 John 3**);
 - c. 179 times in the Gospels Jesus refers to “the Father,” “my Father” and “your Father” as distinct from Himself;
 - d. 49 times in John’s Gospel Jesus refers to Himself as being sent by the Father, but never to Himself as the Father who sent the Son;
 - e. The Father’s “voice from heaven” testifies to the Son at Jesus’ baptism (**Matthew 3:17** and **Luke 3:22**) and transfiguration (**Matthew 17:5** and **Luke 9:35**).



2. See **section 5.1** concerning **Isaiah 9:6**.
 - a. Some OT scholars understand “Father” metaphorically, given the LORD God’s concern for the helpless (see **Psalms 68:5-6**) and His people (see **Psalms 103:13**). Similar ideas are used in reference to the Davidic King (see **Psalms 72:4**).

7.8 **John 10:30 (NIV)**

³⁰"I and the Father are one."

Oneness Pentecostal Interpretation

Jesus *is* the Father manifest in the flesh.

Biblical Interpretation

1. See number 1 in section 7.7 above.
2. Jesus here uses the first-person plural "are" (Gk. *esmen*) to refer to Himself and the Father—He does not say, "I and the Father *am* (Gk. *eimi*) one."
 - a. Note the response of the Jews in verses 31-33!
3. Jesus here uses "one" (Gk. *hen*) in the neuter gender, NOT *heis* in the masculine, thereby suggesting unity of essence or nature rather than personal identity (source: Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament – John*, 2004, p. 312).
4. Jesus distinguishes Himself from the Father in the verses immediately preceding and following **John 10:30** (see vv. 25-29, 36 and 38).

7.9 **John 14:6-9 (NIV)**

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

⁹ Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Oneness Pentecostal Interpretation

Jesus is the Father manifest in the flesh.

Biblical Interpretation

1. See number 1 in section 7.7 above.
2. See **Colossians 1:15** and **Hebrews 1:3** in section 7.4; see also **Colossians 2:9**.
3. One can look to no other place or person besides Jesus Christ to better see and know the Father. The "words" and "work" of the Son are of the Father who lives in Him (**John 14:10**; see also **5:19, 30**).

Excursus 5—The Eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ

Oneness Pentecostalism denies the existence of the Son before His birth, let alone His coeternal existence WITH the Father. Furthermore, some Evangelicals contend that the eternal, second Person of the Trinity did NOT become “the Son” until the Incarnation. The below passages, however, point to the Son being identified WITH the Father PRIOR to *both* the Incarnation and creation.

The Pre-Incarnate Son

1. **John 6:61-62 (NIV)**

⁶¹ Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you?”

⁶² Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before!

2. **John 16:28 (NIV)**

²⁸ I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

The Pre-Creation Son

1. **John 17:5 (NIV)**

⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

2. **Colossians 1:17 (NIV)**

¹⁷ He [“the Son” (v. 15) of “the Father” (v. 12)] is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

3. **Hebrews 1:2 (NIV)**

² but in these last days he [“God”] has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

4. **Hebrews 7:3 (NIV)**

³ [“Melchizedek” (v. 1)] Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

How are we to understand God’s declaration: “You are my son; today I have become your father” (Ps. 2:7; Heb. 1:5-6)? **Psalm 2:7** may be interpreted in the light of a king’s coronation, NOT his birth (cf. Acts 13:33). God also declared Jesus to be “my Son” at His baptism and transfiguration (Mt. 3:17; 17:5). Just as none of these public declarations rule out the timing of the other, neither is the eternal Sonship of Jesus ruled out (source: Gregory A. Boyd, *Oneness Pentecostalism*, 1992, p. 113).

8. The Holy Spirit Is God by Divine Nature

Exclusive Attributes of Divine Nature:

1. Only 1 "God"*
2. Only 1 "LORD"*
3. Only 1 Creator
4. Only Omnipresent One*
5. Only Eternal One
6. Only Omniscient One*
7. Only Forgiver of Sins

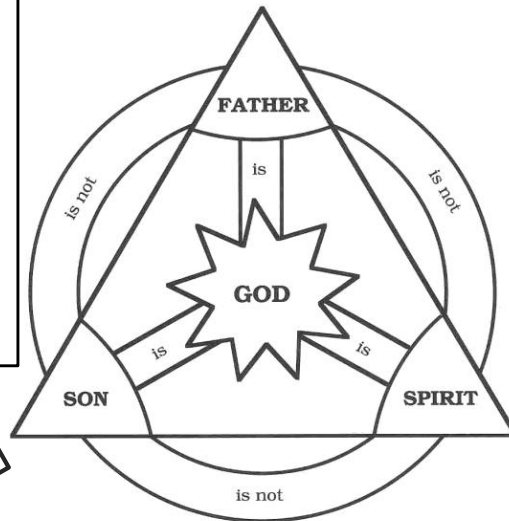
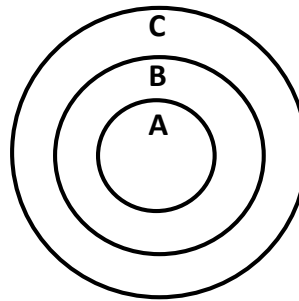


Diagram 11

Syllogistic Logic

Premise #1: All A is inside B.
 Premise #2: All B is inside C.
 Conclusion: All A is inside C.



Premise #1: There is only 1 LORD God.
 Premise #2: The Spirit is called "LORD" & "God."
 Conclusion: The Holy Spirit is the LORD God.

Diagram 12

The Holy Spirit Is "God"

8.1 Acts 5:1-5 (NIV)

¹ Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property.

² With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?

⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God."

⁵ When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.

1. Note that the Holy Spirit is equated with God, as a comparison of verses 3 and 4 demonstrates.
2. Note that the Holy Spirit is treated as a person (one who can be lied to) and NOT merely an impersonal force or power as Jehovah's Witness doctrine teaches.

The Holy Spirit Is "LORD" (Jehovah or Yahweh)

8.2 2 Corinthians 3:13-18 (NIV)

¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away.

¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.

¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

1. In verses 13-15 Paul has been commenting on **Exodus 34:29-35** where "the LORD" (Jehovah or Yahweh) is in view (see vv. 29, 34 and 35).
2. **Exodus 34:34** is arguably the primary verse to which Paul alludes in verse 16; therefore, "the Lord" in verses 16-18 here = "the LORD."
3. "Now the Lord is the Spirit" (v. 17) is Paul's "clarifying 'update.'" In other words, "the LORD" of **Exodus 34:34** in the old covenant era is, in the new covenant era, the Spirit mentioned in 3:3, 6 and 8 (source: Murray J. Harris, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary – The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2005, p. 311).

The Holy Spirit Is Omnipresent

8.3 Psalm 139:7-8 (NIV)

⁷ Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

1. Note that the referent for “your presence” is the “LORD” (see v. 4).

The Holy Spirit Is Omniscient

8.4 1 Corinthians 2:9-11 (NIV)

⁹ However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived”— the things God has prepared for those who love him—

¹⁰ these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

¹¹ For who knows a person’s thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

9. Breaking Down False Teachings on the Holy Spirit

3 Truths & 3 Heresies

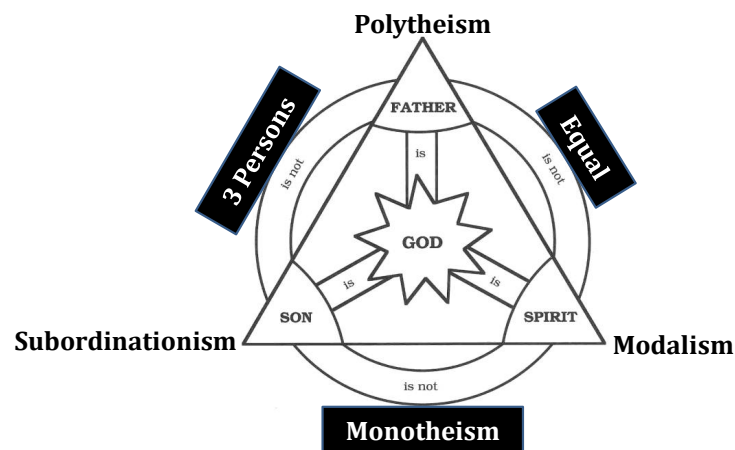


Diagram 13

The Heretical Holy Spirits

9.1 Two primary ways the deity of the Holy Spirit comes under attack today are (1) a form of *subordinationism* whereby He is merely God’s impersonal “active force,” that is, an “it” and NOT a person (JW doctrine) and (2) *modalism* whereby He is the third manifestation of Jesus and NOT eternally coexistent with Jesus (Oneness Pentecostalism).

Excursus 6—The Holy Spirit *Is* a Person

A valid grammatical argument from Scripture for the personhood of the Holy Spirit is His use of the first-person pronouns “I” and “me” in reference to Himself.

Acts 13:2 (NIV)

² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

Acts 10:19-20 (NIV)

¹⁹ While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you.

²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

However, Jehovah’s Witnesses rightly argue that Greek grammar does NOT support the translation of “he” directly for the Holy Spirit in passages such as **John 14:26; 15:26** and **16:13-14** (source: Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar and the Personality of the Holy Spirit*, Bulletin for Biblical Research, 2003, 97-125).

Therefore, Trinitarians must bolster their argument for the personhood of the Holy Spirit by identifying (1) His *coordinate relationship* with the Father and the Son and (2) His actions and characteristics that can only be reasonably attributed to a person (e.g. possessing a mind, emotions and will).

1. The Holy Spirit is “**another advocate**” sent by the Father to replace *the person*, Jesus Christ (Jn. 14:16; cf. 14:26; 15:26 and 16:7-8).
2. The Holy Spirit is another person into whose “**name**” Christians are baptized (Mt. 28:19).
3. The Holy Spirit “**speaks**” (Jn. 16:13-14; Acts 8:29; 10:19-20; 13:2; 21:11; Ro. 8:26-27; Gal. 4:6).
4. The Holy Spirit “**knows**” and “**teaches**” (1 Cor. 2:11; Jn. 14:26).
5. The Holy Spirit “**wills**” (see 1 Cor. 12:9-11).
6. The Holy Spirit can be “**blasphemed against**” (Mt. 12:31-32).
7. The Holy Spirit can be “**lied**” to (Acts 5:3).
8. The Holy Spirit can be “**grieved**” (Eph. 4:30).

Subordinationism and the Holy Spirit Is NOT a Person

9.2 John 14:26 (New World Translation of the JWs)

²⁶But the helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach YOU all things and bring back to YOUR minds all the things I told YOU.

John 14:26 (KJV)

²⁶ But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

JW Interpretation

1. "that one" (NWT) or "he" (KJV) translate the Greek word *ekeinos*, which is in the masculine gender. The reason being that *ekeinos* more accurately refers to "the helper" or "the Comforter" (Gk. *paraklētos*) which, too, is masculine and NOT to the holy spirit which is neuter.
2. "spirit" (Gk. *pneuma*) is neuter and therefore should NOT be understood to be a person.

Biblical Interpretation

1. See **Excursus 6 on page 39** for both a validation of JW point 1 above and the biblical evidence for the personhood of the Holy Spirit.
2. Gender in Greek is primarily an arbitrary thing; that is, it does NOT necessarily have to do with the gender we might expect (source: William D. Mounce, *Basics of Biblical Greek*, 1999, p. 30).
 - a. For example, the word "word" (Gk. *logos*) is masculine while "word" (Gk. *rhēma*) is feminine. Additionally, the word "child" (Gk. *paidion*) is neuter and yet it is repeatedly used of Jesus as a baby.
 - b. **Question:** The Hebrew word for "Spirit" (*ruah*) is feminine. Why do JWs, therefore, NOT teach that the Holy Spirit is a female person?

9.3 Acts 2:1-4 (New World Translation of the JWs)

¹Now while the day of the [festival of] Pentecost was in progress they were all together at the same place,

²and suddenly there occurred from heaven a noise just like that of a rushing stiff breeze, and it filled the whole house in which they were sitting.

³And tongues as if of fire became visible to them and were distributed about, and one sat upon each one of them,

⁴and they all became filled with holy spirit and started to speak with different tongues, just as the spirit was granting them to make utterance.

JW Interpretation

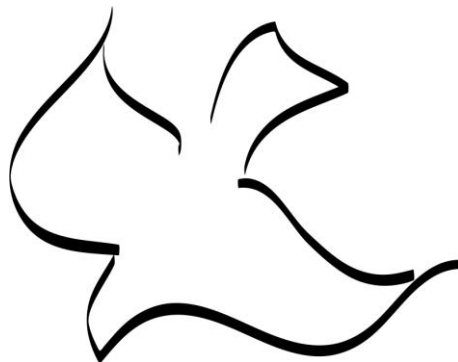
All of the disciples could NOT be “filled” with a person, but they *could* be filled with God’s active force, namely, holy spirit.

Biblical Interpretation

1. See **Excursus 6 on page 39** for the biblical evidence for the personhood of the Holy Spirit.
 2. JWs recognize both God the Father and Jesus Christ as persons and yet Scripture informs us that believers may be “filled to all the measure of the fullness of God” (**Ephesians 3:19**) and that Christ ascended “in order to fill the whole universe” (**Ephesians 4:10**).
 - a. We may not comprehend how believers are filled with the person of the Holy Spirit, but this does not disprove His personhood any more than it would the personhood of the Father and the Son if JWs were consistent in their logic.
- 9.4 **JWs Ask:** “If the holy spirit truly is a person, why doesn’t he have a name just like the Father and the Son have their own names?”

Biblical Response

1. Scripture rarely *names* evil spirits and yet even JWs teach that demons are personal beings.
2. Spirits are often identified in Scripture by their character (e.g. “evil” **Acts 19:15** and “impure” **Luke 4:36**). Why should the Holy Spirit NOT be identified by His character, namely, *holiness*?



Excursus 7—The Holy Spirit *Is* Distinct from the Father and the Son?

John 14:15-17 (NIV)

¹⁵ “If you love me, keep my commands.

¹⁶ And I [Jesus, the Son] will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—

¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”

John 14:26 (NIV)

²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my [Jesus, the Son’s] name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 15:26 (NIV)

²⁶ “When the Advocate comes, whom I [Jesus, the Son] will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.”

John 16:13-14 (NIV)

¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

¹⁴ He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.

1. Note how Jesus consistently refers to “the Holy Spirit” (more specifically, “the Advocate”) in the third person “he” and “him.”
2. Note how Jesus consistently refers to the Spirit as distinct from both Himself and the Father, especially as it concerns the sending of the Spirit (see 14:26 and 15:26).
3. Note how Jesus refers to the Spirit as “**another advocate**” in 14:16 thereby indicating that the Spirit’s presence with the disciples will replace Jesus’ advocacy consequent to His return to the Father (cf. 16:7 and 17:5).
4. See **sections 7.7 through 7.9** and **Excursus 5 on page 35** for a review of the distinct personhood of the Father and the Son and the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ, respectively.

Modalism (Oneness Pentecostalism) and Jesus Is the Holy Spirit

Oneness Logic

1. There is only one God.
2. Jesus Christ is God and man.
3. Therefore, Jesus is the Father (in creation), the Son (in redemption) and the Holy Spirit (in regeneration).

Jesus is the Father in His divine nature and the Son in His human nature. There is no eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ!

Diagram 14

9.5 2 Corinthians 3:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Oneness Pentecostal Interpretation

The Lord Jesus is the Holy Spirit.

Biblical Interpretation

1. See **Excursus 7 on page 42** for the biblical evidence for the distinct personhood of the Holy Spirit.
2. See **section 8.2** to understand why verse 17 may be interpreted to mean: "Now [in the current era] the Lord [Jehovah or Yahweh] is the Holy Spirit."
 - a. Note Paul does NOT write: "Jesus is the Spirit."
3. Paul typically refers to Jesus as "the Lord" (Gk. *ho kurios*) and to Jehovah or Yahweh as "Lord" (Gk. *kurios*) without the article "the," although translators write "the Lord" for smoother English.
 - a. Interestingly, of the **5 times** "the Lord" appears in verses 15-18, **4 times** it is *without* the article. Therefore, the one time Paul uses the article in verse 17a "Now the Lord is the Spirit" it may be understood to refer back to "the Lord" (Jehovah or Yahweh) in verse 16.

Verse 17 would thus read: "Now this 'Lord' is the Spirit" (source: Murray J. Harris, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary – The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2005, p. 308-311).

9.6 Romans 8:9-11 (NIV)

⁹ You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.

¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness.

¹¹ And if the Spirit of him [the Father] who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Oneness Pentecostal Interpretation

By using “the Spirit,” “the Spirit of God,” “the Spirit of Christ,” “Christ” and “the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead” (i.e. the Spirit of the Father) as interchangeable terms, one can see that all these titles refer to *the same person*, namely, Christ.

Biblical Interpretation

1. See **Excursus 7 on page 42** for the biblical evidence for the distinct personhood of the Holy Spirit.
2. See **sections 7.7 through 7.9** and **Excursus 5 on page 35** for a review of the distinct personhood of the Father and the Son and the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ, respectively.
3. Christ indwells all believers *by His Spirit* (i.e. “the Spirit of Christ”), which is also identified as “the Spirit of God [the Father].” This is to say that for the apostle Paul here, the terms “the Spirit of Christ” and “the Spirit of God” are interchangeable for “the Spirit” or the Holy Spirit—**the third Person of the Trinity**. This is NOT to say that Christ is the Spirit or the Holy Spirit (source: Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 1994, p. 549).
4. Note the three-fold distinction of Persons in verse 11: (1) *the Father* who raised Jesus up, (2) *the Spirit* by whom Jesus was raised up, and (3) *Jesus* who was raised up (source: Gregory A. Boyd, *Oneness Pentecostals and the Trinity*, 1995, p. 127).

Diagram 15

