

The Sonship of Christ and the Gospel

by Lynnford Beachy

The Bible declares that the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation,” because it reveals “the righteousness [or the goodness] of God.” (Romans 1:16, 17) There is power in knowing the goodness of God—knowing how greatly He loves us, and how far He is willing to go to demonstrate that love. The power of knowing God’s love is enough to melt the heart of the murderer, to bring the rebel to repentance, and to bring continual victory to the redeemed. Every true conversion story can be traced to a revelation of God’s love. The more God’s love is revealed, the more power exists in a person’s life. God giving His Son to die for sinful men is the greatest revelation of that love. John expresses it this way, “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” (1 John 4:9) The thought thrills your heart—to think that the great God of the universe would be willing to give up His own Son to die for our sins! John says that understanding, believing, and dwelling in this love is how our love for God is “made perfect.” (See 1 John 4:16, 17.)

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) When Jesus said God “so *loved* the world” He was saying, “This is how much God loves you, He loves you so much that He did something for you,” He gave up His most precious possession, His only begotten Son.

If God had loved the world so much that He gave a goat, you and I would seriously question God’s love for us, because a goat would be an almost meaningless gift for God to give up, since it is something He created. If God had loved the world so much that He gave a human, what would we think then? Well, that is a little better than a goat, but it is still a small gift, because humans were also created. What if God had loved the world so much that He gave an angel? That is a better gift than a human, but it still falls far short of demonstrating how much God loves us. You see, our understanding of God’s love depends upon the value of the gift He gave up for us. The more valuable the gift He gave, the more we can see His love for us.

God gave His only *begotten* Son for us. He has other sons, but He only has one *begotten* Son. We can be “sons of God” by *adoption* (Romans 8:14), angels are “sons of God” by *creation* (Job 1:6; 2:1), but Jesus Christ is the only *begotten* Son of God. What sets Jesus Christ apart from everyone else in the universe, and by which we know God’s love for us, is the fact that He was *begotten* of God.

God, the Father, knows, from firsthand experience, the most valuable possession a person can have. He knows that nothing is more valuable to a person than a child whom they love. This is precisely where God tested Abraham’s love and loyalty when He asked him to offer his beloved son, Isaac, for a sacrifice. Abraham’s willingness to obey God’s command proved that he loved God with all his heart. It proved that he would be willing to give up every possession he had for God.

The same thing is true with God. When He gave up His only *begotten* Son it proved that He is willing to give up every possession, suffer any amount of pain, and endure any hardship in order to save those whom He loves. This is what Paul meant when he said, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32)

God truly loves us, yet this love can only be comprehended by understanding that God gave His only *begotten* Son. Therefore, it is Satan’s determined goal to destroy, obliterate, and completely eliminate this truth from the minds of men. Satan knows that the only ones who will be able to overcome and endure unto the end through the upcoming crisis of the mark of the beast are those who believe that Jesus is the *begotten* Son of God. John wrote, “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the *Son of God*?” (1 John 5:5)

Believing that Jesus is the *begotten* Son of God enables us to overcome the world by elevating our perception of God’s love and enabling us to love Him with all our hearts in return.

Begotten

What did Jesus mean when He said He was *begotten*? Jesus, speaking of Himself, said, “When there were no depths, I was *brought forth* [born]; when there were no fountains abounding with

water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I *brought forth* [born]... Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.” (Proverbs 8:24, 25, 30)

According to the Bible, Jesus Christ was begotten, which literally means born, before anything was created—long before God sent Him into the world. (See Hebrews 1:1-9; Colossians 1:15; John 3:16, 17; 18:37; and 1 John 4:9.) *How* He was begotten is not for us to know, but God wants us to realize that the Father and His Son have a close, genuine, father-son relationship that is not just a role or an act.

Understanding God’s love and receiving the power that comes with it, depends upon understanding that Christ is truly the only *begotten* Son of God. John wrote, “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:5) This is the theme of the gospel, and every New Testament writer was consumed with this subject. The disciples who lived with Jesus and heard His messages firsthand, including many things He said that are not recorded, exclaimed, “we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, *the Son of the living God.*” (John 6:69) They also exclaimed, “we believe that thou camest forth from God.” (John 16:30)

The fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is so important that at the close of John’s gospel he wrote, “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:30)

Right after Paul learned the gospel directly from Christ Himself, “straightway [immediately] he preached Christ in the synagogues, that *he is the Son of God.*” (Acts 9:20)

Right after Philip preached the gospel to the eunuch, “Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest [be baptized]. And he answered and said, I believe that *Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*” (Acts 8:37)

Martha, a close friend of Jesus, who heard many of His teachings, said to Him, “I believe that thou art the Christ, *the Son of God*, which should come into the world.” (John 11:27)

Nathaniel, of whom Christ said, In him "is no guile," said to Jesus, "Rabbi, *thou art the Son of God*; thou art the King of Israel." (John 1:47, 49)

Christ said, "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist." (Luke 7:28) John the Baptist testified, "And I saw, and bare record that this is *the Son of God*." (John 1:34)

Of all the witnesses, the greatest is God the Father Himself. Two times He spoke from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son." (Matthew 3:17; 17:5) And we know that God "cannot lie." (Titus 1:2) If we do not believe God, then we make Him out to be a liar. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." (1 John 5:10)

The Bible refers to Christ as God's Son at least 120 times. The Bible does this by using the phrase "Son of God" forty-seven times. Regarding the genuineness of Christ's sonship He is called "the only begotten" five times, "the firstborn" three times, "the firstbegotten" once, God's "holy child" twice. Four verses say He was "begotten" prior to His incarnation. Four verses say that He "proceeded forth from," "came out from" or "camest forth from" the Father. The evidence on this subject is overwhelming. Christ truly is the literal begotten Son of God, brought forth from the Father before all creation. If God expected us to believe anything different He did a poor job of presenting it in the Bible. In fact, if God had wanted us to believe differently, He purposely confused us by making so many clear statements indicating that Christ is literally the begotten Son of God without the slightest clarification to indicate that we should not take His words in their common meaning. Yet, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." (1 Corinthians 14:33)

Any writer or public speaker knows that when they use a word or a phrase that could be easily misunderstood, clarifications need to be made to avoid people coming to the wrong conclusions. Yet, throughout the New Testament where Christ is said to be the begotten Son of God, there is never any type of correction or clarification so that these words would not be taken in their natural sense. Jesus said that He is "the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18) Concerning another subject, but which can be applied with

equal force here, He said, “If it were not so, I would have told you.” (John 14:2)

Christ Died

Understanding that Christ truly died is also of vital importance for us to maintain a close love relationship with God. The glorified Jesus, who is in heaven right now, said, “I am he that liveth, and was dead.” (Revelation 1:18) Also, in Philippians 2:6-8 we read of Christ, who was “in the form of God,” came down to earth, and suffered “death, even the death of the cross.” Paul said “that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” (1Corinthians 15:3) The Scriptures that Paul refers to here include Isaiah 53:8-12 which says that Christ “was cut off out of the land of the living... And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death... the LORD... shalt make his soul an offering for sin... he hath poured out his soul unto death.” All of these terms indicate the completeness of Christ’s death—that no part of Him remained alive while His body rested in the tomb.

From the drunk on the streets, to the hardened criminal, when they first learn about God’s love in giving His Son to die for their sins, they have no question about whether Christ is truly the Son of God or whether He truly died. They accept John 3:16 for what it says, and the power in that thought moves them to repentance. The sad thing is that Satan wants to remove this power from the Christian, and he begins his evil work immediately upon a person’s conversion. All too often, upon joining a church, a newly converted Christian is soon misinformed that God is really a mysterious Trinity, and that the terms Father and Son cannot be taken literally. They are told that because Christ is a part of the Trinity He couldn’t possibly have died. The end result of accepting these theories is that the power that first gave them the victory over sin is removed, and they are left with “a form of godliness” without “the power thereof.” (2 Timothy 3:5)

My friends, God really means what He says. He says that He gave His only begotten Son. If Jesus Christ was not the begotten Son of God before God sent Him into the world, then what did the Father give up? Many sincere Christians believe that Jesus Christ is an exactly equal, same-aged companion of the Father. If this were true, then all the Father gave up was a friend; a companion! If this

were true, then the One who loves us the most is Christ, because He is the One who willingly died for us.

It is true that Jesus Christ loves us very much, and we praise and thank Him for that love. However, the Bible teaches that God the Father suffered tremendously when His Son was suffering under the weight of our sins. (Compare Psalm 18:4-11 with Matthew 27:45-51.) In Abraham and Isaac's story it was obviously the father, Abraham, who suffered more than Isaac when he gave up his beloved son. Jesus said, "the Father himself loveth you." (John 16:27) John wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." (1 John 3:1) We cannot behold the love of the Father if we do not know what He gave up for us. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that *God sent his only begotten Son into the world*, that we might live through him." (1 John 4:9) God the Father has an only begotten Son whom He willingly gave up so that you could be forgiven of your sins and live for eternity. Praise God for such wonderful love!

I pray that you will come to know "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of God's love in giving up His only *begotten* Son.



Christianity's Foundation Under Attack
by Lynnford Beachy

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?"
(Psalms 11:3)

The Sonship of Christ is the foundation of the gospel and Christianity. This is the foundation of which Christ said, "upon this rock I will build my church."(Matthew 16:18)

We have been warned of accepting false theories about the Father and the Son. John wrote, "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also." (1 John 2:22, 23) John also wrote, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

(2 John 1:9) To acknowledge the Son and abide in the doctrine of Christ means more than just calling Jesus the Son of God. Nearly every Christian in the world will say that they believe Jesus is the Son of God, but among these Christians there are many different views about the Son of God, and every false theory distorts the love of God in giving His Son to die for our sins.

The disciples and apostles of Christ's day, along with the large majority of Christians who lived in the first few centuries after Christ's death, understood Jesus Christ to be the literal begotten Son of God without any mysterious definition attached to these words. For example, Justin Martyr, quoting from Proverbs 8, refers to Christ in the following statement:

"The Lord... begets me before all the hills." He adds: "You perceive, my hearers, if you bestow attention, that the Scripture has declared that this Offspring was begotten by the Father before all things created; and that that which is begotten is numerically distinct from that which begets, any one will admit." (Justin Martyr—AD 110-165, *Dialogue with Trypho*, chapter 129)

Novatian wrote, "God the Father, the Founder and Creator of all things, who only knows no beginning, invisible, infinite, immortal, eternal, is one God; to whose greatness, or majesty, or power, I would not say nothing can be preferred, but nothing can be compared; of whom, when He willed it, the Son, the Word, was born... the Father also precedes Him, — in a certain sense, — since it is necessary — in some degree — that He should be before He is Father. Because it is essential that He who knows no beginning must go before Him who has a beginning; even as He is the less as knowing that He is in Him, having an origin because He is born, and of like nature with the Father in some measure by His nativity, although He has a beginning in that He is born, inasmuch as He is born of that Father who alone has no beginning." (Novatian—AD 210-280, *Ante Nicene Fathers*, Volume 5, "A Treatise on the Trinity," Chapter 31)

There are many more examples of early Christians, accepting the Word of God just as it reads, who believed Christ to be the literal begotten Son of God who was born before all creation.

Heresies Arose

Over time heresies arose, and the plain statements of the Bible began, by some, to be understood differently from their common and intended meaning. Origen, who lived from 185-254 AD, came up with a new concept of the sonship of Christ called “the eternal generation of the Son.” This theory maintained that Christ is not a real son, as we would think of a son, but rather a mysterious person who is continually in the process of being begotten by God the Father.

“Origen... was the first to propose the concept of eternal generation. The Son is said to be eternally begotten by the Father.” (Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary—New Testament*, page 364)

The term “eternal generation” is defined as a continual process of being begotten. One Catholic publication says, “The Christian belief is that the Christ of history is the Son of God, eternally begotten by one ceaseless action from the Father...” (*Tell Us About God... Who Is He?*, page 30, by the Knights of Columbus) This idea teaches that Christ has been in the process of being begotten forever in the past, is still being begotten, and will continue to be begotten forever in the future, in some mysterious way.

The theory of eternal generation, originated by Origen, was not widely accepted until several years later. It underwent some changes and was accepted as truth in the creed formulated at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, but even then, it was not held by the majority of Christians, though most of the bishops at the Council signed the creed out of fear of punishment by the Emperor. The new idea that Christ was not a born Son emerged upon the pages of history rather late—far too late to be considered part of the religion of the Bible. The Council of Nicaea was a pivotal point for the mysterious view of the sonship of Christ, because it was there that this new view gained a foothold.

The Council of Nicaea

In 325 AD, 318 bishops assembled in the city of Nicaea to discuss whether Christ was literally begotten or not. “The Arian controversy was chiefly waged over the question of the eternal generation of the Son,” or in other words, the meaning of the term begotten Son.

(*The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers Second Series, Volume 9, Chapter 2, Introduction to St. Hilary of Poitiers*)

Of this council, Philip Schaff wrote, “In reference to the theological question the council was divided in the beginning into three parties. The orthodox party, which held firmly to the deity of Christ, was at first in the minority... The Arians or Eusebians numbered perhaps twenty bishops... The majority, whose organ was the renowned historian Eusebius of Caesarea, took middle ground between the right and the left...” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume 3, pages 627, 628*)

The so-called “orthodox party,” or those who maintained that Christ was not literally begotten of the Father, was in the minority (less than 20), while the next larger group (around 20) were the Arians who maintained that Christ was “begotten, or created... from nothing,” with the vast majority being led by Eusebius of Caesarea (at least 279) who maintained that Christ was literally “begotten... the first and only offspring of God.” This middle group, led by Eusebius, is an embarrassment to Trinitarians, because the group led by Eusebius comprised the large majority of the council and they maintained that Christ was truly begotten of God the Father rather than created or eternally generated. Therefore, many historians completely ignore this group.

“The ancient and the Roman Catholic historians (and A. de Broglie, l.c. vol. ii. p. 21) generally assume only two parties, an orthodox majority and a heretical minority. But the position of Eusebius of Caesarea, the character of his confession, and the subsequent history of the controversy, prove the existence of a middle, Semi-Arian party. Athanasius, too, who usually puts all shades of opponents together, accuses Eusebius of Caesarea and others repeatedly of insincerity in their subscription of the Nicene creed, and yet these were not proper Arians, but Semi-Arians.” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church, Volume 3, Footnote on page 627*)

Through the power and influence of the Roman Emperor Constantine, the minority “orthodox party” succeeded in compelling all to sign their creed or be banished. Thus the new view that Christ was not literally begotten of the Father arose and was accepted as truth in 325 AD at the Council of Nicaea. Shortly after this council, one astonished Christian wrote,

“We have never heard, my Lord, of two beings unbegotten, nor of one divided into two; nor have we learnt or believed that He could suffer any thing corporeal, but that there is one unbegotten, and another truly from Him,... We believe not only that His origin cannot be explained in words, but that it cannot be comprehended,...” (Letter written by Eusebius of Nicomedia—*A Historical View of the Council of Nice*, by Isaac Boyle, page 41)

Arians maintained that Christ was “begotten, or created... from nothing.” (Arius as quoted in Alonzo T. Jones’ *The Two Republics*, page 333) Semi-Arians maintained that Christ was literally “begotten... the first and only offspring of God.” (*Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History*, pages 15-17)

Sonship of Christ Becomes Orthodox

After the Council of Nicaea the Arians and Semi-Arians united in their struggle against the Nicene doctrine. For many years after the Council of Nicaea the majority of Christians were Semi-Arians, who maintained that Christ was truly a born Son of God, the Father. In fact, 34 years after the Council of Nicaea this view became the official teaching of the church at the Council of Rimini in 359 AD. The Arians and Semi-Arians drew up a creed that they could all agree upon. The Rimini creed said that Christ “was begotten of the Father without change before all ages.” The Arians accepted the creed because they were comfortable with saying Christ was begotten, and the Semi-Arians accepted it because it did not mention that Christ was created. If the number of bishops in council who decide on a doctrine indicates orthodoxy, this creed was even more orthodox than the Nicene or the Constantinople creeds because there were more than 400 bishops in attendance at the Council of Rimini, as compared to the 318 who attended the Council of Nicaea and the 150 who attended the Council of Constantinople in 381.

The Council of Rimini is so embarrassing to Trinitarians that most historians completely ignore this ecumenical council. Philip Schaff says, “the first two ecumenical councils” were “Nicaea [325 AD] and Constantinople [381 AD].” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, page 618)

For those who regard ecumenical councils as authoritative to determine doctrine, there is no legitimate reason for ignoring the

Council of Rimini, and the only reason it is ignored is because its conclusions disagree with the chosen doctrines of those who ignore them.

(For a more thorough study on the Council of Nicaea and the events that followed, please contact us and request the booklet entitled, *The Formulation of the Doctrine of the Trinity*.)

Eternal Generation

The acceptance of the doctrine of eternal generation by the Catholic Church was an attempt to reconcile the plain statements of the Bible, that declare Jesus Christ to be “the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18), with the new view that He did not have an origin. This doctrine declares that Christ is now, always has been, and always will be in a process of being begotten by His Father in some eternal begetting process that never began and will never end. This is a re-definition of the word “begotten” to make it have some spiritualistic, incomprehensible meaning. The Bible says that Christ “proceeded forth and came from God.” (John 8:42) Christ is not proceeding (present tense), but He proceeded (past tense) from His Father. The Holy Spirit is said to be proceeding from the Father. Jesus said, “The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father.” (John 15:26) There is a big difference between proceeded and proceeding, yet the Catholic Church accepted the theory that Christ will always be in the process of being begotten of His Father. As ridiculous as this sounds, it is the official teaching of the Catholic Church and is accepted by a surprising number of Protestant theologians.

The truth is, the people who formulated these theories did not find them in the Bible, but invented them to add to, and seek to make sense of, the chain of lies that began with the new view that Christ was the same age as His Father and not truly the begotten Son of God. Once this false theory is accepted as truth, one is compelled to continue inventing new lies in an attempt to harmonize the first lies that were accepted as truth. Thus, the Roman Catholic system is truly the result of one lie invented and placed upon another lie, until the final product is so far removed from the truth of the Bible that it can hardly be recognized as having any origin in Bible truth.

The Foundation of the the Man of Sin

On page 11 of the book, *Handbook for Today's Catholic*, the Roman Catholic Church admits, "The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church."

To be even more precise, the Catholic Church is founded upon the false theory that Christ is not truly the begotten Son of God, because it is this theory that the Trinity is based upon.

"In the formation of the doctrine of the Trinity, the concept of the eternal generation of the Son was one of the essential and major factors... The doctrine of the Trinity was discussed, shaped, and confessed around the concept of the eternal generation." (*A History of the Doctrine of Eternal Generation of the Son and its Significance in the Trinitarianism*, by Jung S. Rhee, Dr. of Theology and the Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at the multi-denominational Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California. This document is on the Internet at <http://jsrhee.hihome.com/thesis1.htm>.)

The Council of Nicaea in 325 AD said nothing about three persons in one God, but rather they debated upon and concluded, that Christ is not truly the begotten Son of God, but rather a mysterious "person" who is of one substance, or Being, with God the Father; who is continuously begotten of the Father. It was not until 56 years later, at the Council of Constantinople, that the idea that God consists of three persons became the official orthodox teaching of the Catholic Church.

Reviewing the history of "eternal generation" does not reveal deeply devoted Christians studying the Bible for more truth, but rather, Satan bringing new theories into Christianity to purposely distort our view of God's love by insinuating that Christ is not truly the Son of God. He has been so successful in this deceptive work that nearly all of the official teachings of Catholic and Protestant churches reject Christ as the literal begotten Son of God.

"Begotten" Deleted From Newer Translations

Satan is so dedicated to eradicating the wonderful truth that God really gave up His only begotten Son, that he has convinced the translators of most of the new translations, including the NIV, RSV, NASB (1995 Edition), NLT, etc., to delete the word *begotten* from John 3:16. Check it out for yourself!

The translators of the Bible excuse this deletion by their supposed *discovery* that the Greek word μονογενής (monogenes) that was translated “only begotten” really means “unique” or “one of a kind” and has nothing to do with begotten. This theory falls quickly when we study the Bible and history. In all of the nine places where *monogenes* is used in the New Testament, it always refers to born children. And the people who lived during the time the New Testament was written, along with the early church writers, also understood *monogenes* to refer to begotten (born) children.

The theory of “eternal generation” is specifically designed to do away with the literal sonship of Christ, while seeking to harmonize the Bible statements that Christ is the “*begotten* Son of God.” In their attempt to discard the literal sonship of Christ, if Origen and the early Catholic councils understood *monogenes* to have no reference to *begotten*, they would have used this argument rather than inventing and accepting the confusing theory of “eternal generation.”

Monogenes is a compound word taken from the two Greek words μονος (monos) and γενος (genos). *Monos* means “only” and *genos* means “offspring.” If any of the Greek writers wished to convey the idea of “unique” or “one of a kind,” they did not use *monogenes*, but merely *monos* or μονον (monon). This would not be true if *monogenes* really meant “unique.” If it did, we would find people using it for “only city,” or “only house,” etc., but we never find such usage. Even today, those who use Greek as their main language would never use *monogenes* to mean “unique” because they know it only refers to born children.

It is only recently (within the last 125 years) that an attempt has been made to redefine *monogenes* to mean “unique” or “one of a kind.” Yet, this cannot be accepted! If *monogenes* meant “only begotten” at the time the Bible was written, who has the right to redefine it 2000 years later and put a meaning on the word that was never thought of or intended by Bible writers?

Today, many Christians have completely discarded the idea of Christ being a begotten or generated Son of God the Father. As an example of this, let us read what one prominent Bible Commentary has to say about it. “The Sonship of Christ is in no proper sense a born relationship to the Father, as some, otherwise sound divines,

conceive of it.” (*Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary on Romans 1:4*)

I am saddened to think that Satan has been so successful in removing Christ as the Son of God in the minds of so many Christians. This ought not to be. Jesus said He would build His church upon the truth that He is the Son of God. Jesus asked His disciples, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and *upon this rock I will build my church*; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matthew 16:13-18)

Notice that the subject of this conversation was who Jesus is. When Jesus said, “upon this rock I will build my church” He didn’t change the subject and refer to Peter as the rock, but He was referring to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. Upon this truth, Jesus said, “I will build my church.” This is obviously a very important truth, the truth upon which God’s church is built.

Solid Rock or Shifting Sand

Jesus said that He would build His church on the truth that He is “the Christ, the Son of living God.” The Catholic Church comes along and says that they have built their church on the Trinity doctrine, which was founded upon the idea that Christ is not literally the Son of God. Two churches, two foundations—one founded on the truth that Christ is the literal Son of God, and the other founded on the lie that He is not the literal Son of God. Satan has a plan in this. He knows that if He can remove the knowledge of Christ being the Son of God, he has successfully removed the power that can transform the sinner and bring continual victory to the Christian.

John declared, “Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:5) My brethren, let us diligently consider the biblical statements concerning the Son of God, and refuse to accept teachings which are not founded

upon Scripture. Paul feared that Christians would be deceived into receiving another Jesus, one who is not the Son of God. “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well *bear with him* [or hold yourself erect and firm— *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*].” (2 Corinthians 11:3, 4)

Paul exhorted us not to accept another Jesus, or another gospel, because he knew that there would be men who would come and try to convince us to accept another Jesus than the one who is taught of in the Scriptures. My friends, Paul’s concerns have been fulfilled through the teaching known as the Trinity doctrine. With this teaching, they claim that the Son of God is not really God’s Son, but that He is merely some sort of mysteriously and eternally generated person. This idea denies the Father and Son relationship, which is so vital to our Christian experience. “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.” (1 John 2:22)

Satan’s counterfeit god includes, inherent in it, a denial of the death of Christ. This, together with its denial of the sonship of Christ, effectively removes from its adherents any clear picture of God’s love, making it Satan’s masterpiece of deception. It is no wonder that he exerts all his power and influence to preserve, promote and protect this doctrine and to continually invent new angles that supply the same results, to ensnare as many as possible before his time runs out. We can look at the primary religions in the world and see that all of them deny the sonship, the death of Christ, or both. The Jewish and pagan religions reject Christ altogether, the Muslim religion believes Christ to be a noble and good prophet, but nothing more than a man, and certainly not the Son of God. The Catholic religion claims Christ to be a mysterious person continuously generating from the Father, and not literally the Son of God, and most Protestant religions follow in the same path or believe Christ to be a Son only by proclamation or by role playing.

Thank God that He is calling His people back to the plain truth of the Bible so that we can appreciate His love in giving His only *begotten* Son to die for our sins.

Do You Believe in the Trinity?

by Lynnford Beachy

“Do you believe in the Trinity?” is one of the most common questions asked to determine orthodoxy. Yet, when this question is really understood, you may be surprised at your answer. Many people think that if a person believes in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then they believe in the Trinity, but there are many people who believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who do not believe in the Trinity, even though some of them think they do. There is much more to it than just believing in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The majority of Christians in the world today claim to believe in the Trinity, even though most will admit that they cannot understand it. With this widespread confusion regarding this doctrine, it is no wonder that among Trinitarians there are many different views about God. Much of this confusion results from the relative ignorance of what the Trinity doctrine really is. Many pastors and church leaders refuse to preach on this subject because they say that they cannot understand it themselves and therefore they feel incapable of expounding upon it to others. The confusion regarding this subject is heightened by the often-repeated saying that the Trinity is a mystery beyond our understanding, and should not be investigated. This has caused many people to ignore the subject of knowing God, and settle for some unknowable mystery in His place.

From my own experience I have witnessed some of the confusion on this subject. I have met several people who quickly claim that they believe in the Trinity but, upon investigation, I have found that they really do not believe in the Trinity. Even more surprising, there are some, even ministers, who openly denounce the doctrine of the Trinity, but the doctrine they promote is in reality the Trinity itself, or some very close variation of it, even though they wish to call it by another name, such as “Godhead.” You can call a chicken a dog all you want, but it will never change the fact that the chicken is still a chicken.

Because of the confusion that people have about God, and the implications this can have upon the gospel, we would like to

examine some of the most popular views about God and compare them with Scripture. With this information you will be readily able to identify the Trinity doctrine as well as some other views about God that are sometimes called by that name, regardless of what the propagators of those doctrines wish to call them, and what words they use to describe them. I pray that after reading this study you will be prepared to accept the truth of Scripture and reject all man-made theories about God. I also pray that you will “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason” for what you believe. (1Peter 3:15)

The four primary teachings about God that exist among Christians are Trinitarianism, Modalism (also called “Jesus only”), Unitarianism, and Tritheism. As we look at the details of these false teachings about God, keep in mind that each one is calculated to deny the literal sonship of Christ and His complete, divine death on the cross, leaving us with nothing more than a human sacrifice for sins, and no real conception of God’s love.

The Official Catholic View

The main points of the official Catholic view of God, also known as the “orthodox Trinity,” are accepted by most Protestant denominations with little variation. This is the only view that can truly be called “the Trinity” since they are the first ones to have defined this doctrine. On page 11 of the book, *Handbook for Today’s Catholic*, we read,

“The mystery of the Trinity is the central doctrine of the Catholic Faith. Upon it are based all the other teachings of the Church...

“The Church studied this mystery with great care and, after four centuries of clarification, decided to state the doctrine in this way: in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit...”

The fundamental teaching of the orthodox Trinity is the idea that there are three distinct persons in one Being (one substance), called God. You will notice that with this usage of the words “person” and “being” they cannot mean the same thing, because it takes three “persons” to make up this one being. It is very important to understand this distinction in order to comprehend the different views of God. A being is all that comprises an individual—the spirit, soul, mind, consciousness, will and body. Person, on the

other hand, can have several different meanings in theological circles, which we will discuss in more detail later in this study.

To help define the orthodox Trinity, I will quote from the Athanasian Creed, which is accepted as truth by the Catholic Church and most Protestant Churches. (See Philip Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 132, page 696.) The author of the Athanasian Creed is unknown, but portions of it seem to have been taken from the writings of Augustine. The Athanasian Creed says, in part:

The Athanasian Creed

1. Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith;
2. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.
3. But this is the catholic faith: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity;
4. Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance.
5. For there is one person of the Father: another of the Son: another of the Holy Ghost.
6. But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one: the glory equal, the majesty coëternal...
15. So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Ghost is God;
16. And yet there are not three Gods; but one God...
19. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord
20. So are we forbidden by the catholic religion to say, there are three Gods, or three Lords...
25. And in this Trinity none is before or after another: none is greater or less than another.
26. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal.
27. So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped.
28. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.

(The Athanasian Creed as quoted in Philip Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 132, page 690-693)

The Orthodox Trinity

The orthodox Trinity teaches that there is one Being called God who is composed of three persons. Each of these persons are said to be distinct, self-conscious persons who are the same age ("none is before or after another"), and they are said to be exactly equal in rank and power ("none is greater or less than another"). However, the definition goes much deeper than this because, according to the orthodox Trinity, the three persons are not really persons as we would think of a person. Normally we would think of a person as an individual being, but this is not what is meant by the use of the word "person" in the orthodox Trinity. The propagators of this doctrine say the word "person," when applied to God, is really inadequate because there is no other idea that can be expressed by the word "person" that is similar to the idea that is meant when it is applied to God. That is why most theologians prefer the term *hypostasis* rather than person because it is a word that refers to the theological concept of person that is half-way between mere personality and an individual being. This concept is explained in the following way:

"The doctrine of a subsistence in the substance of the Godhead brings to view a species of existence that is so anomalous and unique, that the human mind derives little or no aid from those analogies which assist it in all other cases. The hypostasis is a real subsistence, — a solid essential form of existence, and not a mere emanation, or energy, or manifestation, — but it is intermediate between substance and attributes. It is not identical with the substance, for there are not three substances [or beings]. It is not identical with attributes, for the three Persons each and equally possess all the divine attributes... Hence the human mind is called upon to grasp the notion of a species of existence that is totally *sui generis*, and not capable of illustration by any of the ordinary comparisons and analogies." (Dr. Shedd, *History of Christian Doctrine*, vol. i. p. 365 as quoted in Philip Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 130, pages 676, 677)

This strange conception of God is so difficult to understand that Augustine did not even understand it. Augustine was the most influential church writer to define the Trinity, and he is very much

respected as an authority among Trinitarians. Of him, Philip Schaff wrote, “Of all the fathers, next to Athanasius, Augustine performed the greatest service for this dogma [the Trinity].” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 131, page 684)

Augustine said, “If we be asked to define the Trinity, we can only say, it is not this or that.” (Augustine, as quoted in Philip Schaff’s *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 130, page 672)

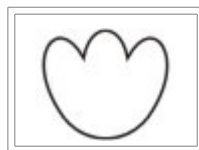
Athanasius, one of the earliest and very influential propagators of the Trinity, “has candidly confessed that whenever he forced his understanding to meditate upon the divinity of the Logos, his toilsome and unavailing efforts recoiled on themselves; that the more he thought, the less he comprehended; and the more he wrote, the less capable was he of expressing his thoughts.” (Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chapter 5, paragraph 1, as quoted in Alonzo T. Jones’ *The Two Republics*, page 334)

Athanasius and Augustine, the two men who did more to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity than anyone else, both admitted that they did not understand it and could not define it.

The Orthodox Trinity Illustrated

The best way I can illustrate the orthodox Trinitarian conception of God would be to draw one circle with three protrusions:

The Orthodox Trinity



Three Persons (hypostasis) United in
One Being

The orthodox Trinity is the official Catholic teaching that the one God of the Bible is one being composed of three self-conscious hypostases. Hypostasis is the Greek word used by Orthodox Trinitarians to describe a supposed species of existence unique to the Trinity that is halfway between attributes and a being and cannot be defined further than to say it is not attributes, and it is not a being.

This concept of God, as confusing as it is, is the most commonly accepted view among Christians.

The orthodox Trinity denies the literal sonship and the complete death of Christ. It denies the death of Christ, because it is claimed that the divine Son of God is part of God and therefore cannot be separated from Him in death because God cannot die. Let us allow a Trinitarian writer to demonstrate this himself.

Augustine wrote, “No dead man can raise himself. He [Christ] only was able to raise Himself, who though His Body was dead, was not dead. For He raised up that which was dead. He raised up Himself, who in Himself was alive, but in His Body that was to be raised was dead. For not the Father only, of whom it was said by the Apostle, ‘Wherefore God also hath exalted Him,’ raised the Son, but the Lord also raised Himself, that is, His Body.” (*Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 1, volume 6, page 656, St. Augustine, “Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament”)

It is true that a dead man cannot raise himself from the dead. It is also true that Christ died. The divine, glorified Jesus Christ said, “I... was dead.” (Revelation 1:18) Since Christ was truly dead, then He could not have raised Himself. The Bible does not teach that Christ raised Himself from the dead. Instead, it says at least thirty times that the Father raised Him from the dead. For example, Galatians 1:1 says, “Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead.)”

I find Augustine’s conclusion that Christ “was not dead” to be repulsive to reason, contrary to Scripture, and injurious to the power of the gospel. Yet, this is the logical conclusion that must be reached if we believe that Christ is a part of the Being of God the Father. The believers in this doctrine are left with the conclusion that the death of Christ was nothing more than the death of a human that had been temporarily filled with the “second person” of the Trinity. No matter how exalted the pre-existent Son was; no matter how glorious, how powerful, or even eternal; if the manhood only died, the sacrifice was only human. Without believing that Christ died, how can anyone appreciate the love of God in giving His Son to die for our sins?

The orthodox Trinity doctrine denies the sonship of Christ, for if Christ, the Son of God, was some type of projection from the one God and part of the being of God, then He could not properly be called a Son of the Father, as was demonstrated by the Catholic acceptance of the doctrine of “eternal generation.”

Modalism (“Jesus only”)

Modalism, also called “Jesus only,” is the idea that God is one person who operates in three different modes. Please notice number 4 of the Athanasian creed. This has specific reference to Modalism and Tritheism. It says, “Neither confounding the persons [Modalism]; nor dividing the substance [Tritheism].” According to orthodox Trinitarians Modalism confounded the three persons into one person, claiming that God is one person who manifested Himself in three different modes at three different times. This idea is sometimes called Sabellianism because a man by the name of Sabellius is credited as the one who invented this theory. Here is what Dr. Philip Schaff had to say about this theory:

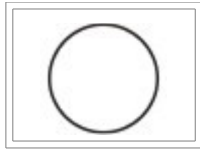
“His [Sabellius’] fundamental thought is, that the unity of God, without distinction in itself, unfolds or extends itself in the course of the world’s development in three different forms and periods of revelation and, after the completion of redemption, returns into unity. The Father reveals himself in the giving of the law or the Old Testament economy (not in the creation also, which in his view precedes the trinitarian revelation); the Son, in the incarnation; the Holy Ghost, in inspiration. The revelation of the Son ends with the ascension; the revelation of the Spirit goes on in regeneration and sanctification.” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 2, Section 152, page 582)

This idea, according to orthodox Trinitarians, confounds the three persons of the Trinity into one person who acts in different modes at different times—sometimes He acts like a Father, sometimes a Son, and sometimes the Holy Spirit. This idea is called by several names, including, Modalism, Jesus only, and Sabellianism.

Modalism Illustrated

A way to illustrate Modalism would be to draw one circle:

Modalism



One Being who is
One Person with
Three consecutive modes or personalities

Modalism is the idea that there is one God who is one being who manifests Himself in three different modes at different times so that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not really three persons, but are merely three manifestations of the same individual person. There are some who believe in Modalism who claim that there are three *persons* in God, but to them the word *person* means “personality, characteristic, emanation, or manifestation” rather than a being or an hypostasis.

With this concept, there is no real Son of God. The only concept of a Son of God would have to be limited to the incarnation of Christ or to God revealing a manifestation of Himself, pretending to be His own Son. Either of these comes far short of portraying the love of God in giving His Son to die for sinners. In addition to denying the sonship of Christ, this theory also reduces the death of Christ to that of a mere human, for if Christ was only a manifestation of the one God, then He could not die, for the Bible says that God cannot die. (1 Timothy 6:16) So with this concept, the believer is left with the idea that God so loved the world that He came to earth pretending to be His own Son, and He pretended to die to reveal His great love for us. It is no wonder that there is a lack of genuine love for God in this world, when the regenerating power of God’s love, the heart of the gospel, is removed from God’s people.

Unitarianism

Unitarianism is similar to Modalism in that it teaches that God is one individual person, but it differs in that Unitarians do not believe God has different modes in which He manifests Himself. Unitarians believe that Jesus was just a man, a prophet endowed with the Spirit of God rather than a divine being. They also deny that Christ died as a substitute for sinners. For evidence of this visit the Unitarian website www.americanunitarian.org. Also see William Channing’s work entitled “Unitarian Christianity” at: www.channingmc.org/unitarianchristianity.htm.

Those who call themselves Unitarians are generally Christians but, perhaps ironically, it is the teaching that is believed in the Muslim religion, which is so openly opposed to Christianity.

The Muslim holy book, the Koran, says, "*Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) an apostle of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him: So believe in Allah and His apostles. Say not 'Trinity': desist: It will be better for you: For Allah is One God: Glory be to Him: (Far Exalted is He) above having a son.*" (Koran 4:171)

With this concept Jesus could fully die, but since they reduce Christ to a mere man and deny that Christ's death truly atoned for our sins, they have less than a human sacrifice for sins; they have no sacrifice at all, either on the part of God or Christ. This concept, like the other false concepts we have examined, eliminates from its adherents any concept of God's love in giving His Son to die for their sins. It is no wonder that the Muslim world demonstrates such a cold and hate-filled religion, when their *god* has never revealed love to them. It is sad that some Christians adhere to this same concept of God and Jesus.

Tritheism

Tritheism is the concept that the one God of the Bible is really composed of three separate beings who are only one because they are perfectly united in their goals, plans and purposes and they work together. In this concept God is not an individual, but rather a group of three individuals, or a committee.

Again I would like to refer you to point number 4 in the Athanasian Creed. It says, "Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance." The term, "nor dividing the substance" has direct reference to what is termed "Tritheism." According to orthodox Trinitarians, Tritheism divides the substance of God into three separate Beings, which would be three gods, hence it is labeled Tritheism. Notice the following definition of the "orthodox Trinity" in which the definition of Tritheism is brought out.

"...the term person [hypostasis] must not be taken here in the sense current among men, as if the three persons were three different individuals, or three self-conscious and separately acting beings. The trinitarian idea of personality lies midway between that of a mere form of manifestation, or a personation, which would

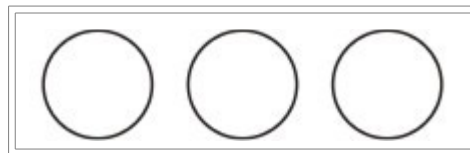
lead to tritheism, and the idea of an independent, limited human personality, which would result in tritheism. In other words, it avoids the... unitarian Trinity of a threefold conception and aspect of one and the same being, and the... tritheistic trinity of three distinct and separate beings.” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 130, pages 676, 677)

Notice here that Tritheism is defined as the idea that God exists in three persons who are “three different individuals, or three self-conscious and separately acting beings.”

Tritheism Illustrated

Tritheism could be illustrated by drawing three circles in the following way:

Tritheism



Three Persons who are
Three separate Beings
Who are *called* “one” because they are one in purpose and
character

Tritheism is the idea that the one God of the Bible is not an individual Being, but rather a committee of three separate Beings who work together in perfect unity, while Modalism, on the other hand, is the idea that the one God of the Bible is one person who manifests Himself in three different ways. The Orthodox Trinity seeks to find a middle road between these two extremes, by inventing a species of existence called hypostasis, which is neither a manifestation, nor an individual being.

With the concept of Tritheism, there can be no real Son of God, for all there could be is one divine Being playing the role, or pretending to be the Son of another one of the divine Beings.

As an example of this theory of role playing I will quote from an author who promotes it.

In 1996 Gordon Jenson, who was the president of Spicer Memorial College in Pune, India wrote, “In order to eradicate sin and rebellion from the universe and to restore harmony and peace, one of the divine Beings accepted, and entered into, the role of the Father, another the role of the Son. The remaining divine Being, the Holy Spirit,... By accepting the roles that the plan entailed, the divine Beings lost none of the powers of Deity... The divine Beings entered into the roles they had agreed upon before the foundations of the world were laid.” (That’s taken from The Week of Prayer issue of the *Adventist Review*, October 31, 1996)

Tritheism, like Modalism, denies the death of Christ, for it is claimed that all three of these divine Beings are exactly alike, and none of them could die or be separated from the other two. Again, the believer is left with a cold perception of God’s love, thinking that God (the committee of three) so loved the world that they sent one of them down here to pretend to be the Son of one of the others who had stayed behind, and to pretend to die, to reveal the love of all three, including the two who had stayed behind. This concept falls far short of revealing the wonderful love of God in giving His Son to die for our sins and has nothing more than a human sacrifice for sin.

Applying the Knowledge

As we look at these four views of God, we see that Modalists, Unitarians and Tritheists all understand the word *person* to mean “a being,” while the orthodox Trinitarians are adamantly opposed to this definition, and claim that the three persons of the Trinity are some mysterious, undefinable species of existence called hypostasis. Philip Schaff puts it this way,

“The word *person* is in reality only a make-shift, in the absence of a more adequate term.” (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Volume 3, Section 130, pages 677)

Orthodox Trinitarians are adamantly opposed to the idea that God is made up of three beings. They say that anyone who says this is a Tritheist. Unitarians say there is only one divine person, God the Father.

The Modalist will say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the same *person*, the Trinitarian will say that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the same *being*, while the Tritheist will

say the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are *three separate beings*.

With the information contained in this study, it should be easy for you to identify Trinitarians, Modalists, Unitarians and Tritheists. Yet, Satan is always busy inventing new angles on these concepts, and using different words to describe them, in an effort to confuse God's people, even the very elect. I believe we will see this confusion increase as the time of Christ's return comes closer.

One way Satan has confused people is by having different people use the same word with different meanings. Some ministers and theologians, when expounding upon God and His nature, use the word "person" to mean one of the modes, emanations, or manifestations of an individual, so that one being can have several of these "persons" or modes in which they manifest themselves. Others use the word "person" to mean a complete being, so that three persons would be three separate beings. Still others use the word "person" to mean, a mysterious form of existence that is half-way between a characteristic and a being, so that one being can have three separate self-conscious "persons," which are often called "hypostasis."

To add to this confusion, the word "being," at times, is used with any of the above three definitions in mind, most rarely with the first definition in mind, and most often with the second definition in mind, but it has also been used with the third definition in mind. So, as you can see, if you want to understand what is being taught by an individual, not only must you understand what they are saying, but you must know what they mean when they use the words, "person," or "being."

A Few Questions to Ask Trinitarians

Here are a few questions I like to ask people to help clarify where a person is coming from when they say they believe in the Trinity:

- When did Jesus Christ become the Son of God?
- Is the Son of God's life derived from the Father?
- Was the Son of God begotten of the Father other than when He was born in Bethlehem?
- Does the Son of God have a separate mind, will, and consciousness from God the Father?

- Can God be tempted with sin?
- Could Jesus have sinned during his incarnation?
- Can God die?
- Was the Son of God conscious during the three days and three nights He lay in the tomb?
- Can God have something revealed to Him, that was hidden?
- Do you pray to the Holy Spirit? If *not*, why neglect him? If so, where is your biblical example?
- Does the Holy Spirit have a spirit of his own like the Father and the Son?

These questions will go a long way to help clarify what a person believes or teaches about God.

Summary

The idea of one God in three persons is contrary to Scripture regardless of which theory is promoted to try to harmonize these contradictory ideas. Modalism, Orthodox Trinitarianism, and Tritheism are all equally dangerous in that they all deny the Bible truths that Christ is truly the Son of God and that He truly died for our sins. The Catholic invention of the eternal generation of the Son is merely an attempt to harmonize the Bible truth that Christ is the only *begotten* Son of God with the false theory that He is the same age as His Father. It is neither biblical, nor consistent with reason. It does away with the sonship of Christ as thoroughly as Modalism or Tritheism. There are many other aspects that are affected when one accepts these false theories, yet the most important remain the sonship of Christ and the death of Christ. The nature of Christ at His incarnation is also severely affected, along with the atonement made for our sins.

These false theories about God leave their adherents with, at best, a shallow picture of God's love that is unable to allow them to have the deep, genuine love for God that can endure every hardship, especially the conflict over the Mark of the Beast, which we shall all face very soon.

Remember that no lie is safe, no matter how innocently it is believed. Paul wrote that those who "believe a lie" will be "damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12) Also, keep in mind that the majority are seldom right in religious matters. Jesus said, "broad is the way,

that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13, 14) The councils of men, and the man-made creeds that are so often esteemed by Christians, are not the standards by which we can determine truth. There is only one standard, and one alone, that we can trust as an infallible guide to truth, and that is the Word of God. We must not trust man to lead us into truth, for God said, "For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed." (Isaiah 9:16)

I pray that you will hold firmly to the truth of the Bible, that "there is but one God, the Father" and "one Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 8:6), who is "the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18), who "proceeded forth" and "came out from God" "before the hills" (John 8:42; 16:27; Proverbs 8:25), who "died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3), and "The Father... raised Him from the dead." (Galatians 1:1) I pray that you will also believe the truth that the Holy Spirit is "the holy Spirit of God" (Ephesians 4:30), which "proceedeth from the Father" (John 15:26) and is sent to us "through Jesus Christ." (Titus 3:5, 6)

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