

The Trinity And The Holy Spirit (Part 1)

Defining Elohim

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For almost sixty years the Worldwide Church of God sailed along with very little controversy regarding the nature of God. There were always signs when somebody from the world took pot shots at it because of our stand that God is not a trinity. But then, about mid-1993 came the "God Is . . ." doctrinal paper in which over a period of about one year changed the Worldwide Church of God's doctrinal position on the nature of God from "God is a family" to "God is a trinity." This was a bombshell, to say the least.

No less authority than the Catholic Encyclopedia calls the trinity "the central doctrine of the Christian church." If that is so, the nature of God is a doctrine around which all other doctrines revolve. It is a concept to which many other doctrines thus owe their existence. They are saying that almost all other doctrines hang on, lead to, and exist to support this one central doctrine.

I have gradually been gathering material on this subject over the years, hoping to make this subject clear, easily understood, as well as being true, and this is my latest effort. We are going to begin in I Timothy where it does not say a thing about the trinity.

I Timothy 6:20 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge.

Let us go now to II Timothy, written just a bit later than I Timothy. Paul again warns Timothy.

II Timothy 2:16 But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness.

Today we are going to spend a great deal of time on the term *Elohim*. *Elohim* is what God is called, but it is not truly a personal name. A clear example of this truth is that when directly asked by Moses what His name was (at the burning bush), God replied, "I am that I am." He did not say, "My name is *Elohim*." He said, "I am that I am."

The reason I read those first two verses is because of what it says about profane and

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

idle babblings about words. The trinity doctrine is replete with much in the way of vain babblings about words. What I am going to give you about *Elohim* is a word, but I am not going to give you vain babblings, because I am going to show you right out of Scripture what *Elohim* means, and *Elohim* is very important for knocking the tar out of the trinity doctrine. Once you get this word firmly in mind, you are going to be able to have a foundation to see that the trinity doctrine cannot possibly be true in terms of biblical truth. There is an awful lot of babble in the trinity doctrine as it is presented by the world.

Now *Elohim* is translated by the very general term “God” 2,300 plus times beginning in Genesis 1:1. I got this figure from, *All the Divine Names and Titles in the Bible*, page 5, by Herbert Lockyer. *Elohim* is a plural term whose essential meaning indicates “mighty ones.” It is used 35 times in Genesis 1 and 2 in relation to the creating being performed by Them.

Elohim's usage is virtually declaring that whoever *Elohim* is, He is the author of the entire Book. God has done this in a way that is common among men. Among men, what comes first? The title of the book. And then what comes second? The name of the author. On the outside of my book it says “Holy Bible.” You get to Genesis 1, and we find *Elohim* one time after another—35 times in the first two chapters. I think, brethren, there is something He wants to get across to us. You know about the law, or principle of “first appearance,” and *Elohim* is the first-appearing indication of God in the entire Bible, and He is its author.

A much fuller understanding of *Elohim* will unfold as we go on. I am not going to give a really technical expounding of words for two reasons. The first is that this sermon is intended for converted peoples' understanding. I am giving it to refine and to solidify your understanding. Matthew 13 shows that God has opened our minds to His mystery. A second reason is because I believe that *Elohim's* meaning is clear in many contexts, and understanding *Elohim* teaches us a very great deal about the nature of the God family and of Their purpose.

This knowledge is essential to the pattern and the direction of our lives. This is really, in a way, the most important reason of all. We have got to get *Elohim* straight, because it is essential to the pattern and direction of our lives, and we must be well-grounded in this most basic and important of all subjects. That subject is: “What is the nature of God?” The “golden calf” incident gives us a very clear example of why a thorough understanding of *Elohim* is important.

I want you to turn to Exodus 32. This will continue laying the foundation.

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Exodus 32:1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

I want you to pick up one thing as we go through here. What triggered the golden calf incident is that Moses delayed his coming. We are in a period of time when we can get into the same attitude regarding Jesus Christ. If time drags on it is going to be very easy for our minds to wonder, and we wonder, "Well, it looks like He's not really coming soon, so that gives me time to do whatever I want to do." So Moses was delayed about returning.

I want you to also put this into your mind. Notice what chapter this is. It is Exodus 32. God came down and gave the law in Exodus 20. They completed the covenant in Exodus 24. Here we are, to chapter 32, and very little time has passed between God revealing Himself, and then this incident in Exodus 32. So not a lot of time had passed in their journey to the Promised Land.

Exodus 32:4 And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

How quickly they forgot. In verse one they said that Moses brought them out. Here in verse 4 Moses had so slipped from their mind, Mount Sinai had so slipped from their mind, that now they were giving credit to the golden calf.

Exodus 32:7-10 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. [God straightens out verse 1 pretty quick!] They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'" And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

Back to the people in thought again. To them, their God's nature was conceived as no greater than that of an uncomprehending non-communicating beast that had nothing in common with them except that it was a mammal, and that it supposedly lived.

Now mark well what I am about to say. What or who a people worship is very important to the quality of life within the nation. A people can rise no higher than what they worship, and there is a very clear logical reason why. Who or what a population worships is pretty much going to determine the nation's spirituality, morality, ethics, government, education, economics, entertainment, movement, literature, architecture, art, clothing fashion, and their vision for the future.

A number of years ago Richard gave me a comment from Ralph Waldo Emerson, and I tell you, Emerson hit the nail right on the head. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "It behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping we are becoming."

Twice I have read a book that was written by a man somewhat a little bit older than my generation; not much older though. His name was Francis Schaeffer. He was a big name in the Evangelical world. Francis Schaeffer kind of came to understand this same principle, so he wrote a book called, *How Then Should We Live?* The title came from what he wrote in the book.

Francis Schaeffer looked at the kind of cultures in terms of their religion, in terms of the art they produced, in terms of their paintings, in terms of their sculptures and so forth, and in terms of their architecture. From those things he formed conclusions about what the spirit of that age was. He advanced through time from roughly about the Middle Ages right on through up to the present day and age. He evaluated each culture on the basis of what it left in terms of its art. Very revealing. When he got to our generation, he said, "In view of all this, what the art reveals about the spirit of the times that those people lived in, we look at the spirit of our times, and what does it tell you we worship?" Very revealing.

I said a bit earlier that there is a logical reason why this occurs, and it can be easily seen by me—somebody as old as I am—that the level of American spirituality, morality, and ethics has degenerated rapidly since the 1950s and on into 1960s as peoples' true knowledge of God diminished, because churches no longer preached much about what God is truly like. Do you realize that those people—those beatniks, those hippies and so forth who were rebelling in the late fifties and on into the sixties—are in positions of leadership in the United States of America? These things are occurring because the mindset of those people who were doing those things is now in places where they can

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

really affect what is going on. That is why it seems like every decision those people make is *weird* to us, and it just flies in the face of anything that is logical.

Is not the administration supposed to protect its borders from invasion? It is weird. Here is our president, chastising the state of Arizona for trying to do what the federal government *should* be doing. It is weird. Their decision-making is completely—as far as anybody who has the Spirit of God is concerned—totally illogical and stressful to an extreme.

So what are they worshipping? What *have* they worshipped?—because they have become what they worship. It does not have to be a living God necessarily, but nonetheless they are not worshipping the God of heaven.

In our western culture we tend to look upon God in a very broad pick-and-choose way. It is as though one is just as good as another. It is a way far different from the Bible's very straightforward approach to perhaps this most important of all subjects, and a lot of its teaching is in this term *Elohim*, and what *Elohim* does, and is. God is no longer preached very much as being the all-powerful Ruler of His creation. But by and large, people are not being given the true picture that produces a deep reverential respect, and thus as the fear of God declines, so do public morals, which go right along with it.

To get a clearer picture of what I mean we are going to look at this example from Exodus 32. As soon as they once again gave their minds and conduct over to the Egyptian bull-god, look at what they did with their lives. God has compressed everything into a very short period of time to give us a picture of what might happen in a culture over a much longer period of time as is what happened here in the United States of America.

Exodus 32:6 Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

I will not go into every detail of what they did, but you know very well that once they began thinking in theological terms of the bull-god, everything broke loose.

Exodus 32:25 Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to their shame among their enemies).

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Now you can just expand your thoughts from this incident to include other things from the Israelites' journey through the wilderness—of the murmurings, the fornications, the political and religious rebellions that occurred on their journey—that all of this morphed into a huge problem with heresy and idolatry. One thing kept producing another thing.

I am not kidding when I say to you that all one has to do is observe the style of one's clothing, or maybe a lack thereof, when one has made a major step toward understanding what one's respect is given to. You ladies, I know, in a way have a tough time restraining your young girls, your teenagers and so forth. They do not realize that the clothing fashions and so forth are being designed by people with very perverse minds to manipulate women. This type of clothing is almost all that you can buy, unless you make it yourself.

These people make clothing in which certain parts of the female anatomy are practically exposed in order to entice men. Of course, this helps the girls too, but you see, they are following the gods of this world, and modesty goes out the window. These people have influence over almost every facet of life.

There is a powerful tendency in all of us to conform to what we respect. We could follow an example of it here in Exodus 32, in God compressing, as we will understand that this respect is still occurring. So as Emerson said, we have got to be very careful what we are worshipping, because what we are worshipping, we are becoming. We will conform to what we respect.

Our response to our God, our worship of Him, is revealed in whether we conform to Him and His way in our attitudes and conduct, or the world's way. What I have just said is wrapped up in the fearing of—and therefore the loving of—God's doctrines, and we are of course to treat Him with the utmost respect, and we are to treat others with the utmost respect also, but we are to conform to Him.

The principle that I am talking about here is what motivates us to project an image of what is important to us. God is *very* concerned about the image His children project. It is called, in the Bible, "our witness," or "our testimony" of Him. This witness is one major reason why He wants us to study His Word often and more deeply. He wants us to get as much of Him in our minds as possible, because it is going to profoundly affect what we do with our lives if we believe what He says. That is the issue. Do we believe Him, and are we willing to go in that direction?

The apostle Paul said something very interesting in I Corinthians 8. Of course, you understand that this was written to a Christian congregation.

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

I Corinthians 8:5-6 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.

Paul thus gives us at least a slight indication that some of these people here might have been somewhat polytheistic. Now are you a polytheist? Or are you a monotheist? Do you worship one god, or are your gods divided between the God of heaven and other gods that are available and that we will give some respect to? I do not believe that we are about to call Paul a liar, but he said there are *many* gods. Now this is God's Word, and Paul means exactly what he said. This is part of the reason why I say that understanding *Elohim* is so important. The Bible begins with *Elohim* revealing Himself.

Paul said there are many gods, and he, having been inspired by God, means exactly what he said. Let me show you this in other places in the Bible. We are going to go to Psalm 86. No commentary, because it is pretty clear. This is a prayer of David.

Psalm 86:8 Among the gods there is none like You, O Lord; nor are there any works like Your works.

This is confirmation from the Old Testament. But let us go a little bit further.

Psalm 135:5 For I know that the LOORD is great, and our Lord is above all gods.

Again, the word "gods" is plural.

Psalm 97:9 For You, LOORD, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods.

Now do you believe the Bible, that there are gods available who can compete for our attention and our submission? There are, then.

Let us go to Deuteronomy 10 just to show you that this is not something confined to the Psalms.

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Deuteronomy 10:12-17 “And now, Israel, what does the LOORD your God require of you, but to fear the LOORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LOORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LOORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good? Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LOORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it. The LOORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day. Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer. For the LOORD your God is **God of gods** and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.

That puts the nail right on that. So Paul was not kidding when he said there are many gods. Now who *are* these gods? Heading the list of course is Satan, and then right under him are multitudes of demons that reveal themselves in various ways, and every time they reveal themselves in various ways it is an effort to get you and me to submit to them, to get our respect. Whether it be terror, or whether it be love, it matters not. They are seeking to conform us to their way of life.

This brings us back to *Elohim*.

Genesis 1:26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

Elohim said that.

I gave you some statistics before regarding how frequently that name or title, or whatever you want to call it, appears, but *Elohim* is more than one being. The word is plural, and it indicates at least two beings. Verse 26 drills this into our mind in that it uses the pronoun “their,” “our,” and so forth, to indicate that the antecedent that those pronouns are magnifying are more than one.

One reason our culture has such a broad view of God is because a false god has been preaching a false Christianity, and this has dominated the religious thinking of this nation considerably. That false Christianity, for the past 1600 years, has taught a false god that is non-biblical inexplicable “three in one.”

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Listen to this quote I am going to give you from “A Handbook of Christian Truth” by Harold Lindsell and Charles Woodbridge, on pages 61 and 62. “The mind of man cannot fully understand the mystery of the trinity. He who would try to understand the mystery fully shall lose his mind; but he who would deny the trinity will lose his soul.” That is the way these two men perceived the importance of a trinity doctrine.

It is inexplicable because they will not believe the Bible’s plain statement in their context when it is mixed with Babylonian lies. They are trying to make the trinity fit into biblical context, and it does not fit. So they say then that it is a mystery one has to accept on faith. However, because that God is narrowly defined, it leaves people free to form their own conception of what He is like. The Bible defines *Elohim* pretty explicitly.

You just heard that about the trinity, that it cannot be explained. So what is the recourse people have? It leaves their mind free to wonder, and to observe what adherent those who respect the trinity do with their lives, and so they pick up from those people the same kind of respect for something that they cannot understand. This has occurred especially in the last sixty years or so, and so in the United States that conception of what God is like has exploded all over the place.

This is a very interesting Israelitish phenomenon, and God gives us testimony to this in two books in the Bible. We are going to take a look at these in Isaiah. Here is what God says about Israel.

Isaiah 1:3 The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider.

In another place God says, “What other nation has done this?” We are very flighty in terms of this.

Turn to Jeremiah 2. This is a little bit after Isaiah lived.

Jeremiah 2:11-13 Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be very desolate,” says the LOORD. “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Our ancestors did this in the past, and we are repeating it—something that other nations have not done. God revealed Himself to Israel, and we have forsaken Him.

This is something which we *should* be able to understand. As I said earlier, Matthew 13 says God has opened our minds so that the mysteries of God can be understood. In I Corinthians 2 Paul gives a number of scriptures there in which he shows that God has given us the Spirit of God in *order* that we might know the things of God.

What is the world trying to palm off on us when they say that the understanding of the nature of God is beyond us, that we just have to accept it? You see, it is just another lie, and all too often people stop right there trying to understand the nature of God. If they would believe what they are reading, they would see it. They are having a lie palmed off on them. It might be beyond them simply because they will not believe, but we have the Spirit of God and we should believe what God says. God's truth should be clear and logical and not beyond us.

Now, back to the Catholic Encyclopedia that I mentioned just a little bit earlier, same edition, early in its discussion on the trinity. The title of the article was "The Trinity." They admitted that the Old Testament has no clear teaching on the trinity, and that the New Testament has no clear single statement affirming it.

The doctrine, brethren, is developed; it is flushed out by what they called in the article, "Christological Speculation." Speculation means that they had no truly solid proof from the Bible. Brethren, they were making *educated guesses*. We will give them the benefit of the doubt that say this central doctrine of the Christian church has been arrived at merely by human deduction, not by clear scriptures written in God's Word.

It did not enter the worldly Christianity easily either. It entered only through much disputing, because many in the Catholic Church did not see it in the scriptures either, and they resisted it. They resisted accepting it. It was first introduced in the Nicene Council over which the Emperor Constantine presided. Can you imagine, the emperor just getting right in on what the church business was, and he made rules? He made the decisions ultimately. That Nicene Council took place in A.D. 325. It did not enter even into the Catholic Church until A.D. 451. That was 126 years of arguing before they finally lured the people in the Catholic Church down who would not accept it.

That ought to tell you something. Even the Catholic Church believers, for a long period of time, resisted it because they had enough honesty with the Scriptures they could not see the trinity. They could not accept it, but as they died off, then the resistance gradually wore out, and the pressure to put it in as an official doctrine of the Catholic

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Church was finally accomplished 126 years later. That ought to give you an idea of how vacant the Bible is about its assertion regarding the trinity. *It just is not there.* Even unconverted men who were reasonably honest could not accept it.

A good way to give yourself a little bit of confidence about how different it is with God and His church, all you have to do is read Acts 15 where there was a dispute that took place within the true church, and from every appearance it only took a couple of days to resolve it. They came together. They argued it back and forth, and even the verbiage there indicates that sometimes the arguments were pretty heated; but nonetheless, with the Spirit of God guiding those men, they were honest enough to see, especially what Peter and Paul were teaching, and they accepted it. This was done in a very short period of time. Why? Because they all had the same Spirit, and that Spirit was the Spirit of God, and that Spirit was guiding and leading their thinking, and they were able to see it in the scriptures that what Paul, James, and Peter were teaching was correct.

When we look into the Bible to identify God, to find out as much as we can about what God is like, we are confronted with a difficulty. There is both a language difficulty as well as a cultural difficulty confronting us that does not easily go away. We who speak English are not the only ones who have this difficulty, and this played a part in the trinity becoming a part of the fabric of this world's Christianity.

The English translations of the Bible consistently, but also inadvertently, persuade us to identify a singular personality as God, because it is constantly referring to God as "He," "Him," or "His." This is where it gets a little bit confusing because I am not saying this is wrong. It depends on the context, and it depends on what words are being used. I am only saying that we have to be careful. It is something that we must be aware of, and if we are aware of it and we do a little bit of searching, it becomes very clear.

This language- and- cultural-difference difficulty we have tends to make us look for a singular unique personality who looks like us, because it says right in Genesis 1:26 that we are made in His image, and He is our natural model. We look like Him, but at the same time He is unique, and nobody compares to Him in holiness, intelligence, and power. Once we get over this language and cultural hurdle, which really is not all that difficult for us to do if we have the Spirit of God, it is something we accept, and we adapt to it, and causes us no real problem.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

We already read Genesis 1:26. We will not go back and read it again, but if we are

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

studying with any depth at all, even before we leave the first verse we are confronted with a difficult problem. Unless one is willing to believe what the Bible consistently says from beginning to end, the fourth word in the Bible in the English translation is “God.” No, it is not. It is “Gods”—plural. It is *Elohim*. Gods created the heavens and the earth and all that in them is. Just in case we thought there was a mistake there, verse 26 confirms it: “Gods.” We are in the image of Gods—more than one.

In verse 26 the translators wisely retained the plural pronoun to conform to the plural noun antecedent *Elohim*. Do you know that *Elohim* is used sixty-six more times before a different Hebrew word appears, translated as “God”—singular? That is in Genesis 6:5. Incidentally, if you have a *King James Version*, Genesis 6:5 translates “Yahweh” as “God.” However, the *New King James Version* translates “Yahweh” as “Lord God.” For 66 times it is used before another word is translated as God—singular.

Genesis 6:5 [KJV] And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Genesis 6:5 [NKJV] Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

You would think that someone reading this in Hebrew would begin to get the idea that the Author (*Elohim*) was trying to get across something important, and He was. He wanted us to know that there was more than one personality involved in the creation of man. It just was not one, it was two. Now does that make you a polytheist? We think of God as being one. No. It is not always one. Sometimes it is two.

God is showing us that two are working in perfect unity and harmony. There is no discord between these two who are *both* God, *both* worthy of worship, *both* worthy of honor and respect. Eventually this leads us to understand what *Elohim* really means. We do know that it is plurality, but it has major impact on our life if we understand what is going on here. God could have used *Eloah*. *Eloah* is the singular of *Elohim*. No, *Elohim* was deliberately used by design. The point is, that whoever or whatever *Elohim* or God is consists of more than one being or personality.

Now the Trinitarians count this as an early indication of the trinity. They see that there is more than one here, but they say that this means there is a trinity. No, it does not. Other places in the Bible shoot that right down.

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

We are going to go back to the New Testament, because that idea cannot possibly be true. This is one of the major reasons, even in Constantine's day, 325 A.D., the Trinitarians had such a hard time getting it into the Catholic Church, because even those theologians could see that, "No, the Bible doesn't say that there are three." They could count "one, two," and there stop. But there is more that they missed.

We have to go back to the ministry of Jesus Christ and what He was doing in order to understand *Elohim*.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

That is very revealing. This is at the beginning of the book of John, and the book of John is putting into form and shape teaching that was not specifically covered in the other three synoptic Gospels. One of the things John is saying here is that Jesus came to reveal, to declare the Father.

You have got to understand this because the Jews already understood God as Father; however, their understanding was not what Jesus revealed. What Jesus revealed or declared was a twist from God being a Father that they had never seriously considered, because they did look upon God as the Father of creation, and therefore He was *the* Father of everybody on earth. But what Jesus came to reveal was God as *spiritual* Father. A big difference, and this gives us insight into Genesis 1:26 and *Elohim*.

Elohim not only is the Father of the physical creation, He is also Father of the spiritual creation. When He said, "Let Us make man in Our image," there were two things there: the physical creation, and the spiritual creation, but the spiritual creation was not *really* going to get underway until the Son came and revealed the Father.

We begin to add to this when we look at the beginning portions especially of the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Jesus is saying things that are very easily passed over if one does not understand this. For example, in Matthew 5, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said:

Matthew 5:44-45 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven.

The Trinity and the Holy Spirit (Part 1) by John W. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

You could very easily take that as common instruction for ordinary everyday life, but once we understand what God is doing—that is, that He is re-creating Himself, He is reproducing Himself, He is expanding His family—we begin to understand that this is instruction for those who are truly *spiritual* sons of God. Those who are unconverted can do all the good works they want to or are charged to do, but just doing those things does not make them a spiritual son of God. In verse 48 He says:

Matthew 5:48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

There is no way an unconverted person can meet the rigors of that responsibility, but only those who have the Spirit of God, those who are converted. God is reproducing Himself, and this is instruction for those spiritual children. Remember, the disciples said to Jesus, “Why do You always speak to them in parables?” Jesus came right back and said, “They aren’t getting it. *You* get it because it’s been *given* to you to get it.” The spiritual sons of God can make use of this. Those who are not cannot really make use of it until they see *who Elohim* really is, and *what* it is. The Jews eventually began to catch on, but that did not mean that they were really going to really accept it and really believe in it.

John 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

That is a very telling statement. Somebody was getting it that Jesus was talking about a Son of God in a different way than they believed. “Blasphemy!” they yelled. “Stone Him!” they yelled, because Jesus was saying He literally was the Son of God, the spiritual Son of God—and they got it. In John 8, they actually did pick up stones and tried to do something about it.

John 8:58-59 Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM.” Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Once you begin to catch on to this, it is all over the place, and you can look at the Scriptures in an entirely different way.

Turn to John 14. Now He is talking to His own.

John 14:6-7 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

Do you understand that He was telling these men, slowly but surely, that He was *Elohim*? But so was the Father *Elohim*.

John 14:8-13 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves. "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

It does not stop there, because it begins to reach out even in the epistles of the apostle. In Romans 8, slowly but surely the pieces begin to come together here.

Romans 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Romans 8:11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Romans 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Do you see what Jesus is saying? This is awesome. We are, slowly but surely, through

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the teaching of Christ and the apostles, being elevated into the same relationship with the Father that Jesus had with the Father. We do not quite reach up to it because we were not part of *Elohim*. But brethren, what Christ is saying is that we are being prepared to become *part* of *Elohim*. It is a step-by-step process. We have got to recognize who our God is, and that *that* God is our Father, and that our Father is expanding His family so that we can become part of *Elohim*. A case is being built throughout the entire Bible.

Remember, it did not really become clearly declared until Jesus declared the Father. Mr. Armstrong put it this way. God (meaning the Father) did not become a Father until Jesus was born. He is Father of creation through Jesus Christ before then, but what Mr. Armstrong was pointing to was that He became the Father through spiritual creation. That is different entirely.

What we have been given is *awesome*. It is just mind-boggling. When you begin to evaluate the power that is inherent within *Elohim*, and that we have been invited to become part of *Elohim*, it is truly mind-boggling. What does *Elohim* do? *Elohim*, the family, creates. Is that worth submitting to? Is that worth understanding? The trinity cannot even begin to compare with the potential that is in this book.

Do you understand that what I am giving you is really what the Gospel is. God is re-creating Himself. God is expanding His family, and this is how we become part of it, by invitation to be given the privilege to become sons of God.

Let us go to another epistle of Paul, in Ephesians 3, where Paul begins to spell this out really clearly.

Ephesians 3:14-15 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

Brethren, that is a real bell-ringer. God is creating a family. He is adding to *Elohim*. This begins in Genesis 1 with only two personalities that are a part of it, but He is in the process of expanding *Elohim* out to an entire family of beings created in His image, with the same mind, with the same attitude, with the same character, with the same name—“**God**.” So a family is being formed. It is located in both heaven and earth. In Genesis 1 only two exist in the family. In heaven there are two, and they are both spirit beings, and this flies in the face of the modern conception of monotheism.

To us, monotheism indicates one is worshipping one distinct and unique personality. If

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anyone claims anything more than that, that person is accused of polytheism—the worshipping of many gods—and that is hard to accept by most people. Despite this, you have got to understand that there is still only one *Elohim*. Once you understand *Elohim* is itself a unit, a family, so there is only one. But when you look closer, *Elohim* reveals that there are two separate personalities, and both are worthy of worship, and resistance to accepting that and what the Bible clearly reveals about the divine nature, has in some measure led to the introduction of the trinity doctrine and sustains its existence so strongly—so strongly that today believing in the trinity is the litmus test as to whether one is considered orthodox, and therefore Christian in religion.

It is also true that trinities existed in pagan religions and were drawn upon as support by those who were trying to force it into the Catholic Church. However, these people doing the forcing still had to deal with the Bible, and so ways had to be devised to make the pagan doctrine appear to agree with their version of this false doctrine and the Bible at one and the same time. Now how do you think that they did that? This is where the third person—the third personality—came into being. They invented a third personality that was just like the Father and Son; in fact, a *co-equal* with Them, and at the same time they had to make the three of them appear as one God. The result was an incomprehensible mystery that a true child of God simply cannot accept.

I am going to give you a couple of scriptures that will knock that co-equal part right in the head. This is so simple it is almost ridiculous. You would think they would take the hint of something as simple as this. In John 14:28, Jesus said the following:

John 14:28 You have heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away and coming back to you.’ If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, ‘I am going to the Father,’ for My Father is greater than I.

How can they be co-equal if Jesus—the greatest authority that has ever been on the face of the earth—says “My Father is greater than I”? Is that not simple?

I told you before that they cannot accept what the Bible says about *Elohim*, because they will not believe what the Bible says. They reject, as Jesus said, “We are not equal. Yes, we’re in the same family, we’re the same kind, we are both *Elohim*, but the Father is greater.”

Look in John 8:28-29. This ought to be in our scriptural vocabulary.

John 8:28-29 Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man,

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then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him.”

The Father and Son are both *Elohim*, but they are not co-equal. The Son always submits to the Father who is greater than He is.

Let us turn to one more scripture that is equally as simply, really clear.

I Corinthians 11:3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

They are clearly separate independently-acting personalities that are in complete agreement, but the one is greater than the other. There is no mention there of the Holy Spirit at all. Jesus left the Holy Spirit out when He put the order of authority in. “Oops! I forgot about that!” No. There is no such personality. Who submits to whom when Jesus and the Holy Spirit are compared? You do not even have to think of it, because there is no such personality.

We are going to stop here. The sermon will continue. I have given myself a terrific responsibility here. How am I going to blend together two sermons into one for tomorrow—the Day of Pentecost?