
God Is a
FAMILY

God Is a FAMILY

BY STEPHEN FLURRY

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No subject has been more misunderstood than the very nature of God. Most who claim to be followers of Christ believe God is a trinity. Yet, how many have actually tried to prove the trinity doctrine according to God's inspired Word—the Holy Bible? What does the Bible have to say on the subject of the trinity? You might be surprised!

Contents

<i>Chapter 1</i>	
God Is a Family	1
<i>Chapter 2</i>	
The Holy Spirit Is the Power of God	15

Chapter 1

God Is a Family

THERE IS NO DOCTRINE MORE MYSTERIOUS THAN THE BELIEF THAT God is a trinity. Most people believe it. But *no one* can prove it. Doesn't it seem strange that the most common belief among churchgoers today is not even mentioned in the Bible once? Look it up for yourself. You will not find the word *trinity* in your Bible. In 1 Thessalonians 5:21, God commands us to "PROVE ALL THINGS." Yet millions of people today believe God is a trinity without any scriptural proof whatsoever. Some even admit that you *cannot* prove it; that it was added by priests in the fourth century. Don't believe men! Believe your Bible.

The late Herbert W. Armstrong, founder of the Worldwide Church of God, wrote in his book *Mystery of the Ages*: "The trinity doctrine *limits* God to a supposed three persons. It DESTROYS the very gospel of Jesus Christ!" The gospel Jesus proclaimed revolves around FAMILY, as we shall see. In other words, Mr. Armstrong was saying that the trinity doctrine DESTROYS THE VERY FAMILY OF GOD.

Herbert W. Armstrong raised up the Worldwide Church of God (wCG) in 1934. Back then, it was called the Radio Church of God. Later the name was changed. One of the very foundational doctrines of the wCG, throughout Mr. Armstrong's life, was the teaching that God is a Family.

In 1986, Mr. Armstrong died. Just days before he died, Mr. Armstrong appointed Joseph Tkach to succeed him as pastor general of the wCG. Over time, after Mr. Tkach took over in

1986, the WCG made numerous doctrinal changes, moving it in line with mainstream Christianity. One of the major shifts in doctrine was its rejection of the God Family teaching in favor of the popular trinitarian belief.

In this booklet, we will thoroughly prove that GOD IS INDEED A FAMILY. But if that is true, what about the Holy Spirit? Where does it fit into all of this? Part two of this booklet will answer that.

IN THE BEGINNING

As Mr. Armstrong often did, we will begin in the first chapter of John. These verses actually predate the first verse in Genesis. Notice John 1:1-4: “In the BEGINNING was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him [the Word]; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”

Before the angels were created, before the universe or man were created, GOD and the WORD existed. Two Personages are revealed in this earliest account in the Bible. THERE IS NO MENTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!

The *Word* in John 1 is translated from the Greek word *Logos* and means “Spokesman.” Notice verse 14: “And the Word was MADE FLESH, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

Here is what Mr. Armstrong wrote in *Mystery of the Ages*: “The Word, then, is a Personage who was made flesh—begotten by God, who through this later begettal became His Father. Yet at that prehistoric time of the first verse of John 1, the Word was not (yet) the Son of God. He divested himself of His glory as a spirit divinity to be begotten as a human person. He was made God’s Son, through being begotten or sired by GOD and born of the virgin Mary.” Remember this particular point made by Mr. Armstrong, because it is crucial in disproving what the WCG is now teaching about the Family of God. The Word was *made* the Son of God when He was begotten by God of the virgin Mary and later resurrected as the firstborn Son of God. Prior to that time, He was *not* the

Son of God, nor was there in all actuality a Family of God—yet! Again, John 1:14 says that when the Word was MADE flesh, He was “begotten of the Father.” The Word *became* the Son!

Prior to *becoming* the Son, He was the Word. By Him, “all things were made” (verse 3). How did He create all things? Ephesians 3:9 says, “... God, who created all things BY JESUS CHRIST.” So it is revealed that God is the Creator, but He created all things through the Word, or Spokesman, the one who became Jesus Christ.

From these verses in John, we see very clearly that before anything was created there were two Personages—God and the Word. They were *not yet* at this point Father and Son.

THE PLAIN TRUTH ABOUT “ELOHIM”

Let’s now move forward in time sequence to Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

Let’s now see what Mr. Armstrong wrote concerning this verse: “This originally was written by Moses as God inspired him. Moses wrote in Hebrew. The Hebrew word translated ‘God’ is *Elohim*—a noun or name, plural in form, but normally singular in grammatical usage. It is the same sort of word as *family, church, group*—one family consisting of two or more members—one church composed of many members—one group of several persons. It is referring to precisely the same Persons, making up or composing the one God, as we found in John 1:1—the Word and God—and each of those two Persons is God” (ibid.).

Mr. Armstrong went on to explain how God is now a Family consisting of God the *Father* and Jesus Christ the *Son*. Mr. Armstrong, however, DID NOT say the word *Elohim* technically MEANT the “God Family,” because as we have already pointed out, there was no family until Jesus Christ was begotten of God and became the Son.

But it is with this word, *Elohim*, that the WCG tries to confuse yet another doctrine restored to the true Church by God through Mr. Armstrong. Dr. K.J. Stavrinides, a WCG scholar, wrote an article in the August 3, 1993, *Worldwide News* titled, “Does *Elohim* Refer to a Family of Divine Beings?” In the conclusion of the article, Dr. Stavrinides said, “The attempt to

make *Elohim* reflect a family of divine beings is not only impossible historically, linguistically and culturally; it is theologically wrong, and inappropriate in the discussion of the true God.”

As we have already seen, Mr. Armstrong DID NOT say *Elohim* MEANT the *God Family*. He said it was “a noun or name, plural in form.” He said it was *like* the words *family, church, group, etc.*

Dr. Stavrinides says *Elohim* in Genesis 1:1 refers to a single deity. Why? Because, he says, “the VOICE OF SCHOLARSHIP has been united on this point, that *Elohim*, when speaking of the Creator, refers to a single deity” (emphasis mine throughout). I think it’s safe to say that the VOICE OF SCHOLARSHIP also believes in the trinity doctrine. So it’s probably not too hard for Dr. Stavrinides to get scholars to support his *theory*.

But let’s notice what the Bible says. “And God [*Elohim*] said, Let us make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness...” (Genesis 1:26). It is truly amazing that you could write on the subject of *Elohim* and cover Genesis 1:1 and at the same time NOT cover verse 26, which reveals and proves what Mr. Armstrong taught to be right!

How do we know there is more than one personage? God said, “LET US”—more than one. How can we be sure? John said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the WORD WAS WITH GOD...”—*more than one*. How can we be absolutely positive? Paul wrote, “... God, who created all things BY JESUS CHRIST”—more than one! It was God the Father who created all things THROUGH Jesus Christ—who at that time was the Word, or Spokesman. There shouldn’t be any confusion over the words *us* and *our* in Genesis 1. It means there was more than one being. In other words, two! *One* of the *two*, the Word, became flesh. The other *one*, God the Father, did not become flesh. They did not both, *as one*, somehow become flesh.

After Adam rebelled against God, notice what *Elohim* said: “And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as ONE OF US, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever” (Genesis 3:22). Here, God not only says “us,” He says “one of us”! ONE of the “us” was God the Father and the other ONE of the “us” was the Word. Very simple. Think about it. If there was just one deity, why would one deity say to Himself, “ONE OF US”?

What Mr. Armstrong proved on this subject of *Elohim* was that at the time of Genesis 1, there were two *God Personages*. He used scriptures like John 1:1-4 and Ephesians 3:9 to back this up. Even though the two Personages at the time of Genesis 1 were NOT YET a family, we could say they were *like a family* because at that time they were the only two beings in the *God Kingdom*. The two worked together in perfect harmony. And in order for God's government to be properly administered, one had to be in charge. The one who became God the Father fulfilled this role. The Word, however, was also God (John 1:1), but not yet the SON OF GOD. We might say He was *like* the Son at this point. But that doesn't mean the word *Elohim* means family. It doesn't. It's a noun, plural in form, which means *more than one*.

As you begin to understand what else is revealed in the Bible about the one who became Jesus Christ, and more specifically about the ultimate potential of man, then the teaching that *God is a Family* becomes quite clear.

FATHER AND SON

One of the most obvious proofs that God is a Family is repeated over and over in the New Testament. The word "son" is used 422 times in the New Testament alone. In at least half of those instances, the word is referring to Jesus Christ—the SON of God the Father. The word "father" is used 352 times in the New Testament and, in over 250 cases, it refers to God the Father. Father and Son—FAMILY!

Here is what Dr. Stavrinides wrote in the above-mentioned *Worldwide News*: "The names 'Father' and 'Son' do indicate a family relationship." So he admits that it does seem to indicate a family relationship. But, he says, "the error creeps into the concept when the relationship is understood in terms of *separate beings*." He then goes on to explain that, on the human level, a father and son are separate beings. He said, "the father-son relationship is meaningful only in light of these limitations." As for God the Father and Christ the Son, Dr. Stavrinides said, "it is a gross misunderstanding to think of God in such terms." In other words, the terms "father" and "son" only have meaning in a relationship with limitations, according to Dr. Stavrinides. He reasons that since God and

the Son do not have limitations, they are not a family. And because of this he writes, “this is another way of saying that God is not a family (a word that has meaning only in the context of limited human beings).” Instead of being a proof that God is a Family, Dr. Stavrinides twists it around to say it’s a proof that God is NOT a family!

Again, we must go back to John 1. The first few verses reveal that there were two Personages, as we have already pointed out. Verse 14 says, “the Word was *made* flesh.” A little further in the verse it says, “and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER.” In other words, when the Word was “MADE FLESH,” He BECAME the Son! At this point, He was the BEGOTTEN Son of God, not yet born. Notice Luke 1:35: “... that holy thing which shall be born of thee SHALL BE CALLED THE SON OF GOD.” When the Word *became* the Son, then obviously, God *became* the Father!

Here again is what Dr. Stavrinides wrote in the *Worldwide News*: “It is not true that the Son had a beginning.” That is directly opposite of what your Bible says. Jesus Christ *became* the Son. The Son *had a beginning*. Prior to being the Son, He was the Word, or Spokesman. In Hebrews 7:3 it refers to the One who became Jesus Christ as being “[w]ithout father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life ...” That is true. The Word lived in harmony with God for all eternity. Neither of them had a beginning. But read the rest of verse 3: “... but MADE LIKE UNTO THE SON OF GOD; abideth a priest continually.” The Son had a beginning at the precise time He was *made* a Son.

So in John 1:14 we see that the Word was MADE FLESH. At the same time He was made flesh, He became the *begotten* Son of God. Later, in Hebrews 7:3, we see that the Word was MADE THE SON OF GOD. When did this occur? Romans 1:4 elaborates: “And DECLARED TO BE THE SON OF GOD with power, according to the spirit of holiness, BY THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.” After His death, Jesus Christ was resurrected as the firstborn Son of God (Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15).

Here is another amazing statement by Dr. Stavrinides: “It is *not* true ... that the Father existed while the Son did not.” Again, keep in mind that these are all reasons why he thinks the Father-Son relationship does not mean family.

The Word was made flesh (John 1:14). In the flesh, Jesus was also God. He was God *converted to* flesh (1 Timothy 3:16). Hebrews 2:14 says, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he [Christ] also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy [annul] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

The Word, one of the two God Personages, was *made* flesh so that He could die for us. Since He was the one through whom God created all things (Ephesians 3:9), His life was worth more than all other human beings combined. Therefore, the death of that God-being in the flesh made it possible that our sins might be forgiven. He paid the penalty for sins that have been repented of (Romans 6:23).

When Jesus died, He was in the grave three days and three nights (Matthew 12:40). Here is what Mr. Armstrong wrote in the March 1983 *Good News*: “Jesus DIED! Jesus was DEAD! And for three days and three nights the second person of the Godhead—EMMANUEL—God with us—God *made* human flesh—was DEAD!”

Dr. Stavrinides said, “It is not true . . . that the Father existed while the Son did not.” The reason why he says this is because he *has* to in order for them to retain their belief that *God is a trinity*—three in *one*. He said, “The names ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ do indicate a family relationship . . . The *error* creeps into the concept when the relationship is understood IN TERMS OF SEPARATE BEINGS.” The WCG now believes that when Jesus died, it wasn’t really the death of a God Personage. Otherwise they would have to admit that God the Father died as well because, as *they* say, “God is one.”

Let’s continue quoting Mr. Armstrong: “God the Father did not cause Jesus Christ to get back into the body that had died. Some seem to believe that it was only the body that died—that Jesus Christ never died—that Christ was alive, and preached to ‘spirits in prison’ during the three days and nights His body was dead. What they believe is that a body Christ lived in died, but Christ Himself never died. Christ was God and, they argue, God could not die! They do not realize that Christ had given up His immortal life inherent in divine glory and been converted into human mortality for the purpose of death. If they are right, they are lost and doomed to eternal punish-

ment! If Christ did not die for their sins—if it was only a mortal body that died—then we have no Savior, and are lost.”

The point Mr. Armstrong made was that the same God who made the Word flesh also raised Jesus Christ from the dead! Acts 13:30 says, “But God raised him from the dead.” If you haven’t noticed by now, in order for the WCG to accept the doctrine of the trinity, it has to change MANY DOCTRINES! It has changed all of the most basic, sound beliefs Mr. Armstrong established.

All of this has everything to do with family; because when you really understand what Christ went through and how God raised Him from the dead, your mind can then be opened to the incredible potential God has *for us!*

MAN’S ULTIMATE POTENTIAL

God begins to reveal our incredible potential in Genesis 1:26: “And God said, Let us make man *in our image*, after *our likeness* . . .” In verse 21 we see that God created the birds after *their* kind. In verse 25 it says God made the beasts of the Earth after *their* kind, the cattle after *their* kind and every thing that creeps upon the Earth after *its* kind.

Then in verse 26 we find the amazing revelation that man was made after the God-kind! We were made in GOD’S LIKE-NESS. In other words, we look like God. And more importantly, we were made in HIS IMAGE, which means God’s ultimate purpose is to build His character in us.

Mr. Tkach wrote in the *Worldwide News* that God “does not have a body” (Aug. 3, 1993). How would you go about explaining that belief to someone? *You* were created in His *likeness* and yet God doesn’t have a body? *Do you* have a body?

We know God is spirit (John 4:24) and we cannot see Him yet. But when we are resurrected *as spirit* we will see God as He is and find that He very definitely has a body! For an actual description of the resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ, read Revelation 1:13-16. These verses plainly reveal that God has a body.

We were created after God’s likeness and image. Hebrews 2 gives us added insight into our ultimate potential. Verse 5 says, “For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to

come, whereof we speak.” God didn’t give that opportunity to angels. He gave it to *man*, as the following verses make plain: “But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower [it should read, “for a little *while* lower”] than the angels; thou CROWNEDST HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOUR, and didst SET HIM OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS: Thou hast put ALL THINGS in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. BUT NOW WE SEE NOT *YET* ALL THINGS PUT UNDER HIM” (verses 6-8).

Man’s ultimate potential is to inherit “all things”—the ENTIRE UNIVERSE! We will inherit all things when we are actually born as members of the God Family.

Here’s how we can know for certain that we will inherit all things when we are born into God’s Family. Notice verse 10 of Hebrews 2: “For it became him [Christ], for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing *many* SONS UNTO GLORY, to make the CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION perfect through sufferings.”

The Word became flesh in the form of Jesus Christ so that He might die to pay the penalty our sins have incurred upon us (verse 14). In doing so, Jesus became the “captain,” or *pioneer*, of our salvation. He was the *first*. “For whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the FIRSTBORN AMONG MANY BRETHREN” (Romans 8:29). Christ was the first, the captain, the pioneer, so that He might bring “many SONS unto glory”! Christ was first, followed by the firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:23).

Romans 8:14 says, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” Right now we are *begotten* children of God awaiting our change or resurrection. The same God who resurrected Jesus Christ will also resurrect us to immortal lives as spirit beings in the very God Family (1 Corinthians 15:52-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). God called Jesus Christ His Son and He calls *us* His sons—in other words, FAMILY! “Son” is not a term that God just carelessly throws around. In Hebrews 1:5 it says, “FOR UNTO WHICH OF THE ANGELS said he at any time, *Thou art my Son*, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to

me a Son?" The angels aren't "sons." But He calls Jesus a *Son*. And He calls the firstfruits *sons*. "And because YE ARE SONS, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6). We can go to God our Father just as Jesus Christ did. The Bible is replete with evidence of a family relationship. The word *trinity*, on the other hand, is nowhere mentioned in the Bible—NOT EVEN ONCE!

What will we be like as sons of God? We've already quoted Romans 8:29, which says we will "be conformed to the image of his Son." Yes, we were created in God's image and likeness. God is REPRODUCING HIMSELF. That's why we were created in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). Notice Philippians 3:21: "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." In God's image and likeness—FAMILY! Human beings have bodies. God has a body.

¹John 3:2 states: "Beloved, now are we the SONS OF GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we *shall be*: but we know that, when he shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; for we shall see him as he is." We are now begotten sons, but it does not yet appear what we *shall be*. But, as John wrote, when Christ returns, we shall be *like* Him—family!

THE FAMILY IN HEAVEN

We have already read Romans 8:29 where it says Jesus Christ was the "firstBORN among *many* BRETHREN." Christ was *first*. *Many* BRETHREN are to follow after Him. The Greek word for "brethren" is *adelphos*. That word is used frequently throughout the New Testament. *Thayer's Lexicon* says this about its usage in Romans 8:29: "Christians, as those who are destined to be exalted to the SAME heavenly [glory] ... which he [Christ] enjoys." Christ was born as a Son by a resurrection from the dead (Romans 1:4; Colossians 1:18). And we will be born as sons by that same process! GOD IS A FAMILY!

Paul had a lot to say about the God Family in the book of Ephesians. In chapter 2, verse 19, Paul writes, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but FELLOWCITIZENS with the saints, and of the HOUSEHOLD OF GOD." Those who

have been called by God and begotten of His Holy Spirit have become part of the *household of God*. Paul used the same Greek word for “household” in 1 Timothy 5:8, only there he used it on the physical level saying that we ought to provide for our own “house.” *Thayer’s* defines that usage as, “belonging to a house or FAMILY, domestic, intimate: belonging to one’s household, *related* by blood, kindred.” It’s the same word used in Ephesians! Only it’s speaking of God’s house, not any man’s. God’s household will be made up of His Family! That Family, as Paul went on to write, is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building [or Church] fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2:20-21).

Paul was a prisoner while writing this letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 3:1). But God was still revealing amazing truths to him. Notice verse 3: “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery . . .” God was revealing mysteries to Paul. He goes on to say how the Gentiles are FELLOWHEIRS along with the rest in the BODY (verse 6).

But heirs to what? Paul wrote in Romans 8:17, “And if CHILDREN, then heirs; HEIRS OF GOD, and JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also *glorified together*.” We are children and joint-heirs with Christ, due to inherit what He did, if we remain faithful. Paul concludes the verse by saying we will be “*glorified together*.” Concerning that word glorified, *Thayer’s Lexicon* says, “to be exalted to the SAME GLORY TO WHICH CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED.” How plain! God is a Family into which we have an opportunity to be born!

The trinity doctrine doesn’t include any of us because it *limits* God to three. Satan can’t be in the God Family. He doesn’t want man to be there either. So he inspired the trinity doctrine, which teaches a CLOSED Godhead.

Continuing in Ephesians 3, we see that Paul proceeds to *reveal* this mystery, “[w]hich in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men . . .” (verse 5). No, Paul wasn’t ashamed or embarrassed to admit that he had revealed truth that NO ONE ELSE before him knew about! Before Paul’s time, it was a mystery. “And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the *mystery*, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ” (verse 9).

In verse 11, Paul writes, “According to the ETERNAL PURPOSE which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” That eternal purpose, as we shall see from the next few verses, is God reproducing Himself through the human race. Christ was only the firstborn of MANY brethren.

Paul discusses some of the trials he had to endure as a result of proclaiming this message. He wrote, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (verse 14). He bowed to God the Father, who, according to Paul, was the actual Father of Jesus Christ. And it is this same God, Paul writes in verse 15, “Of whom the WHOLE FAMILY IN HEAVEN AND EARTH IS NAMED.” GOD IS A FAMILY! This verse is especially amazing when compared to what Mr. Tkach wrote in the above-mentioned *Worldwide News*: “The idea of MORE THAN ONE being in a family or hierarchy of gods is *condemned* throughout the Scriptures.” Mr. Tkach says “family” is condemned throughout the Scriptures. Paul reveals that the very name “family” comes from God!

WHAT DOES “FAMILY” MEAN?

Let us take a closer look at the Greek word for “family” just so there will not be *any confusion* or reason to doubt. The Greek word is *patria*. While the English word “family” is found only once in the New Testament (here in Ephesians), the Greek word *patria* is used *three times*. *Thayer’s* gives two definitions for *patria*: “1. lineage running back to the SAME PROGENITOR, ancestry 2. a race or tribe, i.e. a group of families, all those who in a given people LAY CLAIM TO A COMMON ORIGIN.”

Patria is translated as “lineage” in Luke 2:4: “And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:).” *Thayer’s* says this about the use of *patria* in Luke 2:4: “belonging not only to the same ‘house’ as David, but to the very ‘family’ of David, descended from David himself.” Joseph was *actually from the family, or lineage, of David*.

The other two uses of *patria* are one found in Acts 3:25 and the one we have already read in Ephesians 3:15. Notice Acts 3:25: “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the cove-

nant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the *kindreds* of the earth be blessed.” *Patria* is translated as “kindreds.” For this verse, *Thayer’s* says, “family in a wider sense . . . nation, people.”

So there are three uses in the New Testament. One refers to the family of David (Luke 2:4), which includes all of those who actually descended from David himself. One refers to the family of Abraham (Acts 3:25), which includes all of those who actually descended from Abraham himself. And one refers to the Family of God (Ephesians 3:15), which includes ALL OF THOSE WHO ACTUALLY DESCEND FROM GOD HIMSELF! A scholar will try to tell you that a physical family cannot be compared to a spiritual family because a physical family has limitations. Let there be no confusion. Ephesians 3:15 is speaking of an ACTUAL, LITERAL FAMILY OF GOD that is made up of those who are begotten and later born into that Family by a resurrection from the dead. Can we now begin to see how many “holes” there are in the trinity doctrine?

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

Another obvious and most important point on this subject has to do with the marriage of Jesus Christ to the firstfruits. The trinity doctrine does away with the marriage of Jesus Christ because if there is no family, then there can’t very well be a marriage between a *husband* and *wife*. Yet the Bible once again is very clear on the subject of the marriage of the Lamb, or Jesus Christ.

Revelation 19:7 says, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB is come, and his WIFE hath made herself ready.” The Lamb is Jesus Christ (John 1:29, 36). The Lamb is to be married to the Bride.

Paul makes it plain just who this *wife* is in Ephesians. “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as *Christ is the head of the CHURCH*: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the CHURCH is *subject unto Christ*, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing” (Ephesians 5:23-24).

The Church is to be made ready for this marriage. For what reason? “That he might present it to himself a GLORIOUS CHURCH, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but

that it should be holy and without blemish” (verse 27; see also 2 Corinthians 11:2).

Then for those who still might be a little confused about what Paul is saying, he proceeds to make it **EVEN MORE PLAIN**. “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning **CHRIST AND THE CHURCH**” (verses 31-32). This is yet another part of the mystery Paul began to explain back in chapter 3, which we covered earlier. Paul is focusing on the marriage of Christ to the Church.

Notice Romans 7:4: “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, **EVEN TO HIM WHO IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD . . .**”

How can some reason that Paul is talking about some sort of metaphorical marriage that won't really take place and doesn't really mean family? With that kind of reasoning, we might as well throw the Bible away! No, Paul's main point was concerned with the spiritual marriage of Christ and the Church. But he uses the example of physical marriages to **SHOW THAT MARRIAGE IS ACTUALLY A GOD-PLANE RELATIONSHIP** and pictures an event in the future which is far greater and much more fantastic than any physical marriage!

THE TRUTH BECOMES PLAIN

You have seen that the terms “Father” and “Son” are used hundreds of times in the New Testament alone. The terms “sons of God” and “children of God” are also found in the New Testament on numerous occasions. We have seen that the saints are called *sons* just as Christ is called the Son of God. We have seen that there is a husband and wife relationship between Jesus Christ and the Church, or the firstfruits. Father, Son, Husband, Bride, wife, children—these are all terms that denote **FAMILY!**

Chapter 2

The Holy Spirit Is the Power of God

GOD IS A FAMILY. THAT MUCH WE HAVE PROVEN. BUT WHERE does that leave the Holy Spirit? With its acceptance of the trinity, the teaching on the Holy Spirit has also been changed within the WCG—the very church God raised up through Mr. Armstrong.

Mr. Armstrong taught that the Holy Spirit was the *impersonal power, or force, of God*. Mr. Tkach wrote that the Holy Spirit is often *misunderstood* “as an impersonal force or power that God uses to do His work.” He said, “the Holy Spirit is *personal*.” It is, however, *distinct* from God the Father and Jesus Christ, he maintained. But it’s not *separate*. Trinitarians believe that God is one in three. That is, God, Christ and the Holy Spirit—all together as one. Yet there is no scriptural proof whatsoever that the Holy Spirit is an actual being. There are a few verses that people have misinterpreted. Those will be explained at the end of this chapter.

But first let’s begin by showing just what the Holy Spirit is. Following are SEVEN PROOFS that *the Holy Spirit IS the impersonal power, or force, of God*. Every Christian would do well to have this list handy when confronted by a “biblical teacher” who insists that the Holy Spirit is *personal*.

1) JESUS BEGOTTEN OF THE SPIRIT

We find very early in the New Testament revealed understanding concerning the Holy Spirit. Notice what an angel told Joseph concerning Mary in Matthew 1:20: "... for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost" (*Ghost* is a mistranslation. The Revised Standard Version correctly translates it "Spirit"). Right away we see that Jesus was begotten by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit must be personal then, some might argue.

Here is what the archangel Gabriel said to Mary in Luke 1:30-31: "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS." But Mary asked, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (verse 34). Notice this amazing and very clear answer to Mary: "And the angel answered and said unto her, The HOLY [SPIRIT] shall come upon thee, and the POWER OF THE HIGHEST shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (verse 35). The Holy Spirit, the very POWER OF THE LIVING GOD, would come upon Mary, meaning Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Spirit.

If Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit, *and the Holy Spirit was a third distinct being* in the Godhead, that would make the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ's Father! Yet, even worldly churches know that is not true. Christ prayed to *God His Father*. "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O MY FATHER..." (Matthew 26:39).

Jesus Christ was the Son of God the Father. The Father begot Jesus *through the power of the Holy Spirit*. Just as we are begotten physically by our father through the sperm cell, so the Holy Spirit impregnated the virgin Mary and Jesus Christ was begotten.

2) FIRSTFRUITS BEGOTTEN OF THE SPIRIT

Along this same line, truly converted Christians are *also begotten of the Holy Spirit*, spiritually (James 1:18). Our physical birth began with the female ovum being fertilized by the male sperm. Our spiritual birth began with our minds being

fertilized with a small portion of God's Holy Spirit upon repentance, baptism and the laying on of hands (Acts 2:38).

Notice Ephesians 1:13: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were *sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.*" We were sealed with that Holy Spirit after we believed and were baptized. Paul then writes, "Which [the Holy Spirit] is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (verse 14). The Holy Spirit is the *earnest*, or down payment, of our inheritance, which is to be born into the Family of God. It is by that Spirit that God will resurrect the firstfruits to immortal life at the return of Christ. The Holy Spirit is that *earnest*. It's NOT a different, distinct God within the Godhead.

Because we have been begotten by the same Father as Christ, we too are to call Him *our* Father. "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to MY Father: but go to my *brethren* [those of us in the Church], and say unto *them*, I ascend unto MY Father, and YOUR Father; and to MY God, and YOUR God" (John 20:17). Jesus Christ was begotten by God the Father through the Holy Spirit. The firstfruits, and later all mankind, will go through the same process.

In teaching us how to pray in Matthew 6:6, Jesus instructs us to go unto OUR Father. The firstfruits were begotten by the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit was on a distinct level all its own, like God the Father and Jesus Christ, that would make the Holy Spirit our Father, which again is quite false. Jesus knew His Father wasn't the Holy Spirit. The firstfruits also know their spiritual Father is not the Holy Spirit.

3) THE SPIRIT IN MAN IS NOT DISTINCT

One topic you don't hear much about anymore within the Worldwide Church of God, or in other trinitarian groups for that matter, is the subject of the spirit in man. And yet, it is very plainly taught in the Bible (Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 6:20). Mr. Armstrong expounded greatly on this subject. God revealed to him that the vast difference between human beings and animals is this spirit in man. The spirit in man, combined with our human brain, makes up what we call

the *mind* and gives us the power of intellect. Animals, on the other hand, have *instinct*. Without the human spirit, the human brain isn't any better than the brain of a dumb animal. Some animal brains are in fact much larger than the human brain.

Notice 1 Corinthians 2:11: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the SPIRIT OF MAN WHICH IS IN HIM? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the SPIRIT OF GOD." That means exactly what it says. The spirit of man, man's spirit, makes known THE THINGS OF MAN. Likewise, the Spirit of God, God's Spirit, makes known the things of God. How simple and plain is the Word of God!

Our human spirit within us IS NOT A DIFFERENT, DISTINCT BEING. It is the POWER that enables us to think, to make decisions, to enjoy fine music and culture, to comprehend difficult math equations—in other words, the things of man.

God's Spirit reveals the things of God—the plan of God, the potential for man, and yes, the very nature of God. We simply cannot understand the nature of God without His Spirit dwelling in us. Verse 14 makes that abundantly clear: "But the natural man RECEIVETH NOT the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are *spiritually discerned*." How are they spiritually discerned? "But God hath revealed them unto us BY HIS SPIRIT: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (verse 10). It was revealed *by* God's Spirit, not *by a being* called the Holy Spirit! If the Holy Spirit is a third distinct being in the trinitarian godhead, would not the spirit in man also be another distinct man within us?

4) PAUL DIDN'T RECOGNIZE THE TRINITY

"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy [Spirit], it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matthew 12:32). With these very clear instructions concerning the Holy Spirit, it seems odd that the Apostle Paul *failed to even mention* the Holy Spirit in *any* of the greetings in his letters. He always mentioned GOD the Father and JESUS CHRIST the Son—but never the Holy Spirit. Look and see for yourself.

In 1 Corinthians 1:3 it says, “Grace be unto you, and peace, from GOD OUR FATHER, and from the LORD JESUS CHRIST.” What about 2 Corinthians? “Grace be to you and peace from GOD OUR FATHER, and from the LORD JESUS CHRIST” (2 Corinthians 1:2). Paul also wrote the books of Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon and Hebrews. Check the greetings in all of those books. They are all similar to both of the verses quoted above.

Out of 14 books you would think Paul would at least mention the Holy Spirit *in one* of the greetings if, as Mr. Tkach wrote, “God is one” and “the Holy Spirit is God.” One could even consider such blatant negligence against the Holy Spirit to be *almost blasphemous* considering what we quoted earlier from Matthew 12.

Proof is evident *throughout* Paul’s writings. If you read and study *all* the books he wrote, you will find NO PROOF AT ALL of a trinity of any kind. Notice especially 1 Timothy 2:5: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the MAN CHRIST JESUS.” If the Holy Spirit is an actual being that lives in us, certainly it would be the “mediator” between us and God. But Paul says JESUS CHRIST is the mediator between us and God. Contrast that with what Mr. Tkach wrote in the August 17, 1993, *Worldwide News*: “The Holy Spirit is God in us, who leads us to the Father through the Son.” It’s hard to tell whether Mr. Tkach is saying the Holy Spirit or Jesus Christ is the “mediator” between us and God.

Notice other passages Paul wrote: “And if children, then heirs; HEIRS OF GOD, and JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together” (Romans 8:17). “Heirs” of God, “joint-heirs” with Christ—but what about the Holy Spirit? “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (1 Corinthians 11:3). Notice the beautiful governmental chain Paul explained: The woman is under the man; the man is under Christ; and Christ is under God! Where does the Holy Spirit—this supposed distinct third being in the Godhead—fit into all of this?

We know from Paul’s writings where Christ sits. He sits at the right hand of God on God’s throne (Colossians 3:1; compare with Revelation 3:21). But where does the Holy Spirit sit?

Out of all 14 books Paul wrote, here is the ONLY verse that lists God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit together: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy [Spirit], be with you all. Amen” (2 Corinthians 13:14). In that closing sentence of Paul’s letter, the Holy Spirit is only mentioned in the context of *communion*, or fellowship—not as a third, distinct being in the Godhead.

If anywhere we could find scriptural support for the trinity, you would think it would be found somewhere among the writings of the Apostle Paul—the *most prolific writer in all the New Testament*. Instead, we find numerous scriptures proving without a doubt that God is NOT a trinity. God is a FAMILY!

5) HOLY SPIRIT IS ACTUALLY AN “IT”

Some trinitarians will undoubtedly point to the fact that the Holy Spirit is referred to as “he” in John 14, 15 and 16. There is a very simple explanation for this. Like many other languages, the Greek language has what is called a *gender* for every noun. The *gender* can either be *masculine*, *feminine* or *neuter*.

Here is what the WCG wrote in a reprint article from 1983 concerning this subject: “In the Greek language, the gender of a word has nothing whatever to do with whether the thing designated is *really* masculine or feminine. If it did—what a contradiction in the Bible itself! For in the Old Testament the Hebrew word for spirit—*ruwach*—is usually feminine, and only rarely in a masculine form. Gender in language is really nothing more than a convenient grammatical tool. In the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John, the English pronoun ‘he’ is definitely used in connection with the word ‘Comforter’—but *not* for theological or spiritual reasons.”

The Greek word for “Comforter” in these chapters in John is *parakletos*, and it has a masculine gender. That is why the translators used the pronoun “he.” “It” would have been a more accurate translation (see Acts 2:2-3 where it is correctly translated “it”).

6) HEBREW AND GREEK ADD INSIGHT

A simple study of the Hebrew and Greek words for “spirit”

illustrates that the Holy Spirit is an *impersonal power* that emanates from God.

The Hebrew word for “spirit” in the Old Testament is *ruwach* and is defined in *Strong’s Concordance* as, “wind; by resemblance *breath*, i.e. a sensible (or even violent) exaltation ... *air, anger, blast, breath*.” Nothing in that definition suggests a distinct being with a personality. *Ruwach* is number 7307 in *Strong’s* and comes from 7306, which makes it even more plain: “to blow, i.e. breathe; only (lit.) to smell.”

Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon gives four definitions for the word *ruwach*: “1) spirit, breath, 2) breath, life, the vital principle, which shows itself in the breathing of the mouth and nostrils, 3) the rational mind or spirit, and 4) the Spirit of God.” *Ruwach* is used to refer to the Spirit of God. When it is *not* used in reference to God’s Spirit, it is used to mean breath, life, spirit in man, etc.—*all of which are powers, not distinct beings!*

Now what about the Greek word used in the New Testament? The word is *pneuma*. *Strong’s* (number 4151) defines it as “a current of air, i.e. *breath* (blast) or a *breeze*; by anal. or fig. a spirit.” *Thayer’s Lexicon* gives five definitions of *pneuma*: “1) a movement of air, (gentle) blast, 2) the spirit, i.e. the vital principle by which the body is animated, 3) a spirit, i.e. a simple essence, devoid of all or at least all grosser matter, and possessed of the power of knowing, desiring, deciding, and acting, 4) the Scriptures also ascribe [*pneuma*] to God, i.e. GOD’S POWER AND AGENCY—distinguishable in thought from God’s essence in itself considered, and 5) the disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of anyone; the efficient source of any POWER, affection, emotion, desire, etc.”

No definition supports the belief that the Holy Spirit is *distinct* from God and yet is on the *SAME LEVEL* with God. Instead, the definitions prove that when not referring to the Holy Spirit, it refers to another power or force like wind, breath or blast!

7) HOLY SPIRIT IS THE POWER OF GOD

After the previous six points, isn’t it now obvious that the Holy Spirit is the power of God? Even with all the proof presented in the previous six points, there is still one more verse that actually defines what the Holy Spirit is: “And the angel answered

and said unto her, The Holy [Spirit] shall come upon thee, and THE POWER OF THE HIGHEST shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35; see also Acts 1:8). We used this verse in point one, though in a different context. Here Luke calls the Holy Spirit “the power of the Highest.” Yes, the truth is plain and simple to understand, if we will just humbly submit to God and His law. The Holy Spirit is THE POWER OF GOD.

We know that God created all things. The Bible reveals that the Earth and its surroundings were created by that great power of God (Jeremiah 27:5; 51:15), which we have already proven to be the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ had that same power without measure (John 3:34). It was that same Spirit that begat Jesus Christ, but also the same Spirit that *raised Him from the dead* (Romans 8:11).

Furthermore, every great work of God is done through this powerful force. It was God’s power that made man (Job 33:4). We are baptized into the truth by God’s power (Matthew 3:11; John 1:33). That Spirit, God’s power, actually dwells in us after baptism (Acts 2:38; 4:8, 31; Ezekiel 36:27). It says that God will give His Spirit to those who ask (Luke 11:13). God reveals His secrets to us THROUGH the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:26) and brings things to our remembrance through the power of His Spirit (John 14:26).

None of these scriptural references support the Holy Spirit as being distinct from God the Father and therefore having its *own personality*. It is a powerful force of God. David said, “Whither shall I go from *thy spirit?* ...” (Psalm 139:7). It is God’s Spirit that makes Him omnipresent. God Himself isn’t everywhere at all times *like some unidentifiable blob*. But He is everywhere through His great power—the Holy Spirit.

The WCG has printed many articles supposedly proving the “one in three, three in one” teaching to be true, which therefore puts the Holy Spirit on the same level as God and Christ as a *distinct, personal* being. Yet it has not disproved any of these seven points.

POSSIBLE SCRIPTURES OF CONFUSION

The most obvious false attempt to prove that the trinity is biblical is found in 1John 5:7-8. It says, “For there are three

that bear record in heaven, *the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.*” Sounds like a trinity, right? Except for the fact that all the *italicized* words were spuriously added to the Latin translation of the Bible in the fourth century by a monk copyist.

The italicized words do not appear in *any* of the original Greek manuscripts. Even many commentaries point this out. Correctly translated, it should read, “For there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” The Revised Standard Version has it correctly rendered.

Think about this: Why would this supposed support for the trinity be *added* hundreds of years *after* the Bible was finished, if the trinity was already plainly provable in the Bible? The answer is that the trinity is nowhere to be found in the Bible, and the desperate attempt to force this insertion into inspired Scripture is proof of that!

Another scripture many trinitarians use to “prove” the trinity is Matthew 28:19: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy [Spirit].” The fact that the first two mentioned, God the Father and Jesus Christ, are two separate Beings does not make the Holy Spirit a separate being also.

If we understood the first two points covered in this chapter, this verse becomes quite plain. We are *reconciled* to God by the death of Jesus Christ (Romans 5:10). God the Father brings us to and grants us repentance (Romans 2:4). After repentance, we are to be baptized (Acts 2:38). It is after baptism that God gives us His Spirit. It is the Spirit that actually begets us as sons of God (Romans 8:9, 14, 16-17). As the begetting agent that comes from God, the Holy Spirit then is the earnest, or down payment, of our salvation (Ephesians 1:14; Romans 8:16). That is why we are baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The irony in this verse is that it actually further proves the fact that God is a GROWING FAMILY of beings; because, upon baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit, we become begotten sons of God!

YOU CAN PROVE THE TRUTH

The one doctrine that has been most vigorously ridiculed by critics of Herbert Armstrong is the God Family doctrine. Unfortunately, even Mr. Armstrong's *own church* has abandoned this clear biblical teaching in favor of the ever popular trinity—a term that simply cannot be found in the Bible, let alone proven.

The way God taught this truth through Mr. Armstrong was SIMPLE. We can prove it (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Down through the centuries, men have devised all kinds of explanations for who and what God is. But we are to believe men only as they follow Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). Jesus Christ said, “[T]hy word is truth” (John 17:17). Don’t be deceived into going along with what the majority says. Whenever scriptural controversy arises, we ought to believe God’s Word rather than men (Acts 5:29).

Christ said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE” (John 8:32). If it’s truth, you can be sure you will be able to understand it. God’s truth is not delivered obscurely while surrounded by a cloud of mystery like the trinity doctrine. Once God’s truth is revealed, you will be able to prove it. God is a Family. Mr. Armstrong not only *said* God is a Family, he *proved* it. And so can you.

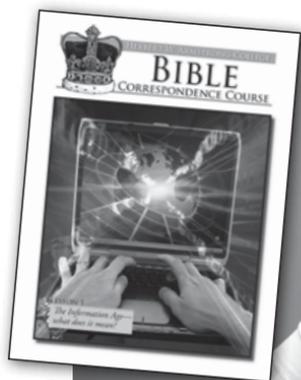
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