

False Prophets

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

(1 John 4:1)

False Prophets

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*NOTE: All SCRIPTURE references from the King James Bible unless otherwise noted. Some quotes are paraphrased and emphasis added.

Hodgepodge

The Bible is linear and not just a hodgepodge of information. In general, there is a chronological flow of events from Genesis to Revelation. Realizing this *order of things* is critical to understanding the Scriptures. In the New Testament the gospels come first, the book of Acts is a result of the things laid out in the gospels, and the epistles are a direct result of the book of Acts.

The Gospels: Biographies of Jesus' Life

The birth of Jesus; His travels; His teaching; the choosing and training of His apostles; and His death, burial, and resurrection are presented in historic detail. While physically positioned among the volumes of the New Testament, the gospels cover events that occurred under the Old Testament. Jesus was “made under the law;” He was circumcised the eighth day; He kept the feasts, and He taught in the synagogues. When He healed the leper, He sent him to the priests to offer the sacrifice according to

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Moses (Matthew 8:2-4). Jesus lived and died under the law.

In the gospels Jesus introduces the coming kingdom, setting the stage for the advent of the New Testament Church. The fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies is recorded and verified by inspired witnesses. The first three books, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, deal mostly with His humanity; John deals largely with His deity. Even all the *red letters* were penned by these men.

Acts: The Church in the Bible

The Holy Ghost (the promise of the Father) is given on the Day of Pentecost, the kingdom comes, and the New Testament Church is born. This book is properly called “The Acts of the Apostles,” because the apostles “Act” on what Jesus taught them in the gospels. There is a word-for-word record of the preaching of the apostles; people are saved, and the gospel is spread. There are actual accounts of New Testament water baptism and actual accounts of people receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The Epistles: The Church Has Mail

Romans through Revelation are letters written to churches and individuals saved by the preaching of the apostles and others in the book of Acts. The letters are not instructions telling the lost how to get saved, but are further instructions to people already saved. Nobody was baptized in the epistles, nobody received the Holy Ghost, and nobody gained entrance into the church. The epistles do

not alter, reinvent, or supersede the church established in the book of Acts.

Warning

Read Matthew 7:13-27 very carefully. Jesus tells of a group of people who have set out on a journey to heaven—a group of people who think they have dedicated their lives to Jesus Christ. Sadly, they won't make it. He warns that the road to hell is broad and many people, even many who believe they are sincere Christians, are traveling that road. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life and very few will even find it.

In this particular passage, Jesus doesn't give us a long list of sins that will send us down the road to hell with the mass of lost humanity. But, to those who desire to live godly, He warns: *"Beware of false prophets."*

Mention false prophets, and people conjure up visions of aboriginal voodoo doctors or unscrupulous TV evangelists. Is this correct according to Scripture? Not necessarily. While a voodoo practitioner is a prophet of sorts, he doesn't claim to be a prophet of Jesus Christ. Further, it is possible for an unscrupulous preacher to teach

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the truth and a sincere preacher of impeccable character to be in gross error.

The Bible tells us plainly that we can recognize the false prophets by their fruits, by what they teach. They won't appear to be false prophets, though; they will appear to be ministers of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:10-15). They will say they love the Lord, they love the Word, and they love you. They will persuade you to call on the Lord for salvation, but they will instruct you to call on the Lord just a little differently than the apostles taught. They will preach right out of the Bible, but they will change the gospel in some way. So much of what they preach will be true, however, that the unwary would scarcely notice the changes.

Most preachers today teach that just about everyone who even claims to believe in the Lord shall be saved, but Jesus clearly warns us that not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord" shall enter in. He tells us many people will plead with Him on Judgment Day, saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Then Jesus tells these people to get away from Him and calls them workers of iniquity, saying, "I never knew you." (Matthew 7:23)

Now, these appear to be some pretty serious Christians that Jesus tosses into hell. If accepting Christ, believing, and faith were the only requirements for salvation, these folks should have been saved. It takes a lot of faith to cast

out a devil, and they wouldn't do it in Jesus' name if they didn't believe in Him. They accepted Him; they called Him Lord. Voodoo practitioners won't be casting out devils in Jesus' name. Not Hindus. Not New Agers. Common drunks and thieves won't be working for Jesus. But these people are obviously some type of Christian, preaching, casting out devils, perhaps praying for the sick and visiting the afflicted. Yet, Jesus calls them workers of iniquity. Why? Why would Jesus put them in hell? Because of false prophets. Because they thought they were saved when they were not. Something other than believing, other than considerable faith, other than casting out devils, and other than prophesying in Jesus' name was required, and these people were lacking whatever it was.

When Moses built the Tabernacle in the wilderness, it had to be according to God's plan. When Noah built the ark, it had to be according to God's plan. And when we come to God for salvation, it must be God's way.

There are false prophets in the world today, many false prophets, but they don't look like false prophets. They look like priests and pastors, ministers of righteousness.

A counterfeit twenty-dollar bill colored hot pink wouldn't fool anyone. To pass as real, it would have to look real. The same holds true for false prophets. They're not going to look like evil, slobbering beasts; they're going to look like sincere and caring ministers of the gospel.

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As Christians, then, we don't need to consider the credibility of a voodoo priest. To weed out a false prophet, we'll have to search among those who appear to be "real."

Since the road to hell is packed with Christians who don't know they are lost, people who have been deceived by false prophets, we need to qualify all preachers to make sure that we aren't deceived. Is it remotely possible that the vast majority of today's modern preachers are false prophets? What about some of the big radio and TV evangelists? Are they preaching the whole truth according to God's instructions? What about the Baptists or the Methodists? What about the Catholics? What about your own church or your own pastor? What about you?

Remember the poor souls in the seventh chapter of Matthew. They were sincere, enthusiastic people who did many wonderful works in the name of Jesus. They thought they were saved and on their way to heaven, but they were mistaken. Because their church taught them a "salvation" not consistent with the Word of God, they were doomed to hell.

It is hard to believe that so many people who devote so much of their lives to godly endeavors could actually miss out on heaven. It is hard to believe that the gospel preached by many pastors on Sunday morning could send you straight to hell. But just because a lot of people believe something, that doesn't make it right. Don't forget, everyone once believed the earth was flat. And, not long ago, almost everyone in the world thought the sun revolved

around the earth. All the scientists and philosophers of the day believed it. Galileo was one of the few who had the courage to stand against the tide of popular opinion, and he proved the whole world to be dead wrong. They didn't thank Galileo for showing them the truth, though. He was mocked, ridiculed, and persecuted because his ideas contradicted what they had been taught all their lives. Many went to their graves believing in something completely false.

Jesus teaches us in Matthew 7 that the deceived Christians on the broad road far outnumber those on the narrow. Because of false prophets, very few will even find the strait gate and the narrow way. Some people naively refer to this as "the straight and narrow," but it's two separate things. The gate is the entrance to the narrow way. The gate is not a straight gate, but a strait (s-t-r-a-i-t) gate. A strait gate is a gate of restricted access. And the way is narrow with no room for deviation.

When you look out over the world today, you will see millions of Catholics, millions of Baptists, millions of Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Pentecostals, and others. Who of these multiplied millions will be the very few to find the strait gate and the narrow way? Who of these are on the broad road that leads to hell? The priests and pastors of all these churches essentially appear to be the same. They all appear to be leading people to God, but some of them, many of them, are false prophets, and their followers will hear Jesus say, "*Depart from me . . . I never knew you.*"

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Some false prophets truly are sincere and caring individuals who have just been misguided or misinformed. Their sincerity makes it all the more difficult to believe they could be false teachers. Being an evil person doesn't make a false prophet false; having the wrong gospel does. A really nice preacher with false doctrine can send you to hell as surely as an evil one.

Does it seem totally impossible that a sincere minister could be in such error as to be a false prophet? Consider a little grade school experiment. A teacher gave a small written message to the first pupil in the classroom. That student kept the written message, but whispered it to the next person. And so the message passed from person to person around the room. The last student recited to the class what he had been told, and then the first student read the written message aloud for comparison. After being repeated only about 25 times, the message had changed beyond recognition. All the students believed they had heard the very same message and believed they had passed it on exactly as they had heard it, but the message was completely changed from the original.

Now, think of the thousands of preachers who have passed around the gospel. One minister teaches aspiring young preachers, and they in turn teach others as they were taught. Preacher after preacher, for centuries.

That's why God gave us the written Word, the original message He gave to the apostles. We can read what the

apostles actually preached in the church in the Bible and compare that to the preaching of any minister today.

Just because a preacher quotes from the Bible, it doesn't mean he's preaching the truth. He can take a verse out of context to try to prove a point that God would not approve. And he may do so with all sincerity, just teaching what he was taught—preacher to student, preacher to student, a little change here, a little change there.

Still, most people just take what's dished out to them, without question, trusting that the preacher is a true man of God. It is a matter of life and death that we study the original message. With God, there's only saved and lost, heaven and hell, a true preacher or a false prophet.

This study will focus on many passages and principles that will make it possible for you to unmask the false prophet. Even though he will have all the appearances of a true minister of the gospel, you need not be deceived. You can penetrate the religion of the false prophet and discover the error that hides within.

The Bible does not contradict itself. It is the Word of God. Although men penned the Scriptures, they wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Men wrote the Bible much like a secretary takes dictation. The secretary sits at the keyboard, but her words are not her own. Some of the old prophets wrote of things that were not to come to pass for hundreds or even thousands of years. They had no idea

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what they were writing about. Only in the process of time would the meaning of their writing be revealed.

The New Testament Church began on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts, and it will continue unchanged until Jesus comes back for it. That gospel the apostles preached two thousand years ago is still the only one that will save us today. To see if we're truly saved, we must rightly divide the Scriptures to find out how the apostles taught repentant believers to be converted.

The Bible warns of adding to or taking from the Scriptures, but to ignore a verse or to take one out of context amounts to the same thing. If any passage contradicts what we believe, then we must reconcile our beliefs to the Bible. We cannot use one portion of scripture to support a certain doctrine while ignoring others that contradict that doctrine.

Example: The Jehovah's Witnesses take Ecclesiastes 9:5, "The dead know not anything," to mean that a dead person is totally unconscious, oblivious to anything. A person in such a state would have no feelings, no perceptions of any kind and, therefore, hell could not be a literal place of fiery torment. No flames, no wailing, and no gnashing of teeth.

In order to embrace this doctrine, the Witnesses have to reinvent many, many passages that clearly describe a specific place of torment God has prepared for the devil and his followers. For instance, when the rich man died in

Luke 16:23: "... in hell he lift up his eyes." The rich man was tormented in the flames, he could see and recognize Lazarus, and he was praying for his brothers back home. He was there and he was conscious. Revelation 21:8 tells us that murderers, whoremongers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the "Lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." These two verses alone completely contradict the "dead are unconscious" theory; but, every time a Jehovah's Witness reads these verses, he has to say, "Uh oh, this can't mean what it actually says, because the dead know not anything."

By the same token, if it isn't right for the Witnesses, it's wrong for everyone else, too. We can't go around believing in hell and torment if Ecclesiastes 9:5 conclusively states that the dead are unconscious.

Sometimes we have to really study the Scriptures to resolve an apparent contradiction. We have to look at all sides of an issue, without personal bias, to see what the message of the Bible really is. A closer look at "The dead know not anything," in the context of the whole ninth chapter of Ecclesiastes, reveals that the dead know not anything about the world of the living. It does not say they are unconscious. Now everything harmonizes. The dead "Know not anything" among the living, but they can go to an actual hell as the other scriptures declare. NO CONTRADICTION.

Admittedly, the Jehovah's Witness example is quite extreme—one passage against many. Nevertheless, if your

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church teaches a doctrine that is contrary to only one verse, you have a problem.

Fig trees bear figs and peach trees bring forth peaches, but the fruit of a false prophet is false doctrine and, ultimately, false Christians. When a church or preacher preaches the truth, there will be no contradiction of Scripture. God is the author of the Bible and God is not the author of confusion.

This short book cannot and, indeed, should not convince anyone of who a false prophet is or whether anyone has been truly saved or deceived. The Bible is the only true yardstick and cannot be improved upon. Let the Bible convince you.

History shows us repeatedly that the opinions (and gospels) of men change all the time, but the Word of God is forever settled in heaven. Don't take the teaching of any preacher at face value, but weigh it against the Scriptures. Make sure his preaching doesn't contradict the Bible. Make sure that he's not pulling the wool over your eyes. And Ph.D.'s don't come from God; they come from schools where men are taught popular, contemporary religion, where men are taught to be good speakers.

Apostle Paul warns us in Romans 16:17-18 that preachers who preach a gospel different from his do not serve the Lord and to stay away from them: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have

learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”

With good words and fair speeches they deceive. The sermon of a false prophet will contain a lot of truth, a lot of biblical truth, but not enough. It will sound sincere, religious, and “Christian,” but it cannot save you. Rat poison contains about 99% good wholesome food, but that other 1% outweighs all other nutritional considerations .

It is not the intention of this book to condemn anyone. However, I have no qualms about condemning false doctrine. We would be poor witnesses for Jesus if we saw someone on the wrong road, the broad road that leads to hell, and didn’t at least try to warn them.

A friend of mine asked his father this question—“If you could be shown proof that your church has drifted away from the truth of the Bible and is teaching false doctrine, would you change?” The man replied, “I will never leave the church that I belong to. I would go to hell with this church.” Now what kind of logic is that? The whole concept of Christianity is to be reconciled to God and avoid going to hell.

Did this man really want to go to hell? Not likely. He probably just took the negative insinuations about his church as a personal offense. To admit that he had been deceived might make him feel stupid or something. So,

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rather than proving his faith with the Bible, he was mistakenly trying to defend his honor with stubbornness.

What could be sadder than for a person to spend a lifetime devoted to a church, thinking the whole time that he was on his way to heaven, just to wake up in eternity to find out that his church was wrong about what it really takes to be saved?

The people in the seventh chapter of Matthew thought they were saved. They had cast out devils in Jesus' name, prophesied in His name, and done many wonderful works in His name, but Jesus threw them in hell anyway (Matthew 7:23). They went to hell because they had been deceived by a preacher who did not preach the gospel according to the Bible, a false prophet. All their church attendance, all their praying, all their worship, and all their sincerity meant nothing when Jesus said, "Get away from me, I never knew you." How many times might they have left church on Sunday morning saying how wonderful it was to be a Christian? How often did they pray for a sick friend and rejoice to see that friend miraculously healed by the hand of God? How often might they have knelt by their bed and prayed for God to save their friends and family? They had no idea that they were on their way to hell.

Perhaps one thing could be sadder. The deceived Christians of Matthew 7 probably did get many of their friends and family converted to their same church, converted to their very same destiny.

The Test

Slight variations notwithstanding, most modern preachers around the globe, whether they are independent or denominational, preach essentially the same gospel today. If you were to go to any of their churches and ask them to tell you what you must do to be saved, this is about what they would say:

“All you have to do to be saved is repent, trust Christ as your own personal Savior and accept him into your heart by faith.”

To seal the deal, you would be told to recite the “sinner’s prayer,” which goes something like this: “God, I know that I am a sinner. I know that I cannot save myself. I am trusting in Jesus Christ as my Savior. I believe that His death and resurrection provided for my forgiveness. I trust in Jesus and Jesus alone as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank you Lord for forgiving me and saving me. Amen.”

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They would tell you that at this point, if you truly believed what you prayed, if you truly trusted Christ as your Savior, even if you didn't say the prayer aloud, your sins are automatically forgiven and you automatically receive the Holy Spirit. You are born again and assured of a place in heaven. Some would even say that once you accomplish this thought process, you can never be lost. They will tell you that you ought to be baptized in obedience to the Lord's command, but baptism is not a part of salvation; therefore, such obedience is not really essential. Salvation comes first, simply upon believing, then baptism would follow. You need not speak in other tongues when you receive the Holy Spirit. In fact, there would probably be no outward sign that you had received it. You would have to accept it by faith only, just as you are saved by faith only.

This is the gospel of most preachers today. If you are affiliated with any of the contemporary denominations, this is more than likely what your church teaches. It is often referred to as "The Roman Road."

Some churches do encourage speaking in tongues, but do not attach any significance to salvation. One is saved first and then may receive the gift of tongues at some later time. Likewise, baptism is strongly urged in many churches, but even then, baptism would occur as a result of salvation.

Of course, there may be extenuating circumstances. Someone might get saved and then die in an accident

before their scheduled baptism or get converted on their deathbed and wouldn't have time to be baptized or anything else. Surely in these circumstances God would not condemn anyone for not being baptized, and speaking in tongues wouldn't even enter into the picture.

Since this gospel of salvation is representative of so many of today's modern preachers, we have *volunteered* them to stand before us that we may examine their gospel and compare it to the gospel preached in the church in the Bible. Will the Word of the Lord confirm that these preachers are true men of God, or will they be exposed as false prophets? Either way, the Bible is true and must be the deciding factor.

Now, don't get in a lather and stop right here just because we have dared to question other preachers' gospels. The apostles warned us to test all preachers so that we aren't deceived. John warns the church in 1 John 4:1—"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Modern preachers do not back up from what they teach, we are not going to judge their personal character, and they couldn't be false prophets anyway, unless we learn somewhere down the line that their preaching contradicts the Bible in some fashion.

How can we "try the spirits?" The only way to put a preacher on trial to see if he has the spirit of truth or the

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spirit of error is to compare his teaching to the Bible. God tells us in Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:19 not to add anything to the Scriptures or to take anything from the Scriptures. A false prophet will not build on the rock. He will add something or take something away from the Word of God, not by openly blotting out a verse or physically writing a new one, but by artful interpretations, by appealing to the original language in an attempt to cancel out the Bible's plain English wording, or by using one passage to try to defeat another.

This study will bring to light many things taught in the Bible regarding water baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Godhead, and New Testament salvation. Read carefully, because some things clearly spelled out in the Bible are simply not taught or are openly denied in most churches today.

Baptism

In John 3:5, Jesus said, “EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

If a person cannot enter into the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and of the Spirit, it is of the utmost importance that we know and understand exactly what this new birth really is. Jesus doesn't mince words here; if we're not born of water and of the Spirit, we're not getting in. Let's start with “born of water.”

Some people claim that “born of water” refers to the water in the mother's womb associated with natural childbirth. First of all, not one verse of Scripture supports that theory. John the Baptist was the greatest prophet born of a woman, not born of water. When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, not made of water. Nowhere in Scripture is any reference made to natural childbirth as any birth of water. Secondly, if “born of water” referred to natural childbirth, then natural childbirth would become a condition of salvation

that must be met by every adult person. But let's go ahead and rewrite the verse to see how it works—"Except a man be born of natural childbirth...he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This renders the statement an absurdity.

In John 3:3, Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Like many today, Nicodemus didn't understand and, in verse 4, he tried to make the new birth a natural, physical birth. In verse 5 Jesus dealt with Nicodemus' misunderstanding, saying, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." There are two prepositional phrases used as adverbs and both modify the verb "be born." "Except a man be born (How?) of water and of the Spirit." One new birth—two elements.

It is commonly taught that the "flesh" of verse 6 explains the "water" of verse 5: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." However, only verse 5 defines the elements of the new birth. In verse 6, Jesus simply states that flesh begets flesh and Spirit begets spirit. Moreover, for their concept to be true, they have to either knowingly or subconsciously rewrite the verse to read, "That which is born of water is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

To get a true understanding of what it means to be born of water in John 3:5, we would have to find the record of someone actually being born into the kingdom and see if water plays a part and whether it is regular water or amniotic fluid.

Some say the birth of water is water baptism. Well, we could consider that. What is baptism for? Is there a specific biblical way to perform baptism? Let's see what Jesus and the apostles taught about baptism, beginning with the Great Commission given in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus told His apostles to “teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Mark 16:15-16 is another account of that same Commission. Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Luke 24:47 records a different aspect of the Great Commission. Jesus actually spells out what He wants the apostles to teach and preach to the whole world. He told them that “Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name (Jesus) among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Let's loosely state the whole Commission Jesus gave to the apostles. He said to “Preach the gospel of repentance and remission of sins in His name to the whole world, beginning at Jerusalem. Those who believe that gospel and are baptized in the name shall be saved; those who reject that gospel shall be damned. But tarry in Jerusalem until you receive the promise before beginning to preach.”

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Jesus did not speak those words directly to you and me; He gave them to His apostles to give to us. How did the apostles respond to His instructions? How did they preach repentance and remission of sins in Jesus' name? How did they baptize people in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? We must turn to the book of Acts to follow through and find out how they obeyed the "Great Commission" Jesus gave them in Matthew 28:19, but we must remember that Mark and Luke are a part of that Commission. Matthew doesn't stand alone, the Bible cannot contradict itself, and the apostles were chosen to show us the way.

In the second chapter of Acts we find that, after the Holy Ghost fell on the Day of Pentecost, Peter stood with the other apostles and preached the first sermon of the New Testament Church. Peter had the keys of the kingdom (the church), the keys to unlock the door of salvation. Jesus is the door, but He gave the keys to Peter, and He told Peter back in Matthew 16 that He would stand behind what Peter preached. Near the end of Peter's sermon (Acts 2:37), the people believed Peter's words and were convicted in their hearts. The believers asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" That's a logical response to the message of Christ. And what were Peter's straightforward instructions?

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38)

This deserves careful consideration. Peter told the believers to REPENT, (And what else?) AND BE BAPTIZED (Who?) EVERY ONE OF YOU (How?) IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST (What for?) To identify with other believers? As an outward sign of an inward activity? To join a local church? No, FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS. And what was promised to these believers? The same Holy Ghost that those had received in the upper room.

Did Peter obey the command Jesus gave in Matthew 28:19? Yes, he did. If you read Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16, and Luke 24:47 and then turn over and read the first two chapters of Acts, you will see a perfect flow of events. You will also see how Peter wrapped up Matthew, Mark, and Luke in Acts 2:38. He did not just repeat the command; he obeyed it. But he did not tell the people to be baptized in the titles Father, Son and Holy Ghost. He told them to be baptized in THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST.

Did Peter know what he was doing? Absolutely. In the first chapter of Acts, we are told that after His resurrection, Jesus spent 40 days with the apostles, teaching them everything they needed to know about the kingdom of God. Plus, in Luke 24, Jesus opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. While Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, the church is founded on the apostles and prophets.

Some say Acts is a book of transition, but the apostles started and finished with the same message. The four

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gospel accounts might show somewhat of a transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, but the book of Acts is clear and consistent.

In case there's any doubt that Acts 2:38 was Peter's very plan of salvation, consider Acts 2:40. Peter said, "Save yourselves..." (a call for action on the part of the believers). In Acts 2:41, "... they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Added how? Obedience to Peter's call to be baptized. The colon after "baptized" is simple, yet ample proof: that which follows the colon explains that which precedes it. Verse 42 says they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. The only apostles' doctrine recorded up to this point is spelled out from Acts 2:14 to Acts 2:41. Finally, verse 47 specifically says people were added to the church. The book of Acts is the only book in the Bible with the record of people actually gaining admittance into the church, being born again into the kingdom. Not the book of John. Not Romans. Only Acts.

Is there a contradiction between Matthew 28:19 and Acts 2:38? Absolutely not. Acts 2:38 fulfills Matthew 28:19: "Teach....baptizing...in the name." If there were a contradiction, then we would have to pick and choose one portion of Scripture over another. That would place us as the final authority. Who would dare to say, "I'll take Matthew 28:19 over Acts 2:38," or vice versa. To say, "I'll take Jesus' words over Peter's words," is tantamount to saying the apostles got it wrong and cannot be trusted.

Either Jesus told the apostles to baptize in the titles and they rebelled, or Jesus told them to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and they accurately understood that name to be Jesus.

If there appears to be a contradiction in the Bible, we must study until we find any other related passages that will make everything agree or harmonize. The Bible does not contradict itself. It is the Word of God, and we'd better not try to change it, but rather, find out exactly what it says and conform our opinions to that.

Did the apostles think a person could be saved without being baptized? NO! Listen to Peter as he emphasizes to the church what baptism is all about. 1 Peter 3:20-21 tells about Noah's ark: "20Few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21THE LIKE FIGURE WHEREUNTO EVEN BAPTISM DOTHT ALSO NOW SAVE US." The salvation of Noah was a direct example of how baptism saves us today. Vain wrangling about whether Noah got his feet wet is moot; the Bible says Noah was "saved by water," and "baptism doth also now save us."

Remember what Jesus said in Mark 16:16—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." There are two *he*'s. One will be saved and one will be lost. The *he* that believeth not shall be damned. Okay, which *he* will be saved? The *he* that BELIEVETH AND IS BAPTIZED.

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The Ark was God's plan of salvation for Noah. Noah passed through the water and escaped the judgment of God. The other people represented sin. The same water that Noah passed through washed away the other people. And only eight persons were saved. Everyone else received God's judgment. All the people of every single religion were destroyed, no matter how sincere. Those who lived in remote places and never heard of the ark were destroyed. Even if there were experienced sea captains with great ships, they too would have perished. There was only one plan of salvation: "And few there be that find it." We are baptized for the remission of sins.

There are many such examples in the Scriptures. The children of Israel passed through the Red Sea on their way to Canaan. When the Egyptians tried to follow, they were all washed away. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:1-6 that this was done as an example for the New Testament Church. The children of Israel were baptized unto Moses. How? In the cloud (Spirit) and in the Sea (water). Believers pass through the water, but sin cannot follow. The same water that saves believers washes away sin.

But doesn't the blood of Jesus take away our sins? Sure it does, but the question is how is the blood appropriated? We can't dunk ourselves in a vat of Jesus' blood. Where in the gospel of the apostles was there a way to have sins taken away by His blood? Water baptism in the name of Jesus. That's where the blood is applied.

In the Tabernacle of Moses, the priest had to wash his hands in the laver of water after the altar of sacrifice but before entering into the presence of the Spirit of the LORD. This was a “type” of baptism. And it was essential, too. Had the priest failed to wash in the water, he would have died. If we are not washed in the waters of baptism, we also will die.

God took a rib from Adam’s side to make his wife, but to obtain the bride of Christ, when Jesus, the second Adam, was pierced on the cross, there came out of his side “blood and water.” In 1 John 5:8, we are told, “There are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.” No wonder you can’t get into the kingdom of God without being born of water. Baptism is where the sacrificial blood of Jesus is mingled with water to wash away sins. And with sins washed away, removed from God’s record book, we are “born again” to start a new life with a clean slate.

When the Samaritans “Believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women” (Acts 8:12). From this we know that the crux of the gospel of Christ that Philip preached was water baptism. When they believed—they were baptized. Believed, what? What he preached. Preached, what? Obviously, Jesus-name water baptism. How did Philip baptize the people? In the name of the Lord Jesus, just like Peter did (Acts 8:16). Neither the titles nor the “believe-only” doctrine were a part of Philip’s gospel.

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How was the apostle Paul converted? Was baptism a necessary part of his salvation? Since over half of the New Testament came to us by Paul, we need to take a close look at his conversion experience.

While on the road to Damascus, he was knocked down and blinded by a bright light. A voice spoke out of the light saying, “Saul, Saul, (Paul’s original name) why persecutest thou me?” Paul only knew one God. Jehovah, whom he knew as the Father, was his God. He asked (in the Hebrew tongue), “Who art thou, Lord?” (Who art thou, Jehovah?). And the Lord said, “I am Jesus” (Acts 9:5).

Paul became a believer right then. He accepted Christ as his own personal Savior. Was he automatically born again? Nope. He asked Jesus what he had to do, but Jesus sent him to wait for a preacher who would answer his question. Jesus revealed Himself to Paul, but He had given Peter the keys of the kingdom, and Paul would have to hear and obey that same gospel just like the Samaritans and everyone else. There’s only one way to be saved. Three days after Paul’s personal encounter with Jesus, Ananias came and prayed for Paul, for two things—that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

Now, Paul is a believer. He has received the Holy Ghost and he has been healed. But look what happens next. Ananias said to Paul, “Why tarriest thou? **ARISE, AND BE BAPTIZED, AND WASH AWAY THY SINS, CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD**” (Acts 22:16). What was the name of the Lord that had just been

revealed to Paul? Jesus. What name did Peter use to obtain remission of sins? Jesus. Did Paul get his sins washed away by calling on the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? No, he was told to call on the name, invoke the NAME.

Can you have your sins forgiven other than by water baptism? The apostle Paul couldn't. After he believed and repented, after he received divine healing, after he accepted Christ, and after he received the Holy Ghost, he still had to be baptized in the name of Jesus to have his sins washed away. This is significant. Had he died on the way to the river to be baptized, he would have died in his sins. Had he made it to the river but been baptized in the titles, he would still have died in his sins. The Trinitarian formula simply serves no purpose in New Testament water baptism.

Did Paul go, then, and preach that same message? Look at the 19th chapter of Acts. Paul met twelve disciples at Ephesus. He identified them as believers. Paul knew they were believers, but he did not know if they were born again, so he asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed. They answered that they had not. Paul didn't say, like some preachers today, "Oh, you got the Holy Ghost when you first believed and accepted Jesus as your personal Savior. You were born again the moment you prayed the sinner's prayer." No! He knew that just believing was not the same thing as obeying the gospel, not the same thing as being born OF WATER and OF THE SPIRIT.

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The first thing Paul did was check out their water baptism, “Unto what then were ye baptized?” (not by whom, but by what method). They answered, “Unto John’s baptism.” Paul said that John truly did baptize unto repentance, but that the people should believe on Jesus Christ, and then he re-baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus. The only difference in Paul’s baptism and their previous baptism was the name called over them as they went down in the water. Paul recognized only one method of baptism. Did Paul repeat the command of Matthew 28:19? Did he say the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Absolutely not; he baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus like Peter, Philip, and Ananias did. Then they received the promise and spoke in tongues just like the first converts did on the Day of Pentecost approximately twenty years earlier.

Did Paul preach it differently later on? Did he proclaim a different gospel to other Gentiles...to you and me? Did he later come up with a salvation not requiring water baptism? Of course not. Read what Paul wrote in Galatians 1:8: “But though we (the apostles), or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you (in the book of Acts), let him be accursed.” While you’re at it, you should read verse 9, too. If a mighty angel, or a preacher, or even Paul himself comes to you, saying that you can get into the kingdom, the New Testament Church, without being baptized in Jesus’ name, Paul said to let him be accursed.

So much for Paul changing his gospel with the Pauline epistles. So much for the Roman Road philosophy.

The covenant of circumcision God made with Abraham in the Old Testament was an everlasting covenant. That means it can never be broken. We are adopted into the family of Abraham. We must also be circumcised. But how? In the second chapter of Colossians, Paul tells us that when we are buried with Christ in baptism, we are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands (circumcision of the heart).

In the Old Testament, those not of the circumcision were cut off from God, not partakers of the covenant. Today Jesus tells us, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” A person not baptized in the name of Jesus is no better off than an uncircumcised Philistine and not a partaker of the covenant. That person is lost.

Many people go around saying they’re in the body of Christ. Well, how does one get into that body? Just by believing? According to Romans 6:3, we are baptized into Christ. Some say Paul is talking about Spirit baptism, but verse 4 says, “we are buried with him by baptism into death.” Verse 5 goes on, “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.” No, this is water baptism. And notice the “if.” That means it’s conditional. It goes without saying that if you’re NOT planted in the likeness of His death (water baptized), then you won’t be in the likeness of His resurrection.

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Similarly, Galatians 3:27 states: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” In verse 28, Paul says...“Ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” How does he say we become one in Christ Jesus? By being baptized into Christ. Finally, in verse 29, Paul says that’s how we become Abraham’s seed and heirs of the promise. Baptism. This ties in perfectly with Colossians 2:11-12: ^{“11}In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: ¹²Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” Read these two passages from the Word of God and then see if you can reconcile them to the baptism-is-not-essential-to-salvation philosophy.

Does your preacher twist Mark 16:16 around to read, “He that believeth only is automatically saved, and baptism has nothing to do with salvation?” If he is telling you that you can be saved without being baptized, he is openly contradicting the words of Jesus. Jesus tells us, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

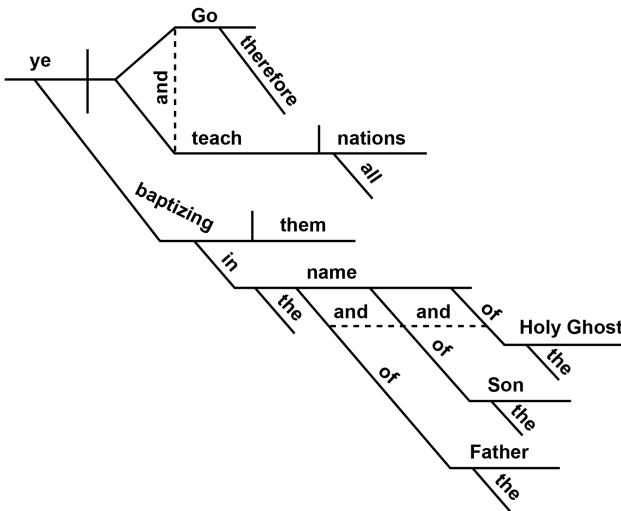
Does your church baptize in the titles the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost instead of in THE NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost called for in Matthew 28:19? Matthew 28:19 certainly does not tell us to be baptized in the titles. Millions of people around the world are relying on one verse, Matthew 28:19, to validate the triune formula of baptism but, as we shall see in a moment, the verse simply does not support it.

So, we're going to analyze Matthew 28:19, but, before we do that (and even though many may know this verse by heart), let's go ahead and have a look at it again.

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 Ghost:

Below is a grammatical diagram of Matthew 28:19. It may help to "see" how the different parts of the sentence interact with each other. For those who are interested, the diagram follows the standards of the Reed-Kellog diagramming system.



And now for an explanation of the part of the diagram we're particularly interested in: ***in the name***. *In the name*

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is an *adverbial* prepositional phrase that modifies the verb *baptizing*. Baptizing, how? **In the name.** That's it—no other word or phrase in this sentence tells HOW to baptize.

That settled, let's move on to the three prepositional phrases: (1) *of the Father*, (2) *of the Son*, and (3) *of the Holy Ghost*. These are *adjectival* phrases, and they do **not** modify *baptizing*; they modify the singular noun *name*. Adjectives answer the question which one, what kind, or how many? In this case, these three phrases are answering the question, *Which name?*

The Scriptures cannot contradict themselves. Matthew, Mark, and Luke must agree with each other and with the book of Acts—REPENT, AND BE BAPTIZED EVERY ONE OF YOU IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS...

Can you be saved and baptized in the titles of the Trinity? No, my friend. Not only did Peter say in Acts 2:38 that water baptism was for the remission of sins, but in Acts 10:43, Peter said that believers receive remission of sins THROUGH THE NAME OF JESUS, not the titles. After Jesus ascended, the apostles never mentioned the titles in regard to water baptism, and Paul had to invoke the name of Jesus in water baptism to wash away his sins.

Nobody in the New Testament was ever baptized with the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost called over them. Without exception, the converts were always baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Search your Bible. Not one person was ever baptized with the Trinitarian formula. Trinitarian baptism is a post-scriptural, man-made doctrine. Even history records that nobody was baptized in the titles until a couple hundred years after Christ. At the Council of Nicaea, after the Church of Rome joined forces with Constantine, they stopped preaching one God and started preaching three gods wrapped up in transparent tape. That's when they established the whole Trinitarian philosophy.

There is a Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but these are three offices or manifestations of the same person, the same God. I am a father, son, and husband, but I am not three persons. Father is not my name and son is not my name. These are just titles, offices, or terms of relationship.

God is a Spirit and God is holy—Holy Spirit. God is ONE. He was the Father in creation, He took on humanity (the Son) to reconcile the world unto HIMSELF, and He lives in our hearts as the Holy Ghost. Three offices—ONE GOD. The name Jesus, brought down by the angels, literally means Jehovah Savior or Jehovah is become salvation.

The Son was just the Lamb, the physical body employed by God to manifest Himself and redeem mankind. God the Father was manifest, not God the Son. Jesus was never called God the Son in the Bible. He was both man and God. The Son (humanity) was a man. The Spirit (the Divinity dwelling inside the Son) was Jehovah

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Savior, the Eternal God. Two natures, not two persons. “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE LORD!”

Jesus (the man), speaking to the Father (omnipresent Spirit), said, “I have manifested thy name.” (John 17:6). What name did He manifest? Jesus. Jesus said He would send the Holy Ghost in His own name. He also said, “I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.” Then, there is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Who is in you when you receive the Holy Ghost? Who is the Spirit of the departed Christ? Jesus. Peter actually did baptize the people in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and that name is Jesus.

We cannot be “saved” apart from having our sins forgiven. Not one apostle ever preached that just believing or confessing Jesus as your personal Savior would wash away your sins. They all preached that baptism in the name of Jesus washes away sins. Nothing else. Walking to the front of the church won’t take away sins. Reciting the sinners prayer won’t. They taught only one way and explained how the examples of the Old Testament led up to New Testament, Jesus-name water baptism.

The New Testament Church is the kingdom of God on the earth in the last days. This is not to be confused with the millennial kingdom that will be set up in Israel after the Lord’s physical return. To be “in Christ” is to be in the body of Christ, which is to be in the Church, which is synonymous with being in the kingdom.

Finally, from the birth of the church on the Day of Pentecost throughout the historical record of the church in the Bible, when people were “born again” into the kingdom of God, neither the titles nor amniotic fluid were ever mentioned. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter never mentioned natural childbirth or the titles. Neither did Philip, Ananias, or Paul ever mention them, but they all preached Jesus-name water baptism for the remission of sins.

The Holy Spirit

“EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT, HE CANNOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

To be born again of the Spirit means to receive, or to be filled with, or to be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

What happens when a person receives the gift of the Holy Ghost? Is there a way to tell whether or not someone has received it?

Let's start at the beginning. The New Testament Church began on the Day of Pentecost a few days after Jesus ascended (Acts 2). On that day, the first 120 people received the Holy Ghost and they all spoke in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Other than what? Other than their own. Speaking in tongues wasn't a work initiated by the disciples. The Holy Spirit that filled them caused them to speak in tongues. Some onlookers who observed the event thought the disciples were drunk on

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new wine and wanted to know what all the tongue-talking meant.

Peter stood with the rest of the apostles and preached the first sermon ever preached in the New Testament Church (Acts 2:14-36). He said the people were not drunk on wine, but “THIS IS THAT” (Acts 2:16) prophesied by the prophet Joel where God said, “I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.” (not just this 120). **THIS** speaking in tongues that you are witnessing is **THAT**, the outpouring of the Spirit. The disciples were waiting for the “PROMISE OF THE FATHER,” the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:4-8 and Luke 24:49), and Peter said, “THIS IS THAT.” In Acts 2:33 Peter went on to say, “Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the PROMISE of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

Peter told the crowd that what they were witnessing, what they were seeing and hearing, was 120 people receiving the promise of the Father, receiving the Holy Ghost. What were they seeing and hearing? People speaking in tongues (And staggering? Isaiah 28:11 & 29:9). Twice in his first sermon, in Acts 2:16 and Acts 2:33, Peter unmistakably declared that speaking in tongues reflected the fact that the disciples had received the Holy Ghost.

At the end of his sermon, the people were pricked in their hearts and asked Peter and the other apostles what they had to do (Acts 2:37). Peter told them in Acts 2:38 to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the

remission of sins and they too could receive the same gift of the Holy Ghost that they were witnessing. Peter said it was the promise of the Father, and in verse 39 he said, “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” “What you are seeing and hearing is the promise, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and this promise is for everyone that God calls.” The Lord is still calling people today and the promise has not changed.

In verse 40 of the 2nd chapter of Acts, Peter exhorted the people to save themselves. In verse 41 they that gladly received his word were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And finally, in verse 42, the Bible says they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine. On the Day of Pentecost, over 3000 people were added to the church by obeying the gospel that Peter preached. They were baptized in Jesus’ name and received the promise that they were seeing and hearing.

Next, Philip, who wasn’t an apostle but an evangelist, went down to Samaria and preached Christ to them (Acts 8). They believed, they accepted Christ, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, they had devils cast out, they were healed, and they had great joy, but they DID NOT have the Holy Ghost. They did not receive it automatically at repentance, not at acceptance, and not at baptism. It wasn’t until the apostles, Peter and John, came down from Jerusalem and prayed for them that they

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received the Holy Ghost. Receiving the Spirit was a separate experience from believing and miracles.

While the Bible doesn't specifically say that the Samaritans spoke in tongues, there are several very important things to consider. (1) Philip was most likely converted directly under Peter's preaching, and Peter taught that tongues is the evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost. (2) The response of the people indicated that the plan of salvation Philip preached was the same that Peter preached in Acts 2:38. (3) Receiving the Holy Spirit definitely did not occur at the moment the people accepted Christ. (4) There was some evidence or lack of evidence that let the apostles know whether the Samaritans had received the Holy Ghost. It wasn't a long-term thing that you could see played out in their lives, but an instant, recognizable sign. (5) Simon the sorcerer didn't offer money when he saw devils cast out or healing, but when he saw the people receive the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the apostles' hands, he was impressed enough to offer money.

Several years after Pentecost, Peter preached to the house of Cornelius (Acts 10). While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Ghost fell on all of them and they all spoke in tongues. That's exactly how Peter knew that these Gentiles had received the gift of the Holy Ghost: "FOR THEY HEARD THEM SPEAK WITH TONGUES" (Acts 10:46). Again, here in Acts 10, tongues is expressly shown to be the evidence, the sign, that the people had received

the Holy Ghost. We aren't told what the missing sign was in Samaria, but we are told here of a very definite sign.

So, we have the first outpouring in Acts 2 where they all spoke in tongues and Peter said, "This is that." Next came the Samaritans, who did not automatically receive the Holy Ghost. Now, we have the house of Cornelius receiving the Holy Ghost where speaking in tongues is definitely shown to be the evidence, the only evidence. From this we can only conclude that the missing sign in Samaria was tongues. That's how the apostles knew that the Samaritans had not received the Holy Ghost; they did not hear them speak with tongues.

Acts 19 is another blow to the Holy-Ghost-is-received-automatically-with-no-physical-sign theory. The Ephesians were already believers when Paul met them. They had already repented, accepted Christ, and been baptized. They were disciples. Still, Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed. That's a peculiar question if people are supposed to receive the Holy Ghost automatically when they accept Christ as their personal Savior, when they believe. When they answered that they had not received it, the first thing Paul wanted to know was how they were baptized. He re-baptized them in the name of Jesus, but they didn't receive the Holy Ghost automatically then either. It wasn't until Paul laid hands on them that they received it, and when they received the Holy Ghost, they all spoke in tongues just like in the beginning on the Day of Pentecost.

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While there are only three accounts of people actually speaking in tongues in the book of Acts, the context clearly demonstrates that tongues is the evidence (the sign) of receiving the Holy Ghost. In the book of Luke, Jesus told the thief that he would be with Him in paradise. The same account in Matthew makes no mention of paradise. Did the thief go to paradise or not? He went, of course. Matthew didn't undo Luke's account; it just focused on a different aspect. Likewise, if tongues is clearly and unmistakably shown to be the evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost in the very beginning, it isn't voided later simply because it isn't mentioned. Like baptism, it can't be essential in one place and not essential in another. When the 3000 obeyed Peter's gospel on the Day of Pentecost, they would have received the same Holy Ghost experience that Peter did, and so would the Samaritans, because what they were seeing and hearing was promised to everyone that God calls.

The three instances of people speaking in tongues in the book of Acts wasn't some random sampling either, such as, "Oh, by the way, eight or ten of these one hundred twenty people spoke in tongues when they received the Holy Ghost." No, it was a fundamental truth established in the beginning. "This is that" outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:16). Jesus received the "PROMISE" and has shed forth the Holy Ghost that you "SEE AND HEAR" (Acts 2:33). It was the missing sign that revealed that the Samaritans had not received the Holy Ghost (Acts 8). Peter knew Cornelius had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, "For

they heard them speak with tongues” (Acts 10). And under Paul’s ministry, “The Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.” (Acts 19).

Let’s examine another lesson of the book of Acts, keeping in mind what Jesus said in John 3:3-5: We must be born again of water and of the Spirit or we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. In Acts 2, the message is first taught: Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. There are two key elements after repentance: water baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost.

Acts 8 gives an example of people who believed and were baptized, but who did not receive the Holy Ghost right away. They had to tarry until the apostles came and prayed for them, but they had to experience both things. Acts 10 is an account of people who believed and received the Holy Ghost immediately, but who were not baptized. So afterward, Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. The same two elements. Acts 19 shows baptized believers who had accepted Christ and were baptized, but who were not baptized with the name of Jesus called over them and who had not received the Holy Ghost. Paul had to bring these people through the birth of water and the Spirit. He re-baptized them in the name of Jesus, and then they received the Holy Ghost speaking in tongues just as in the beginning. The people in each example obeyed the same gospel in the same manner and received the same promise. The difference was just in the order of

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occurrence. Repentance and baptism were commanded. Receipt of the Holy Ghost was promised. All three were essential.

Jesus said in John 3:8 that the wind blows where it wants to. You can't see the wind come and you can't see the wind go, but you WILL HEAR THE SOUND THEREOF, and so is EVERY ONE BORN OF THE SPIRIT. In other words, you can't see the Spirit come and you can't see the Spirit go, but you will hear the sound every time someone is born of the Spirit. What was the sound heard on the Day of Pentecost? Tongues. What was the sound heard at the house of Cornelius and at Ephesus? Tongues. What was not heard when Philip preached in Samaria?

Mark 16:17 states, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues." There is no cutoff date here; the sign of tongues will follow the believers throughout the Church Age. True, Mark 16:18 says the signs of taking up serpents and drinking deadly liquids would also follow the believers, but there is no evidence that links those signs or casting out devils with receiving the Holy Ghost. Speaking in tongues, on the other hand, is definitely shown to be the sign of receiving the Holy Ghost and follows throughout the book of Acts and the epistles. Paul tells the church in 1 Corinthians 14:22 that tongues are for edifying the saints and are for a SIGN to unbelievers.

Are you one of the creatures who heard the gospel and believed? Was there a sign of tongues when you received the Holy Ghost? Was there a sound? If you didn't speak in tongues, maybe the gospel you heard was a little different from that preached by the apostles.

"And so is EVERY ONE born of the Spirit."

The passages we have just reviewed show that tongues is the evidence that someone has received the gift of the Holy Ghost and not the evidence that someone has received the gift of tongues. We need to understand the difference. This difference will be covered in a later chapter.

The record of people being converted by the New Testament Gospel is in Acts 2, Acts 8, Acts 10, and so on. The general, introductory teaching of Jesus in John 3:16 is not how the apostles preached salvation to the lost. Jesus did not tell Nicodemus to take "believe only" into all the world, beginning at John 3:16. And neither is the discussion about confession in the 10th chapter of the letter to the church at Rome an example of New Testament salvation.

When people were converted by the gospel of the apostles, they repented, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when they received the Holy Ghost, **THEY ALL SPOKE IN TONGUES.**

The Trinity

The Trinity doctrine represents that God exists in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It further teaches that these three persons are co-existent, co-equal, and co-eternal. The Bible, however, does not even imply that there are any “persons” in any Godhead, nor does the word Trinity ever appear. From beginning to end, the Bible repeatedly proclaims that GOD IS ONE. And the one God of the Old Testament is the very same God of the New Testament.

The Father is God, the Holy Ghost is God, and Jesus is God. How can these three be one, and not be three separate persons?

First of all, consider some attributes peculiar to God alone. We know that “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24). Whatever else we believe about God must agree with God is a Spirit. “In the beginning God (God is a Spirit) created the heaven and the earth.” God is a Spirit and He is holy. He is, therefore, a Holy Spirit. We know that the Lord is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent and He is invisible.

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He is all-knowing and all-powerful. He fills the whole universe, He doesn't take up space, and He has no mass. He is everywhere at once and we can't see Him. Yet, for all of this, the Bible states that God created man in His OWN IMAGE. If God is an invisible Spirit, how did He create man in His own image? Maybe the answer to this riddle will give us a better understanding of God.

When God created man in His own image, Adam was the man He created. Exactly how, then, was Adam created in the image of God? Romans 5:14 states that Adam was patterned after Jesus. Even though Adam came 4000 years before Jesus, the Bible says Adam was "The figure of him that was to come."

Well then, if Adam was created in the image of God and Adam was patterned after Jesus, is Jesus the image of God? Colossians 1:15 tells us that Jesus is indeed the IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD (God is a Spirit). Colossians 2:9 also tells us that all the fullness of the Godhead (Deity) dwells in Christ, bodily (flesh). And 2 Corinthians 5:19 says: "To wit, that God WAS IN Christ reconciling the world unto HIMSELF." Now, what does this verse really tell us? God was in Christ. God (The invisible Spirit) was in Christ (the flesh) reconciling the world unto Himself. The Father was in the Son, Divinity was in humanity. In John 14:10, Jesus said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: **but the Father that dwelleth in me**, he doeth the works." Hebrews

1:1-3 says it even plainer: Jesus is the EXPRESS IMAGE of God's person.

One of the first things the Jews had to learn is recorded in Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear O Israel: the LORD our God is ONE LORD." Jesus confirmed this in Mark 12:28-30 as the greatest commandment, and the scribes agreed in verses 32 and 33, saying, "None other but He."

"The LORD" is translated from the Hebrew proper name, Jehovah. Let's review a couple of Bible passages which show us that Jehovah was the only God of the Old Testament. Isaiah 43:3: "For I am the LORD (Jehovah) thy God, (Elohim)(God is a Spirit) the HOLY ONE of Israel, thy savior." Isaiah 44:24: "Thus saith the LORD, (Jehovah) thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD (Jehovah) that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens ALONE; that spreadeth abroad the earth by MYSELF."

So, did God the Father have any help in the creation? Was Jesus there physically? Was He a separate divine person with the Father? Was He also omniscient and omnipresent? Was He an invisible Spirit, the Son of an invisible Spirit? Was He the eternal Son as the Trinity doctrine declares? What eternal mother would have given birth to this Eternal Son? The Bible never refers to Jesus as the Eternal Son, but the Begotten Son. Eternal Son and Begotten Son are opposite terms. For that matter, Eternal and Son are mutually exclusive terms. Eternal means without beginning and without end. A son, on the other

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hand, has a beginning by definition as he could not exist until he was fathered by another. And to say that the Son is eternally begotten is simply ridiculous. Jehovah said that He made all things by Himself, alone.

And now, let's get back to Jesus being the image and very person of God. We are told in Matthew 1:23: "And shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us." When was the one God of the Old Testament with us? And in what form? Now we see God (Jehovah, Divinity, Spirit, Invisible, Father) with us in the form of a man (lamb slain from the foundation of the world, made of a woman, made under the law).

The Father (invisible Spirit) robed Himself in flesh (body, Son). One God, One Person, One Body. I have a body, soul, and spirit, but I am only one person. 1 Timothy 2:5 states that there is one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus. We see here that mediator refers to the humanity of Jesus. The distinction is not between persons, but between divinity and humanity, between the Eternal Spirit and the flesh. Jesus the man, was not God at all, but Jesus the Lord, was Jehovah Savior. Galatians 3:20 states: "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but GOD IS ONE." And 1 Timothy 3:16 tells us that GOD was manifest in the flesh. God (One, Spirit, Deity, Father) was manifest in the flesh (man, humanity, Son). Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 8:6, "But to us there is but ONE GOD, the Father." So, who was manifest in the flesh? The Father.

God the Son wasn't manifest in the flesh; there is no such thing as "God the Son." That title is contrary to the Scriptures. God is a Spirit, the Son of God was a MAN. When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, "Made of a woman." He sent His Son into the world from the virgin Mary. He did not send Him from the Son's throne in heaven. The "Son of God" did not exist before He was born in Bethlehem, except in the mind or plan of God.

Jesus actually did claim to be the Father. He said in John 10:30, "I and my Father are one." He told Philip in John 14:9, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In John 12:44, Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me." Let that soak in for a moment. Jesus said, "If you believe on Me, you're not believing on Me (humanity), but on Him that sent Me (Divinity)." And finally, in John 8:19, some religious leaders asked Jesus to show them the Father. They asked Him point-blank, "Where is thy Father?" Jesus answered the question in John 8:24, "If ye believe not that I AM HE, ye shall die in your sins" He, who? He, the Father. "If you don't believe that I am the Father, you will die in your sins."

Die in your sins? Why? If you don't believe that Jesus is the Father—the Spirit manifest in the flesh—you might believe that He is just the second person of some kind of a triune god-group. If you believe in three personal gods, you'd try to cover all your bases by being baptized in the three titles instead of in Jesus' name. The idea is that if one

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is baptized only in the name of Jesus, the Father God and Spirit God may be offended. But, there is no remission of sins in the titles. Without remission you would, therefore, die in your sins.

If the apostles didn't give us the Trinity, then who did? The same folks who gave us bowing to statues, counting repetitious prayers with beads, calling priests "Father," and praying to a dead woman. All these things are opposed to the Bible. These things are gross sin. And to worship a triune conglomeration invented by men is idolatry. It robs God of His glory. The God of the Bible is the only true God. The three-in-one god invented in the early centuries is an idol because it is not the God revealed in the Bible. We might as well bow down to a golden calf as to worship a Trinity.

Jehovah, the God and Savior of the Old Testament, came to earth in a human body, and while He has used other names to reveal Himself in the past, in Jesus Christ He has made known His greatest name (Philippians 2:9). He was Jehovah-Shalom, our peace, and Jehovah-Jireh, our provider, but Jesus is "Jehovah Savior" or "Jehovah is become salvation." Jesus encompasses all that God ever was or is. Jesus is our peace, our provider, our healer, our everything.

Even though God was in Christ when He walked the earth, it did not diminish His omnipresent Spirit that fills all things. It was also no great feat for the omnipresent Spirit to speak from heaven while Jesus, the man, was

being baptized and the dove descended (which was just a sign for John the Baptist and not the identification of a person).

I guess the LORD, Jehovah, (prophesying about the Son that would be born 700 years in the future) sums it up pretty well Himself in Isaiah 52:6, “Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore they shall know in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold IT IS I.” Isaiah 26:19 is even clearer, “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.” You can see this fulfilled in Matthew 27:52-53, “⁵²And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, ⁵³and came out of the graves after his resurrection.” Jehovah, the One God of the Old Testament, referring to Jesus Christ said, “MY BODY.”

When the rich man of Luke 16 died, “in hell he lift up his eyes.” Who went to hell? The rich man. Bear in mind, though, that he didn’t take his body with him. The body was just the physical image of the rich man’s person. The rich man was in hell while his body went to the grave and the spirit that animated his body returned to God.

We are spirit beings living in bodies of flesh. Jesus was a spirit being living in a body of flesh. But, who was the person living in Jesus’ body? “God was in Christ;” “The Father that dwelleth in me,” and “God was manifest in the flesh.” We are not eternal, so before our bodies were born, we didn’t exist, but before God made His body, He was still the great “I AM.”

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Adam was the figure of Him that was to come. Adam was created in the image of God. The image of God is Jesus. Adam's body looked like God's body. "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." (I Corinthians 15:47).

The apostle Paul knew that Jesus was Jehovah manifest in the flesh and not just Jehovah Jr. He wrote to the Ephesians, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:4-6). Who is in you when you receive the Holy Spirit? The "Spirit" of Christ, the Father. God is a holy, invisible Spirit. Paul also wrote to Titus, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13). The Son of God was a man, but Jesus was more than a Son and more than a man; He was Emmanuel, God with us. Jesus is our great God and Savior.

The confusion occurs because some people have tried to retrofit the Scriptures to prove that the one true God exists as three members of a race of gods. John 1:1 is used by Trinitarians to try to prove that Jesus was physically with God in the beginning. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "Word" here is translated from the Greek word "Logos," which means thought or Divine Expression. "Word" does not translate SON or CHRIST. So when people wrongly substitute "Son" for "Word," the verse

reads: In the beginning was the Son, and the Son was WITH God, and the Son was God. They want this to mean that Jesus was a separate god person beside or WITH God the Father. This is to say that the Son was God “**also.**” “The Son was God, but not the Father God.” This is exactly how the Jehovah’s Witnesses got the idea that Jesus was “a god.” They say He is “a god,” but not “the God.”

The following are just a few passages that must be harmonized with John 1:1...

1. Deut. 6:4: The Lord our God is ONE LORD.
2. John 4:24: GOD IS A SPIRIT.
3. Isaiah 43:10-11: Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and BESIDE ME there is NO SAVIOR.
4. Isaiah 43:15: I am the Lord...the HOLY ONE.
5. Isaiah 44:6: I am the first, and I am the last; and BESIDE ME there is no God.
6. Isaiah 44:8: Is there a God BESIDE ME? Yea, there is NO GOD; I know not any.
7. Isaiah 44:24: I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens ALONE; that spreadeth abroad the earth BY MYSELF.

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8. Deut. 32:39: I, even I, am he, and there is no God
“WITH” me.

We'll go ahead and rewrite John 1:1, though, substituting “Son” for “Word,” but this time, we'll also substitute “Father” for “God” the way the Trinitarians want it: “In the beginning was the Son, and the Son was with the Father, and the Son was the Father.” Rewriting scripture is tricky business. The Word was God, Himself, not God also. The Word was God—God was the Word.

And now, verse 3: “All things were made by him.” Who made all things? The one God of the Old Testament...“In the beginning God...”

Verse 14: “And the WORD was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” Who was the WORD? God Himself. He is a Spirit, invisible, everywhere at once...The everlasting Father.

Verse 14 continued: “And we beheld his glory, the glory AS OF the only begotten of the Father.” Whose glory did we behold? God's glory. How did we behold God's glory? AS OF a Son. We did not behold God's glory as of the supreme creator of the universe, but AS OF the only begotten of the Father. This is very clearly confirmed in Hebrews 1:1-3: “God...hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person...” Whose glory? God's glory. Jesus is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of God's person.

Isaiah 9:6 declares that the Son would be none other than the everlasting Father. This is the only place in the King James Bible that the term Everlasting Father is used and it is attributed to Jesus. As surely as Jesus is the Prince of Peace, He is also the everlasting Father. God is a Spirit, the Son of God was a man—Jesus is both.

When Stephen was being stoned, he looked up into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:55). Did he see the Father sitting on His throne in all His glory and Jesus standing on His right hand? No, he couldn't. The Father is an invisible Spirit that fills the universe. "No man hath seen God at any time." He saw the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Standing on God's right hand is figurative and merely shows Jesus in a position of authority. 2 Chronicles 16:9 says: "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth." This doesn't literally mean that God has a big pair of eyes running all over the place. Likewise, an omnipresent, invisible Spirit would not have a literal right hand. The only person Stephen could possibly have seen was Jesus.

Then, notice how Stephen called on God: "Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." He saw the brightness of God's glory. He saw Jesus Christ. Then he called on God, but he called God by the name that is above every name, he called Him Jesus.

After the resurrection, the flesh and Spirit were permanently united in the glorified body of Jesus. Jesus

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said in Mat. 28:18: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” Jesus is now the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:10). All the fullness of the Godhead now dwells in Christ, bodily (The Bible never says that Christ is in the Godhead, but that the Godhead dwells in the body of Christ). Godhead simply means divinity; it isn’t some kind of a thing with persons in it. Indeed, Romans 1:20 speaks of “His Godhead,” “His Divinity” (possessive). And doesn’t this go hand-in-hand with 2 Corinthians 5:19, “God was in Christ”? The only God any of us will ever see is Jesus Christ. To Him shall every knee bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

What Jehovah was in the Old Testament, Jesus is in the New. Jehovah was the I AM, Jesus is the I AM. Jehovah was the King of Kings, Jesus is the King of Kings. Jehovah was the Redeemer, Jesus is the Redeemer. Jehovah created all things, Jesus created all things. And we could go on, and on, and on. Jesus is the express image of God’s person. When we call on God today, we call Him by His greatest name. Whatever we do in word or deed, we do in the name of Jesus. When John went up into heaven, in the book of The Revelation, he saw one throne and ONE that sat on the throne. He saw the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, The Almighty, and His name was Jesus.

Take a look at any artistic depiction of the Trinity. In many cases, three separate beings are clearly shown. Of course, occasionally there will be a single being with three faces somehow merged together in some odd way on a

single head. Keep in mind that the Bible clearly states we are made in His image (Genesis 1:26). Last I checked, there are not too many of us going around with three faces smooshed onto one head. Not too many of us going around as three persons, in that case, either.



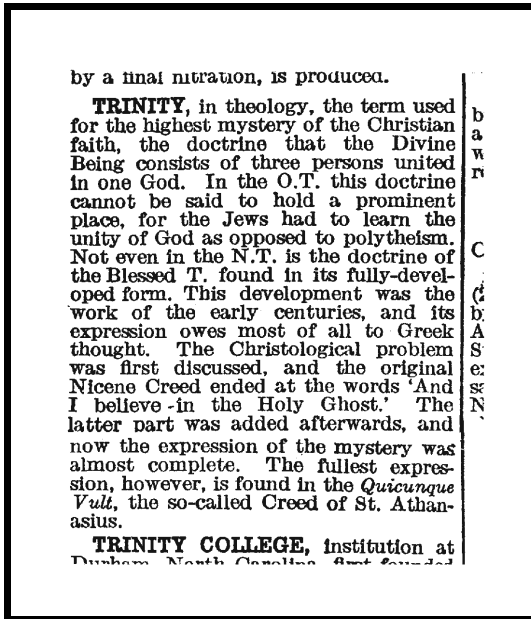
I challenge you to look at this 14th century depiction of the Trinity and say to yourself, ***"I BELIEVE IN ONLY ONE GOD—HE EXISTS IN THREE PERSONS."***

"Wait," you say, *"I don't believe God is three individuals?"* Well, this is an accurate description of the Trinity. Read some of your church dogma or look it up in Webster. The Trinity doctrine really does claim that God exists in **THREE PERSONS**. A person is an entity, an

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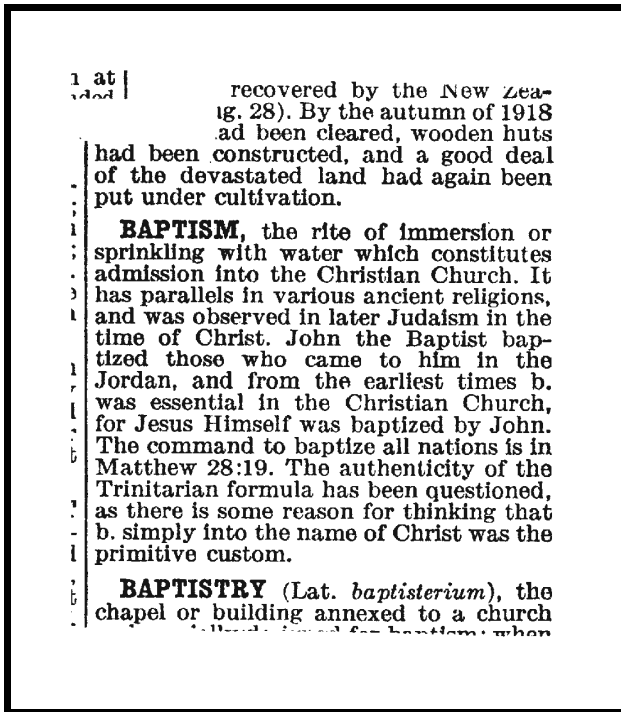
individual, a being. The only way to say that the Trinity is one is like saying that the City Council is one. The City Council is made up of three human persons, but they are one council—one group of humans. The Trinity is made up of three god persons—one group of gods.

Below are a copies of two entries from the 1937 edition of *World's Popular Encyclopedia*—one for Trinity and one for Baptism.



Greek thought? Greek Philosophy? Col. 2:9: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain

deceit..." The fully developed Trinity was the work of the early centuries. Polytheism is the belief in more than one God. The Trinity is not a mystery; it is a lie.

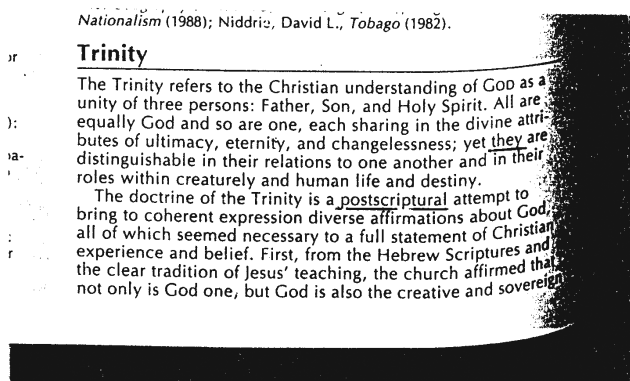


From the earliest times, Baptism was ESSENTIAL. The Trinitarian formula has been questioned. Nobody in the church in the Bible was ever baptized in the three titles. The converts were always baptized in the name of Jesus.

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Nobody was baptized in the three titles until a couple hundred years after Christ.

Now here's an entry from a more modern book: the 1993 edition of *Grolier's Encyclopedia*...



Three persons united, or joined together into one God, all, each, sharing.

And how about this? "The doctrine of the Trinity is post-scriptural." Post-scriptural! After the Bible. Not in the Bible. How plain could it be? No matter how much people try to Christianize it, the Trinity is three gods in a one-god mask. The worship of triune or multiple gods has its roots in Babylonian paganism.

The proponents of the Trinity tell us that there are three divine persons, and this group of persons eternally joined

up to be one God. The Bible says, “Hear O Israel: the Lord our God is ONE LORD.”

Perhaps one final point should be made before we leave the Trinity.

The Old Testament was written basically in the Hebrew language and the New Testament was primarily written in the Greek. Curiously, the word *Trinity* is derived from a Latin word. It didn’t come from the Old Testament prophets or the New Testament writers; it came from Rome.

The Trinity doctrine was not created in a corner, either. You can go to the library and discover the names of the men who invented it and when they introduced it into the churches. You can also discover that it took a few hundred years to fully develop.

A Biblical Example

The eighth chapter of Acts gives a detailed record of a true New Testament preacher, an evangelist, carrying the gospel from Jerusalem to another town: “Philip went down to Samaria, and preached Christ to them.”

Everyone in town believed Philip’s preaching. They were, then, “believers.” They accepted the preaching of Philip—Philip preached Christ—so they “accepted” Christ. Many had devils cast out, many were healed, and there was great joy. These people were having church! Even Simon the sorcerer believed and followed Philip around watching all the miracles.

Jesus said that except a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. From all that we have read in the Scriptures so far, “born of water” is baptism in the name of Jesus and “born of the Spirit” is the in-filling of the Holy Ghost evidenced by speaking in tongues. Philip is a true man of God who was converted by Peter’s gospel and certainly not a false prophet. Did water and the Spirit play a part when Philip preached Christ?

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Acts 8:12: “When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Careful examination reveals that preaching Christ amounted to preaching the “kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.” While we aren’t given any of the words that Philip preached, we can know from the response of the people that he preached Jesus-name baptism. The Samaritans were baptized in the name of Jesus as the direct and only response to Philip’s preaching of the name of Jesus Christ. Verse 16 proves that he baptized in the name and not the titles. Okay, there’s the water.

Philip preached the birth of the Spirit, too. Verses 14-16 tell us that when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the gospel, they sent Peter and John to pray for them “that they might **receive the Holy Ghost**” because “as yet he had fallen on NONE OF THEM: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Philip preached New Testament salvation just like Peter did, and the Samaritans obeyed the same way the people in Acts 2 obeyed Peter. The people believed, were baptized in Jesus’ name, and now are waiting, tarrying, for the Holy Ghost.

Isn’t this curious? This takes place some years after the church was established on the Day of Pentecost. This is the same Church Age that we live in today. The people had devils cast out, they were healed, they had great joy, they were believers, they were baptized, and they accepted Christ, but they DID NOT have the Holy Spirit. They must not have received it the moment they recited the sinner’s

prayer. And they cannot enter into the kingdom of God without it.

Here's another curious thing: Simon the sorcerer never offered money when he saw healing. He didn't offer money when he saw devils cast out. But when he saw the people receive the Holy Ghost, he pulled out his wallet. What did Simon observe that impressed him so? Would Simon pay money if he saw someone receive the Holy Ghost in your church?

After studying the events in Samaria, the following questions are offered to provoke thoughtful consideration:

1. If a person is "saved," has his sins forgiven and receives the Holy Spirit automatically when he "accepts" Christ, as it is preached today, why wasn't Simon saved? Simon "believed also" (like the other Samaritans) and was baptized. When he offered money, Peter didn't just say to him, "Oh, that's a mistake, Brother Simon. You're not supposed to think that way, now that you're saved." No, Peter told this baptized believer that he had no part in the matter.

According to most Baptists, a person doesn't have to do anything to get saved and then, once he is saved, he couldn't shoot his way out of it. Why wasn't Simon saved upon acceptance? If he was saved when he accepted Christ as his personal Savior, how did he get unsaved when he offered money?

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2. If baptism is not essential to salvation, why was that the Samaritans' only direct response to Philip's preaching? When they believed what he preached, they were baptized. And how does this incident compare with Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16, Luke 24:47, and Acts 2:38?

3. Why did Philip baptize the people in the name of the Lord Jesus, instead of the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

4. How did Philip and the apostles know that the Samaritans had not received the Holy Ghost? There had to be an instant, recognizable sign. What was it? It had to be something other than accepting, other than believing, other than miracles, and other than baptism, because all these were listed but expressly did not show that they had received the Holy Ghost. I challenge anyone who believes that receiving the Holy Ghost is automatic, with no accompanying physical sign, to answer.

5. Why did the Samaritans not receive the Holy Ghost automatically as soon as they believed and trusted Christ, the way it is taught today?

6. At what point in history did people begin to receive the Holy Ghost and have their sins forgiven automatically at the moment they accepted Christ? And how would such a change relate to Jesus' command to take the gospel that began on the Day of Pentecost to every nation and every individual on earth?

7. If your pastor went to another town and preached Christ to the people, would he preach the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ? Would he baptize them in the name of the Lord Jesus? Would the converts receive the Holy Ghost? Would anyone notice if they received it? Could anyone tell if they hadn't? Would your pastor preach the gospel just like Philip, Peter, Ananias, and Paul did in the church in the Bible?

The Proverbial Line

The mark of a false prophet is that he will not build on the foundation laid by the apostles. We live in the same Church Age that began in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, and a true prophet will preach the same gospel that the apostles preached then.

Now, the time has come to compare the modern preacher's gospel of salvation to actual conversions recorded in the Bible and see if we can find any contradictions:

Modern preacher: All a person has to do to be saved is repent and accept Christ as his own personal savior.

Peter: Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38)

Modern preacher: A person's sins are forgiven at the moment he accepts and trusts Christ, and baptism is not essential to salvation.

Peter: ...and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins... (Acts 2:38)

Ananias: Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. (Acts 22:16)

Modern preacher: A person receives the Holy Spirit automatically at the moment he believes and accepts Christ.

Luke: ¹⁴Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: ¹⁵Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: ¹⁶(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) ¹⁷Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8:14-17)

Paul: He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? (Acts 19:2)

Modern preacher: A person need not speak in tongues when he receives the Holy Spirit.

Peter: This is that ... (Acts 2:16)

Peter: Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. (Acts 2:33)

Peter: ⁴⁵And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. ⁴⁶For they heard them speak with tongues (Acts 10:45-46)

Paul: And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. (Acts 19:6)

Modern preacher: If water baptism is administered, it is to be done with the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost called over the person being baptized.

Peter: Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins... (Acts 2:38)

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Luke: For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 8:16)

Peter: And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. (Acts 10:48)

Paul: When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Acts 19:5)

Ananias: ...arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. (Acts 22:16)

Modern independent and denominational preachers alike contradict the Bible on every point of salvation. They sound honest and caring when they talk about the love of God and how Jesus died for our sins. They may really be sincere, too. But when it gets right down to the real nitty gritty, they will tell you that your sins are forgiven differently than the apostles taught. They will tell you that you receive the Holy Spirit differently. Their gospel of salvation is not the same as that of the apostles.

Modern preachers look and sound just like ministers of righteousness, and much of what they teach is true, but according to the Bible, are they true preachers or false prophets? Do they really serve the Lord Jesus Christ? Can you trust your eternal destiny to their gospel? Is their gospel the same as the one Jesus said to take into all the world, beginning at Jerusalem?

More importantly, how does the gospel of your church or pastor compare with the Bible? Many of today's preachers may preach faultless sermons lasting an hour or more, but when they get to the end of their sermon and tell the people how to be saved, they will not tell it like the apostles.

Acts 2:38 is where the proverbial line in the sand is drawn. Acts 2:38 is where the false prophet has to part company with the apostles.

When the first believers asked Peter what they had to do, he told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. When a new believer asks the modern preacher what he has to do, he will say to come up front, fill out a card, and say the sinner's prayer: "God, I accept your Son Jesus as my personal Savior. Thank you for forgiving my sins and saving me." No tongues as the apostles taught. No baptism, no birth of water. Instant forgiveness and automatic receipt of the Spirit. There is not one example of anyone being saved by their gospel in the Bible. Not one. Nobody was baptized with their baptism, nobody received their brand of Holy Ghost, and nobody in the church in the Bible ever even said any sinners prayer.

Peter walked with Jesus for three and a half years. Peter preached, healed the sick, and cast out devils, but yet, just before Jesus was crucified, He said to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen the brethren." When was

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Peter converted? In Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Only then was he able to feed the flock. A preacher converted differently than Peter is not qualified to preach.

Think about Paul's conversion. Wouldn't you like to have the same salvation experience that Paul had? You're not going to heaven without it. The book of Acts records Paul's conversion in detail, and it was completely different from anything in today's churches. Cornelius was a devout man who believed God, but he still had to hear and obey Peter to be saved. And so will you. The Ephesians of Acts 19 were disciples and believers, but that wasn't enough. They weren't truly saved, born again into the kingdom of God and added to the church, until they were re-baptized in the name of Jesus and filled with the Holy Ghost speaking in tongues. These are some of the examples of the pattern that God gave us. Why would we settle for anything else? Why would we follow a preacher who has changed and perverted the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Most preachers will not preach salvation the way the apostles did in the book of Acts. They have added something to the Scriptures and taken something away. They have added the post-scriptural Trinity doctrine and the believe-only plan of salvation. They have taken away Jesus-name baptism and speaking in tongues as the evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost.

A counterfeit twenty-dollar bill can look "real." It can have the right pictures and lettering on it. It can be so close

that it will fool almost everyone. But, regardless of how right it appears to be, it is still a fake, and when it gets to the bank, it won't be acceptable. No matter how closely it resembles the real thing, it will never be anything but a fraud—it is worthless. Jesus said, “In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” (Mark 7:7). That's a sobering thought. People are actually worshiping Jesus whose worship is in vain, their worship is worthless. I didn't say that; Jesus said that.

How can we know a counterfeit? How can we know a false prophet? I John 4:6 states: “We (the apostles) are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.” Who has the truth? The apostles. Who has the spirit of error? Those who will not hear them, the preachers who won't go back to the apostles to get the salvation preached in the church in the Bible, those who preach a gospel that's been changed from what the apostles taught.

Now for the big question: are you in a church that preaches the same truth the apostles did? Have you been baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of your sins? Have you received the Holy Ghost speaking in tongues? God wants to forgive your sins. He wants you to have the “real” Holy Spirit, the miraculous, powerful Holy Spirit that would make someone like Simon the sorcerer pull out his wallet.

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Apostle John warned: if someone comes to you who doesn't have his gospel, don't receive them into your house and don't wish them Godspeed, or you will be guilty of their evil deeds (2 John 1:10-11).

There are churches in the world today that teach New Testament salvation just like the apostles did in the church in the Bible. You can find them, but you'll have to search them out. Be sure to ask questions, though. A lot of churches claim to preach the doctrine of the apostles, but few truly do.

When considering any religious organization or preacher, keep your radar out for whitewash, smoke screens, and contradictions. Get specific answers to specific questions and don't settle for broad generalities. Is baptism essential to salvation or is it not? Is baptism for the remission of sins or is it not? Did the apostles baptize in the titles Father, Son, and Holy Ghost or in the name of Jesus? Did the converts in the early church speak in tongues when they received the Holy Ghost or did they not? Is God one person or three persons? What are the keys of the kingdom that Jesus gave to Peter and when did he use them? What does the Bible really tell us about these things?

Sometimes you can ask a Trinitarian preacher if he baptizes in the name of Jesus, and he will say that he does. But when you get into the water, he may only recite the titles. Further questioning would reveal that this preacher believes "in the name of" means "in the authority of" and,

therefore, he doesn't actually call the name over the person being baptized. Still others will baptize you either way or both ways. To these preachers, the method of baptism is not important since they think baptism is not essential to salvation anyway. Is that what the apostles taught or is that false doctrine? I submit that we cannot do anything in anyone's authority without invoking their name.

We need to understand what preachers teach about water baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Godhead, and salvation. These are the areas that reveal false doctrine. These are heaven or hell issues, and the Bible does not contradict itself. If Peter says, "This is that," then something else isn't. If tongues is how they knew Cornelius received the gift of the Holy Ghost, that's how we will know that we have received it. If the missing sign in Samaria was tongues, it will be the missing sign for us. If Paul had to question whether baptized believers had the Holy Ghost, we'll have to ask the same question. If thousands were added to the church in Acts, they would all have been added the same way and that's how we'll be added. Baptism cannot be essential in one place and not another. Tongues cannot be the definitive evidence in one place and not another. Do not put your confidence in any preacher, but study to find out what the Bible really teaches.

Of course, if God has done miraculous things in your life, we don't want to discount that at all. But if the Bible clearly says that you must be baptized in the name of Jesus to have your sins remitted and your present church teaches

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otherwise, don't stop there. Move on toward God. God is working in everybody's life, but that doesn't mean everybody will be saved. If you are a Catholic, study Mary worship in the Bible. If the Bible promotes Mary worship, then fine. If it turns out that Mary worship and other Catholic practices are based on traditions of men that are contrary to Scripture, then chart your course accordingly, how you may best please God. Don't stick with something just because you're used to it or because it's popular at the risk of spending eternity in the flames of hell.

The Bible declares that the Scriptures are not subject to any private interpretation. So rather than taking the things pointed out in this study as a personal insult, read your Bible. The Scriptures will prove whether the things brought to your attention are true. If you see a contradiction between what's being handed to you and what the apostles taught, take the courage to stand for truth.

"But," you say, "almost all the churches in the world believe the same way my church does. So many people just couldn't be wrong." That's what everyone thought when Galileo said the Sun didn't revolve around the earth: "How can this one man be right and all those scholars and scientists and teachers be wrong?"

You should be concerned if you're following the crowd because the crowd is on the broad road, the road to hell. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to life

and, because of false prophets, very few will even find the strait and the narrow.

Just before He ascended into heaven, Jesus gave His apostles their final instructions, the “Great Commission.” He told them to wait until they received the Holy Ghost and then preach the gospel (repentance and remission of sins in Jesus’ name). They were to begin at Jerusalem and continue from there, teaching this very same message to every person in every country on earth. To be truly saved, people would have to obey the gospel of His apostles, not just believe that Jesus lived and died and rose again, but believe and obey what they taught. The church of Jesus Christ is built on this very specific gospel, and the book of Acts records exactly how the apostles preached it, with verbatim accounts given in some instances. Does your preacher teach that you can be saved differently than Peter and Philip and Paul? Jesus is only coming back for His church, the church that He established by His apostles.

You don’t want to find yourself arguing with Jesus on Judgment Day, saying, “Lord, Lord, didn’t I accept you as my personal savior?” “Lord, wasn’t I a believer?”

Lay aside every opinion and man-made doctrine that is contrary to the truth. Turn from your traditions and obey Matthew 28:19 the way the apostles obeyed it and ask Jesus to fill you with the same Holy Ghost they received in the church in the Bible.

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Don't allow a false prophet to convince you to accept the traditions of men over the Word of God. Don't be one of the "Christians" Jesus warns us about in the 7th chapter of Matthew. Don't be one of those sincere believers who will hear him say, "I NEVER KNEW YOU."

Common Arguments

Over the centuries, people have raised all kinds of arguments against the apostles' doctrines. So-called great men of God have formulated ideas to circumvent the plain teaching of the Bible. In this section we will present twenty-one of the most often used arguments with each followed by an in-depth refutation.

1. The thief on the cross went to heaven even though he was not baptized and did not speak in tongues.

The thief did go with Jesus that day; however, the New Testament Church would not come into existence until almost two months later. The thief died under the law, under the Old Testament. First, a testament is not valid until after the death of the testator and, secondly, the church was not inaugurated until the Day of Pentecost as recorded in the 2nd chapter of Acts. Remember what Jesus told Peter in Mat. 16:18? “Upon this rock I will build my church.” He would build His church at some time in the future. Further, He told His apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promise and then go and preach the

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gospel—not before. That’s when the church of Jesus Christ began. Check your church history and doctrine. If your church started someplace other than Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, it will have no part with the church that Jesus built.

In John 7:38-39 we read, “³⁸He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. ³⁹(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.).”

And John 16:7 says, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”

You see, the Holy Ghost, the birth of the Spirit, was not available to the thief and could not be available to any believer until after Jesus left the planet. The ascension of Jesus occurred forty days after Calvary. The thief didn’t need to be baptized, because New Testament baptism did not begin until the Day of Pentecost. The thief was not born again.

Finally, the thief was not in the kingdom of God, the New Testament Church. Jesus almost went out of His way to show us that even John the Baptist was not in the kingdom: “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the

Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

2. When the jailer in Acts 16:31 asked how to be saved, Paul and Silas told him that all he had to do was believe.

Not exactly. The jailer did ask Paul and Silas, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they did tell him, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” But “shalt be” is future indicative and implies a future time, not automatically, right now with nothing else involved. Moreover, if we stop here, then everyone in the jailer’s house would be saved because the jailer believed. Just consider the very next verse (32) : “And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.” Faith (saving faith) cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. In other words, they went home with the jailer and preached the gospel to him and his household. What did Paul and Silas preach to these folks? We are not given a single word, but the people went out sometime after midnight, in the company of the prisoners, to be baptized “straightway.” Back at the jail, the jailer would have committed suicide for fear of the Roman soldiers, but after Paul and Silas gave him the Word of the Lord, baptism became more important than his very life.

Would anyone go out in the middle of the night (at risk) to be baptized, if it were not essential? Baptism is exactly how Paul had his sins washed away, so it’s doubtful he would tell these folks that they could be saved without being baptized. Jesus expressed an opinion on the subject: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” (Mark 16:16).

Paul also wrote that without the Spirit of Christ, we are none of his. While the main focus of this account is on water baptism, the jailer would have needed to receive the Spirit as well. We can turn to Acts 19 and see a detailed example of Paul's ministry, including the people's response and a written record of what happened when someone received the Holy Ghost under Paul's preaching.

Further, all the apostles preached the same gospel. Jude, in his letter, refers to the "common salvation" and admonishes us to "Contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints." What does contend for mean? It means to fight for, to defend. What faith was once delivered unto the saints? The one that began at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost.

Indeed, Galatians 1:23 says of Paul: "That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed." What faith had Paul destroyed? The one that began in Acts 2.

3. In the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul asks, “Do all speak with tongues?” This is proof that not all people will speak in tongues when they receive the Holy Ghost.

There is a difference between receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues and the operation of the gift of tongues discussed in 1 Corinthians 12. Tongues was established as the sign of receiving the Holy Ghost in Acts. Corinthians does not void that, but expounds on a different aspect of tongues. When you read “Do all speak with tongues?” you will see that the question refers back to the unique gift of “divers tongues and interpretations” at the beginning of the chapter and not to receiving the Holy Ghost at conversion. 1 Corinthians 12 has nothing to do with conversion.

The speaking in tongues mentioned by Paul was one of the nine gifts of the Spirit actively operating in the church. This is not the same thing as described as receiving the promise in Acts. Paul couldn’t undo what Jesus said in John 3:8, either: “And so is EVERY ONE born of the Spirit.”

Paul is not telling us that not everyone will speak in tongues when they receive the Holy Ghost. He is telling us that not everyone in the church will operate in this unique gift of tongues and interpretations.

1 Corinthians was a letter written to the church at Corinth. It was only broken into chapters and verses for

our convenience. Therefore, we must consider the whole letter and not take chapter 12 out of context. We've presented much scripture to show that tongues is the only biblical evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost in the book of Acts, but Paul tells us something in 1 Corinthians 14:14-15 that goes far beyond the initial evidence: "¹⁴For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. ¹⁵What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also:"

When Paul prayed with the spirit, he prayed in unknown tongues. This means that when he prayed with his understanding, he wasn't praying with the spirit, no matter how sincere or passionate his praying. And he said he would continue to pray with the spirit (unknown tongues) and with his understanding also. Why would Paul stress praying with the spirit? "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself" (1 Corinthians 14:4). Edify means to build up. Don't we want to pray with the spirit and build ourselves up? Well, according to Paul, the way to do that is praying with unknown tongues.

Jude said almost the same thing in his letter (in verse 20): "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost." Wouldn't this be the same as praying with the spirit? How do we build ourselves up on our most holy faith? By praying in the Holy Ghost. If praying in the Holy Ghost is the same as praying with the spirit, then that means we build ourselves up on our most holy faith by praying with unknown tongues.

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Okay, where does that leave those who do not pray with unknown tongues? They can't pray with the spirit or build themselves up like Paul did, and they can't build themselves up on their most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost like Jude spoke about.

If you can't pray with the spirit and you can't pray in the Holy Ghost because you don't speak in unknown tongues, what is the implication here? You don't have the Holy Ghost in the first place. That brings us full circle. Acts shows us what happens when people receive the Holy Ghost, and the epistles were written to people saved in Acts. If we haven't received the speaking-in-tongues Holy Ghost as recorded in the book of Acts, then 1 Corinthians does not apply to us anyway.

Finally, if you were called to testify as a witness in a court proceeding, you would "speak" on behalf of the defense or the prosecution. To give testimony or bear witness means to speak. 1 John 5:6: "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." Would the Spirit "speak" when it bears witness? Acts 2:4: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." In the upper room, when the people spoke with tongues, the Spirit spoke supernaturally through the believers. When God shows up, He'll speak for Himself.

Try this little experiment:

I know that I received the gift of the Holy Ghost because...

(Fill in the blank).

Now, list as many examples as you can of people in the church in the Bible who knew they received the Holy Ghost by the same evidence that you just wrote down, and then harmonize that with Acts 2:16, Acts 8, Acts 10 and Acts 19.

4. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

This is truth, but not the whole truth. Remember, this conversation began with, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” This is the same Jesus who said in Mark 16:16, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” If you’re going to take John 3:16 alone, as the complete gospel to be saved by, you might as well take a pair of scissors and cut out the Great Commission, the book of Acts and the rest of the New Testament. Moreover, the only thing John 3:16 actually tells us is why God gave His Son, and not how to be saved.

When Philip went out into the desert and preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, all of a sudden there was water. Philip’s sermon is not spelled out for us, but the only thing the eunuch wanted to know was if he could be baptized. Philip said that he could be baptized if he believed with all his heart. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

There is no record in the New Testament of any individual being converted by mental assent. NONE. Not one apostle or other preacher ever told a lost person that he would be instantly and automatically saved, born again, simply by believing on Jesus Christ. NEVER. We don’t want to end up like the Jehovah’s Witnesses, believing that John 3:16 is all there is to salvation, while completely

ignoring Matthew 28:19, Mark 16:16, Luke 24:47, John 3:5, John 3:8, Acts 2, 8, 9, 10, 16, 19, 22, James 2:17, 1 Peter 3:21, and others. Believing is essential, but it is only a prerequisite to actual conversion. Believing leads to repentance, obedience, and the birth of the Spirit.

Furthermore, the only scriptural way to be baptized is by immersion. When a person dies, he is buried, not sprinkled with dirt. When a person repents, dies out to his carnal lifestyle, he is buried with Jesus in the waters of baptism.

Romans 10:13 isn't the only relevant verse in the book of Romans. There's also Romans 6:4-5: “⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:” We'll be in the likeness of His resurrection **IF** we have been planted in the likeness of His death (baptism). What if we're not planted in that likeness?

5. The Bible says that we are saved by grace and not by works, lest any man should boast. Baptism is a work.

Paul does write in Ephesians 2:8-9 that we are not saved by works. We cannot, by our good deeds, earn our salvation; it is the gift of God. Let's read it.

Ephesians 2:8-9: “⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.” This is one of the most popular passages of Scripture in modern Christianity.

As previously pointed out, Ephesians is a letter to the saints at Ephesus. Remember, these people are already saved and this is not instructions to lost sinners. The critical question is how did these people get saved by grace through faith, and is there a written record? Wouldn't that give us a truer meaning of what Paul is writing about than some preacher's opinion 2000 years after the fact?

There is a detailed record of the Ephesians' conversion in the nineteenth chapter of Acts. In verse 1, Paul met some disciples at Ephesus. They were probably introduced to Christ by a man named Apollos. Paul knew they were believers, but he did not know if they were born again, if they were saved. He asked them a peculiar question in verse 2: “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?”

What a question. According to Paul, it is possible to believe and still not have the Holy Ghost. When they told Paul that they never heard of the Holy Ghost, Paul didn't

tell them that they received it unawares the moment they believed. No. As we said before, the first thing Paul did was question their water baptism (verse 3): “Unto what then were ye baptized?” When they said, unto John’s baptism, Paul recognized that John baptized unto repentance; however, he basically told them that their baptism wasn’t good enough. When the people understood that, Paul re-baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus. The only difference in Paul’s baptism and their first baptism was the name called over them as they went down in the water. In verse 6, Paul laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost speaking in tongues.

Paul was not satisfied that the Ephesians were saved until he had baptized them in Jesus’ name and heard them speak in tongues. Regardless of what any preacher says, that is exactly how the Ephesians were saved by grace through faith and not of works.

Just as Peter preached in Acts 2:38, the Ephesians had to be baptized in Jesus’ name and filled with the Holy Ghost in order to be saved by grace through faith. And when they received the Holy Ghost, they spoke in tongues just like the Jews on the Day of Pentecost. The gospel won’t change and the faith that was once delivered to the saints won’t change.

No, our works cannot pay the price for our salvation, but neither can we obtain it just by saying or thinking the words, “I accept Jesus as my personal savior.” The apostles told us the way to have our sins forgiven and to be

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born into the kingdom of God is: REPENT, AND BE BAPTIZED EVERY ONE OF YOU IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST. Baptism in the name of Jesus is the only scriptural way to receive remission of sins. Jesus paid for our sins with His blood, but His blood is applied in water baptism.

Baptism is not a work we do to earn our salvation but an act of faith in response to God's grace. Actually, the person being baptized doesn't do any kind of work at all. When someone dies, he doesn't bury himself.

Just to keep things in proper perspective, we should point out that reciting the sinners' prayer is as much a work as being baptized. Even "believing" is something that we do.

6. We are saved by faith only. The Bible says Abraham's faith was accounted unto him for righteousness.

Okay, Romans 4:3—"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

Paul is quoting from Genesis 15:6 and he tells us that Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. However, Paul doesn't go into any detail about how it actually came about. But James does. James goes into explicit detail when he quotes Genesis 15:6. If we believe, it will be counted unto us for righteousness, but how is it counted for righteousness? It's not just believing.

James asks in James 2:14, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" He spends the rest of the chapter answering this question. In verse 17 he says, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Then, he reiterates it in verse 20, "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" In verses 22 and 23, James tells us that Abraham's faith was made perfect by his works and that, because of his works, the Bible says, "Abraham's faith was imputed unto him for righteousness." There are two kinds of faith, saving faith, and dead faith. What is the difference? Works.

Hebrews 11:7 sheds some light on Noah's salvation. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as

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yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” Faith caused Noah to move, but building the ark is what saved him and made him an heir of righteousness. By faith, he believed God, but obeying God’s word is what saved Noah. Had he not built the ark, Noah’s faith in God would not have saved him. It would have been mere dead faith.

The people in Acts 2 weren’t saved by faith only. Philip didn’t preach faith only in Acts 8. Paul wasn’t saved by faith only in Acts 9 (and 22), and Paul didn’t preach faith only to the Ephesians in Acts 19. Faith without works is dead.

But what about Abraham’s faith being imputed unto him for righteousness? James 2:21: “²¹Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? ²²Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? ²³And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” Genesis 15:6 was fulfilled when Abraham offered Isaac on the altar, not at the moment he believed only.

I don’t think we can put it any stronger than James. James 2:24 —“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and **not by faith only.**” And don’t forget, he is still answering that question from verse 14.

One more point worth mentioning here is we are not saved by faith; we are saved by grace. Faith is how we avail ourselves of God's grace, but faith without works is dead faith. There are no works to grace (God's part), but there are plenty of works to faith (our part). Grace, God's unmerited favor, gave us Calvary, the blood, and the gospel that began at Jerusalem. Nothing we ever do or fail to do will add to or take away from that grace. However, our faith, faith made perfect by our works, is obedience to the demands of that grace.

7. The Bible says we aren't supposed to judge people.

Jesus did tell us that in Matthew 7:1-3, but in that context, He was talking about judging our neighbors' hearts or their motives.

1 John 4:1 is very clear in telling us that we ARE to judge people's doctrine (what they teach): "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God: because many FALSE PROPHETS are gone out into the world."

We are not qualified to judge who will go to hell; however, putting someone in heaven is the same judgment. No, we cannot judge who will be saved and who will be lost because God has already made that judgment:

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy ghost. (Acts 2:38)

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved... (Mark 16:16)

If we were to judge, we might say something like, "He that just believes—plus nothing, minus nothing—shall be saved."

8. I don't like to discuss or debate doctrine. I just want to be close to Jesus.

The apostles tell us dozens of times that we **MUST** have their doctrine. Without the doctrine of the apostles, it is impossible to be close to Jesus. Here is just one such example—"Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Timothy 4:16)

If you have accepted a preacher who tells you that your sins are forgiven at the moment you believe on Jesus, and the apostles say that forgiveness of sins comes in water baptism through the name of Jesus, how can you be close to Him? How can you be close to Jesus when your sins aren't forgiven and you're not a partaker of the Covenant, but an uncircumcised Philistine? A true relationship with God is impossible without obedience to the commandments of the apostles' doctrine. I John 2:4 states: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Read Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-20, Luke 24:44-49, and then read the first two chapters of Acts. You will see the New Testament Church, plain and simple. And from the very beginning, they "Continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine."

9. God looks on the heart. If a person is filled with the Spirit and then gets killed in an accident before being baptized, God wouldn't send him to hell.

This could only be true if you can find Scripture to prove that Jesus didn't mean what He said in Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." or John 3:5: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he CANNOT ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD." Refer to Paul's conversion in Acts 9 and 22, or read Acts 2:38: "...and be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins."

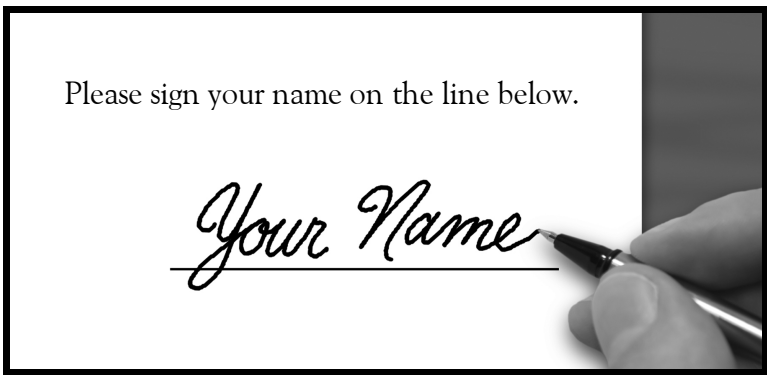
Try this: I received remission of sins by...

(Fill in the blank).

Now, list all the people in the church in the Bible who expressly received remission of sins the same way you did, and harmonize that with John 3:5, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16.

10. What if a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, but is baptized in the titles Father, Son, and Holy Spirit instead of the name of Jesus? God wouldn't send that person to hell just because a preacher quoted Jesus' own words from Matthew 28:19.

Let's consider a non-religious example for a few moments. Look at the picture below:



The paper's own instructions say to "sign your name on the line below." This person has literally quoted part of those instructions on the line. In doing so, they failed to put *any* name at all on the line. Do you think the person properly followed the instructions?

Would you take a check signed with the words *your name* on the signature line. Or would a contract that was signed in such a way be valid?

And, yet, anybody who has been baptized by a preacher who said, "I now baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" has done something

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very similar. Why? Because, while they quote the Lord's command, they don't actually invoke *any* name during the baptism. Quoting the Lord's instructions is not the same as actually obeying them?

For those who think Matthew 28:19 is using the terms *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost* as names, let me point out that each of those terms is preceded by the word *the*.

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 Ghost:

In normal usage (and this verse is an example of normal usage), proper names are not preceded by the word *the*. So, those baptized by quoting part of this verse end up being baptized into no name at all.

Not convinced? Perhaps another non-religious example will help. One might say, "Give this package to the manager." One might say, "Give this package to Fred." But nobody would say, "Give this package to the Fred."

There are some specialized cases in which you can preface a proper name with the word *the*, but those circumstances do not exist in Matthew 28:19.

Remission of sins is why the Lord Jesus came and why He died on the cross (Matthew 26:28). Remission of sins is why He is named Jesus (Matthew 1:21). Jesus is the only name that can save us (Acts 4:12). Peter made it clear that

water baptism in Jesus' name is how we get our sins remitted (Acts 2:38). So, why would anyone think that it would be okay to get baptized into no name at all?

We can only show you what the Bible says, but you will have to decide for yourself if you can go to heaven without having your sins forgiven or if you can get them forgiven differently than they did in the church in the Bible. We're saved by grace through faith, right? Well, faith in what? Faith in the baptism of the church in the Bible or faith in our opinions and traditions?

God told Noah to build the ark of gopher wood. What if he had used oak instead? Could Noah have been saved if he had built the ark his own way instead of the way God commanded? Do you think God will honor a method of baptism thought up by men? Paul didn't make an exception for the Ephesians in Acts 19. He re-baptized them in Jesus' name.

Trinitarian baptism is a development of the early centuries. It is the result of men adding to and taking from the Word of God. Even history records that the early Church knew only the name of Jesus in water baptism.

Here are just a few examples:

Moreover, there is no mention in the New Testament of anyone being baptized into the name of the Trinity (James Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, vol. 1, p. 241, 1906 edition).

The New Testament knows only baptism in the Name of Jesus... which still occurs in the second and third centuries (Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, vol. 1, p.435, 1966 edition).

An explicit reference to the Trinitarian formula of Baptism cannot be found in the first century (New Catholic Encyclopedia, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967, p. 59).

The formula used was 'in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ' or some synonymous phrase; there is no evidence for the use of the triune Name (Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, vol. 2, p. 384, 1958 edition).

At first baptism was administered in the name of Jesus, but gradually in the Name of the Triune God: Father, Son , and Holy Spirit (Otto Heick, A History of Christian Thought, vol. 1, p. 215).

Nobody got baptized in Matthew 28:19. That is merely one account of how Jesus told the apostles to baptize every person on earth. He wasn't speaking directly to us, but to them. Therefore, we must see how they obeyed and not try to second guess them two thousand years down the road. That takes us to Acts 2:38, Acts 8, 10, 19 and 22.

Baptism is for the remission of sins, and remission of sins comes only through the name of Jesus. After Paul believed on the Lord Jesus, after he repented, after he

prayed and fasted for three days, after he received divine healing, and even after he received the Holy Ghost, Ananias said, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16). Therefore, calling on the name of Jesus outside of baptism will not bring remission of sins, and calling on the titles in baptism will not bring remission.

Perhaps a simple question would be appropriate here. Why would anyone want to be baptized in a way that was never once performed in the church in the Bible and reject the only way that ever was?

11. God will judge us according to what we know. If a person never heard the gospel, God couldn't send that person to hell, because the person didn't know any better.

Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 2:16 that he was upset with the Jews because they wouldn't let him take the gospel to the Gentiles that they MIGHT BE SAVED. If they needed saving, they were lost. A lost person is on his way to hell. Jesus said that He came to save the lost, and the gospel is the "...power of God unto salvation." (Romans 1:16)

If ignorance would save us, then the best thing we could do is say nothing. That way everybody could go to heaven. But Jesus commanded us to preach the gospel.

We need to be careful that we don't end up creating our own gospel. We could create the gospel of ignorance as easily as others have created the believe-only gospel. And when we do that, we subordinate the gospel of Christ to our opinion.

12. I believe that true believers of all faiths (Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, etc.) will go to heaven.

Catholics in heaven? Perhaps, if you can find one who has been born again of water and of the Spirit. If you can find one baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost speaking in tongues. And if you can find a Catholic who doesn't bow to statues or call a priest "Father." If you can find one who doesn't believe in a Trinity or one who will renounce the Pope as the head of the church. If you can find a Catholic who doesn't pray to a dead woman, perhaps such a Catholic as that could go to heaven.

But then again, listen to Paul's warning in 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "¹Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; ²Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; ³Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth."

Jesus is coming for a church without spot or blemish; He isn't coming back for liars and hypocrites or a church teaching doctrines of devils. The first church that comes to mind that doesn't allow some of their people to marry (priests and nuns) or to eat meat (on Fridays) is the Catholic Church.

Revelation 17:1-9 speaks of the great whore, the mother of harlots, whose headquarters is the city of seven

hills. Who do you reckon that would be? And who would be her daughters? Modern theology says that “saved” Catholics can go to heaven, but how can Catholics be saved if the Catholic Church has departed from the faith and teaches the doctrines of devils? This is not to say that a Catholic cannot be saved. Many are. But when Catholics are truly saved, they are liberated from Roman tradition.

There are basically three kinds of Christianity:

1. **Apostolic Christianity**—The original, established by the apostles in the book of Acts.
2. **Church Father Christianity**—Developed around the invention of the Trinity in the early centuries after the death of the apostles and grew into the Roman Catholic Church.
3. **Reformation Christianity**—An offshoot of Roman Catholicism started by Martin Luther in 1517 that evolved into denominations such as Baptists, Assemblies of God, Methodists, Presbyterians, Churches of Christ, etc. These denominations are actually still Roman Catholic by virtue of their mother church’s Trinitarian philosophy. They are called Protestants (*Protestants*, *Protesting Catholics*).

Our approval will not validate the Church Fathers’ or the Reformers’ man-made substitutes.

13. Romans 10:13 says that whosoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. This is how everyone in my church was saved and it's good enough for me.

It may be popular now, but it's not good enough. First of all, there are many, many passages of Scripture that prove there is more to salvation than just believing, more than just thinking a thought. And trusting in your heart is nothing more than thinking a thought. When you stand before God in judgment, the record of your life will be judged against the Word of God, the Bible. It won't make any difference how anyone else believed, not your church, not your friends, and not your family. Each person will give account of himself.

Secondly, the book of Romans was written to the saints (Romans 1:6). It was written to people already saved by the preaching of the apostles and others in the book of Acts. This letter absolutely WAS NOT written to lost people. All of the epistles were written to the church. There are no instructions to the lost in them. If you are going to Romans for your salvation without the experience of Acts, you are just reading someone else's mail; Romans is not written to you.

Moreover, if you look at the very first verse of Romans 10, you will see that Paul is telling his Christian friends how much he would like to see his Jewish brethren saved. Then we move on to the main issue in verse 13: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

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Actually, if we go back to verse 8, we see that Paul is telling us that it is the “word of faith which we preach.” And the “word of faith” the apostles preached was Acts 2:38. As previously stated, believers shalt be saved. Certainly non-believers will not be. That’s what Jesus said: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” It wouldn’t matter whether a non-believer were baptized or not.

But, there is this calling on the name of the Lord. When we get to Romans 10:13, he says those famous words, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

There is a written record of Paul’s salvation experience. Where in the record of Paul’s conversion was there a calling upon the name of the Lord? Acts 22:16—“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” To call on the name means to invoke the name.

Further, in the second chapter of Acts, Peter tied speaking in tongues to the same quote from the Old Testament book of Joel: “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” So, Paul didn’t come up with some new plan of believe-only salvation when he wrote Romans 10:13; he just reaffirmed the gospel that began in the second chapter of Acts.

14. I knew someone who went to a certain church and spoke in tongues, and that person turned out to be a really terrible hypocrite.

As for spiritual depth, it is, sad to say, true that someone who speaks in tongues could be as shallow as anyone in any other church. This, however, does not negate the declaration in Acts that tongues is the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit. Some people are fakers. Others could backslide. The fact that someone has experienced the new birth doesn't ensure that they will always be perfect.

Look at Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. They were apparently true believers in the original church, who would have been baptized in the name of Jesus and who would have spoken in tongues. But in the process of time, they became greedy and held back a portion of the money they received from the sale of their property. They told Peter a lie about it and God struck them dead, not for keeping the money—the money was theirs—but for telling the lie.

Jesus said there would be some weeds among the wheat. And just because one person fails to keep the faith, doesn't mean the faith is wrong. The gospel of the apostles is not dependent upon the actions of any man. The truth will still be the truth even if some people fail to live up to it, even if nobody lives up to it.

15. I know that I received the Holy Ghost the night I went to the altar and gave my heart to Jesus because I was miraculously healed in my body.

Healing is no more a sign that a person has received the Holy Spirit now than it was in Acts 8. The Samaritans had devils cast out, they were HEALED, and they had great joy, but they did not have the Holy Spirit. That was a separate experience.

The Lord promised that where two or three were gathered together in His name, He would be in their midst. He also promised that if we ask anything of Him in faith believing, He will grant it. Therefore, people in all denominations can experience miracles. That's why many people are deceived by false prophets. They receive a touch of the power of God and think that validates their church's doctrine. But miracles are not a sign that a person has received the Holy Ghost, nor are they a sign of salvation. Even non-Christians can experience miracles.

The apostles clearly taught that the sign of receiving the Holy Spirit was speaking in tongues. Receiving a miracle from God does not exclude anyone from obeying the gospel preached by the apostles. Peter said of speaking in tongues: "This is That," and nowhere in the Bible is there a "This" different from the one on the Day of Pentecost.

16. When they spoke in tongues in the Bible, they spoke in recognizable languages and not the gibberish we hear today.

While it's true that several languages were understood on the Day of Pentecost, back in the upper room there was no crowd, and the Galileans would not have understood any of the languages. To them, they would all have been speaking gibberish. Remember, they spoke in OTHER tongues...other than their own. The tongues were unknown until later when the crowd came around.

If you're going to set yourself up as the tongues police, to declare which are authentic and which are gibberish, then you must be familiar with every language ever known to man. I've read that there have been about 500 nations in North America. How many do you suppose were in South America? China? How about Africa? Anyone not familiar with all their languages, is not qualified to call any gibberish.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul devotes almost a whole chapter to "UNKNOWN" tongues (languages that no man understands) and their operation in the New Testament Church. Paul says he will continue to pray with the spirit (unknown tongues) (because it edifies a saint) and with his understanding also. Jude says that praying in the Holy Ghost is how we build ourselves up on our most holy faith.

17. Acts 2:38 was only for the Jews, because they killed their Messiah.

Consider the following verses:

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 Ghost:*

Mark 16:15-16

*¹⁵And he said unto them, Go ye into **all the world**, and preach the gospel **to every creature**. ¹⁶He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

Luke 24:47

*And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name **among all nations**, **beginning at Jerusalem**.*

Jesus told the apostles to go someplace and do something. He told them to take their message to every nation and to every individual. And...they were to begin at Jerusalem. What began in Acts 2:38 is for everyone.

18. If I believe what you're saying, that would mean my grandmother went to hell.

Let's look at the logic behind this argument: in effect, people are saying, "I *know* so-n-so went to heaven; therefore, any doctrine that contradicts that 'fact' must be in error." In other words, they judge their relative into heaven and then filter biblical doctrines by that preconception. But it's the Scriptures that will judge *us*, not the other way around.

The possibility that a loved one didn't make it to heaven might be one of the saddest realities that a person would ever have to face. It is understandable that a person would want to believe that a loved one went to heaven. However, people who have passed on are already where they are. Our beliefs have no effect on the matter: their eternal destinies are settled.

We are not responsible for where our deceased loved ones will spend eternity, but we are responsible for how we respond to God's word.

19. “Elohim,” the Hebrew word from which we get the word “God” in Genesis 1:1, is a plural word and proves that God is more than one person.

Elohim is a plural word in the Hebrew language, but it is used in the plural and in the singular, kind of like our word sheep. In Exodus 7:1, God told Moses: “See, I have made thee a god (Elohim) to Pharaoh.” How many persons was Moses? In 1 Kings 18:24, Elijah used it both ways: “And call ye on the name of your gods (Elohim), and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God (Elohim) that answereth by fire, let him be God (Elohim).”

However, the King James Bible is written in English and not Hebrew. If you want Elohim to be plural in Genesis 1:1, you’ll have to add the “s” to the English word... “In the beginning gods created the heaven and the earth.” Is that really what we want to do?

People try the same tactic in Genesis 1:26—“Let us make man...” They want this to be one god person talking to two others. But, look at it in context...“God (singular) said, let there be light.” “And God said, let the waters bring forth...” “And God said, let us make man...”

Genesis 1:26 is interpreted by verse 27—“So God made man in his own image.” *God said* and *God made*. *Us* didn’t do anything in Genesis 1:26.

20. According to Hebrews 1:2, God made the worlds by His Son and that, taken with John 1:1-14, proves that the Son was physically WITH the Father in the beginning, because the Son took part in the creation.

We have four things to consider here in context: “God,” “the Word,” “the Son,” and “the beginning.” First, let’s read Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:1-2

¹God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

²Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

We can’t help but acknowledge that according to this passage, God indeed made the worlds by His Son. How does this tie in with “the Word” and “the beginning?” As everyone would agree, at the time God made the worlds, the “Word” had not yet been made flesh. This harmonizes with John 1:1-14.

John 1:1 & 14

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

¹⁴And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, ”

Word in John 1:1 is derived from the Greek word *Logos*. According to Strong’s Concordance, *Logos* (*Word*)

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is “something said ... Thought ... The Divine Expression (i.e. Christ).”

So God made the worlds by His Son, but prior to being made flesh, the Son was the Word that was with God in the beginning. Moving backwards in time, we should be able to trace this through the Old Testament and find references to God making the worlds by His Word, His Divine Expression. Psalms 33:6 is one such reference...

Psalms 33:6

By the word of the LORD were the heavens made...

Well, we appear to be on course. We still have God making the heavens by the Word, which was to subsequently be made flesh. But let's read the rest of the verse...

*By the word of the LORD were the heavens made
and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.*

Now this puts a little different perspective on things. If we are on target, the LORD in Psalms 33:6 would be the same God as in Hebrews 1:2, and the Word would be the same Word that was made flesh in John 1:14 and the same Son “*by whom also he made the worlds.*”

To really understand this, though, we need to keep moving backwards until we find God making the worlds by His Word. To see what happened in the beginning, we'll have to go to the written record of the actual beginning...

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Okay, this is the beginning John was talking about in John 1:1—“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Here is where we need to find God making the worlds by His Word, His thought, His Divine Expression.

Genesis 1:3

*And God **said**, Let there be light...*

Genesis 1:6

*And God **said**, Let there be a firmament...*

Genesis 1:9

*And God **said**, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear...*

Genesis 1:14

*And God **said**, Let us make man...*

Remember Strong’s definition? The *Word* in John 1:1 is “**something said...thought...Divine Expression**”

Now, let’s go to John 1:1 & 14 with the proper understanding of *Logos*:

¹In the beginning was the Word (Divine Expression), and the Word (Divine Expression) was

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with God, and the Word (Divine Expression) was God.

¹⁴And the Word (Divine Expression) was made flesh, and dwelt among us,”

Jesus really confirmed that the Word was God Himself (God is a Spirit) in John 6:63: “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

Turning again to Hebrews, we find the “Divine Expression:”

*¹**God**, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,*

*²**Hath** in these last days **spoken unto us** by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

*³Who being **the brightness of his glory**, and the **express image of his person**...*

Jesus is not the second person of some Trinity. He is the brightness of God’s glory and the express image of God’s person, God expressed in flesh.

21. In the gospel of John, Jesus said, “We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” This is proof of the Trinity.

John 14:23

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

This is Jesus speaking in the gospel of John about a future event. The Father and the Son will live with those who keep His words. The Trinitarian stops right there and says, “There it is, two distinct persons in the Godhead!” But we don’t want to stop there. We want to see how we can harmonize Jesus’ words with the first and greatest commandment: “Hear O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD.”

John reiterates Jesus’ concept in his second letter to the churches...

2 John 1:9

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

If someone transgresses and doesn’t abide in the doctrine of Christ, that person doesn’t have God at all. However, those who do will have “both the Father and the

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Son.” This is what Jesus was talking about back in John chapter 14.

But let’s dig a little deeper. Just exactly what does it mean to “have the Son”? John opened the door to this in the introduction of his gospel....

John 1:11- 13

¹¹He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

¹²But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

To “have the Son,” we must receive the Son. Is that mere mental acceptance? No. John’s gospel was written many years after the birth of the Church in Acts 2. When did “His own” reject Jesus? At Calvary. Okay, then, when did people begin to “receive Him” to the point of being born of God? On the day of Pentecost. To receive Jesus is to be born again. And the only way to receive Jesus is to receive His Spirit, and that means receiving the Holy Ghost. Can we prove that with scripture?

Colossians 1:27

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

To have the Son is to have Christ in you. How can Christ be “in you” when He is seated at the right hand of God in the heavenlies? The Trinitarians want it both ways. They want Jesus physically seated at the right hand of His daddy in heaven, and they want Him physically in our hearts at the same time.

Romans 8:9

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Jesus can’t live bodily in a person. His Spirit dwells in believers. Notice how “Spirit of God” and “Spirit of Christ” are used interchangeably. And Paul said almost the same thing in Galatians.

Galatians 4:6

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

What is the Spirit of the Son? It is the Spirit of the crucified Christ. What is the name of the Spirit of the Son? That name is Jesus, of course.

John 14:16-17

¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

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¹⁷Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Jesus said He would see that they had another Comforter, which would be “the Spirit of Truth.” Is the Spirit of truth the Spirit of His Son?

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Jesus is the truth, and His Spirit would be the Spirit of truth, and His Spirit is the Comforter. What else can we say about this Spirit of the Son?

John 14:26

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

We see here that the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, is the Holy Ghost. Now, let’s go over it again...

John 14:16-18

¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter; that he may abide with you for ever;

¹⁷Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth

*him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you,
and shall be in you.*

*¹⁸I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to
you.*

“I will come to you.” Jesus was the comforter with them and would be the comforter IN them. That comforter is identified as the Holy Ghost. And no wonder, Paul wrote almost the same thing in 1 Corinthians 15:45: “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”

Therefore, when we “have the Son,” when the Son comes to us, we have the Spirit of the Son, which is the Holy Ghost. But wait a minute, if having the Son is having the Holy Ghost, then how can we have the Father?

Matthew 1:18

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise:
When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph,
before they came together, she was found with child
of the Holy Ghost.*

The Son’s Father was also the Holy Ghost. How about that? The Spirit of the Son is the Holy Ghost, and the same Holy Ghost fathered the Son. When Jesus spoke of His Father, when we have both the Father and the Son, we have the Spirit of the Son and the Father of the Son. We don’t have two Spirits, but one Spirit occupying two positions of relationship. The Spirit fathered the Son, and the Spirit dwelt in the Son (“*God is a Spirit*”).

Ephesians 4:4-6

⁴There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

⁵One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

⁶One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Now back to John 14....

John 14:23

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

“We,” the Father who conceived the Son in the womb of Mary and the Spirit of the crucified Christ, will come unto him and dwell with him. It is the same Spirit, the same God.

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. It is our hope that the issues covered in this Bible study, however controversial, will inspire you to make certain that your relationship with Jesus Christ is based on His Word and not on mere opinions, traditions, and distortions that have been cleverly dressed up to look like His Word.

Jesus said it is not the will of God that any should perish; however, that same Jesus said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” He was at once open to all and, at the same time, very exclusive. He wants everyone saved, but only on His exclusive terms. Shouldn’t that be what we want as well?

Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

(Luke 13:24)

God Bless