

# Christ and the Trinity

## *The Two Foundations of Worship*

*“... Ye are God’s building.”*

*“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.”*

*1 Corinthians 3:9; Isaiah 28:16, 17*

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# Introduction

The Trinity, the central doctrine of modern Christianity, is under scrutiny. Christians who once believed in the Trinity are uprooting their faith from this foundation, and re-rooting their faith in Matthew 16:16, which declares that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This has created a controversy in the Christian world. Those who have uprooted their faith from the Trinity for Matthew 16:16 make the allegation that these two foundations are absolutely incompatible. This study seeks for a better understanding of this controversy by comparing the Trinity and Matthew 16:16 as foundations.

This examination will be done in the following manner: 1) Each foundation will be tested for stability and strength by the Word of God; 2) the line of doctrine that naturally develops from each foundation will be drawn and compared; 3) the relationship between each foundation, God, and worship will be considered; and 4) the conclusions of this study will be given practical application concerning the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This study approaches the concept of foundations from two perspectives: one, from the perspective of building; the other, from the perspective of learning. The development of sound doctrine involves characteristics of both perspectives. In the process of building, the foundation supports the structure that is erected upon it. It also protects the structure from being damaged by the elements of the earth. It is the same with the process of building doctrine. The foundational doctrine must support every other doctrine, as well as give protection from the corrupting influences of the world.

In learning, the foundation is not only the beginning point for the development of knowledge, but it is also within the increase of knowledge. For example, counting is the foundation of math, and it becomes the heart of the more complex calculus. Calculus both depends upon, and employs, the solid

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foundation established with simple counting. It is the same when increasing knowledge of doctrine. The more complicated doctrines depend upon, and make use of, the first lessons of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The foundation becomes the heart of all succeeding doctrines.

The aim of this study is not to give a thorough examination of doctrine itself, but to focus on the relationships between foundation and doctrine, between foundation and worship, and between foundation and being prepared for Christ's second advent. There are many resources available for the reader who would like to examine the doctrines more thoroughly, some of which are listed at the end of this study.

This study unfolds from beginning to end, therefore it is best read in order, that is, from beginning to end. As each chapter prepares the reader for the next chapter, the study will be most beneficial if followed in the order it is laid out.

Since this study examines a controversial subject in Christianity, feedback and conversation are welcome. If fault is found with this study, and the reader desires to share such criticisms, these, too, are welcome. However, criticisms are welcome under the conditions that they are offered with thorough biblical support that directly corrects the perceived errors. Rather than merely entering into a debate about conclusions, the author appreciates feedback regarding her process that produced the conclusions in a manner that will help the author to grow in understanding.

The author hopes that the outcomes of this study will encourage and strengthen her Christian brothers and sisters to make choices that will both purify their relationship with God and enable them to edify others.

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*“The foundation of a house serves two basic functions. First, it protects the rest of the house from the harmful effects of the soil. By holding the frame of the house up off the ground, the foundation keeps it a safe distance from the moisture, frost, termites, mildew, rot-producing fungi, and other organisms that live in the ground.*

*“Second, the foundation serves as a transition from the irregular surface of the land to the level, plumb, and square surfaces of the house. Before the foundation, there is nothing but dirt; after the foundation, there should be a square and plumb structure with a level top. It is upon this flat and even surface that the carpenters begin the frame of the house.”<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Chapman, Scot Gibson, editors, “The Complete Visual Guide to Building a House,” 2013, Page 6, The Taunten Press Inc.

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# 1. THE TWO CLAIMS

The two foundations that will be examined in this study are the Trinity and Matthew 16:16. Even though there are different versions of the Trinity that vary in the details according to denomination, there are common core characteristics that the varying denominations share, and which designate the differing trinitarian doctrines as all equally and fully trinitarian. The following description is the core of the trinitarian belief, and is common to the various denominations who profess the Trinity:

“God exists as three persons [God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit] ... but is one being [or one unit]... The members of the Trinity are co-equal and co-eternal... all three are eternal, without beginning...”<sup>1</sup> “God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are each equally and eternally the one true God.”<sup>2</sup>

Matthew 16:16 is straight forward, and is quoted from Scripture:

“And Simon Peter answered and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

The doctrine of the Trinity has become the central, distinguishing doctrine of the modern religious denominations that are now recognized as “Christian.” Here’s what is being said about the doctrine of the Trinity by mainstream Christianity:

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1 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity#Trinitarian\\_baptismal\\_formula](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity#Trinitarian_baptismal_formula)

2 <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t002.html>

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“The doctrine of the Trinity cuts right to the core of the very constituent nature of God. For this reason, the doctrine is an essential teaching of the Christian faith with *salvific import* [emphasis in original]. For, as we have seen, it is inextricably interwoven with Who Christ is—the Author and Perfecter [sic] of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). To reject the Trinity is to reject the God Who Is.”<sup>3</sup>

*Note: To say that the Trinity is a doctrine with “salvific import” means that the Trinity is redemptive, or has salvational (“salvific”) value. In order to be saved, it is said that we need to believe in the Trinity. It has been deemed to be that important (“import”). If one does not believe in the Trinity, it is believed that they will not be saved, thus the Trinity is believed to be a doctrine with “salvific import.”*

“Trinitarian theology, in so far as it is concerned with what ‘kind’ of God Christians worship, is far from being a luxury indulged in solely by remote and ineffectual dons; it is of cardinal importance for spirituality and liturgy, for ethics, for the whole of Christian self-understanding.”<sup>4</sup>

“The doctrine of the Trinity is truly distinctive of the Christian faith, crucial because it deals with who God is, what He is like, and how He works.”<sup>5</sup>

“It is impossible to overemphasise the importance of the Christian doctrine that God is one in three persons. This has correctly been called the teaching distinctive of the Christian faith, that which sets the approach of Christians to the “fearful mystery” of the deity apart from all other approaches.”<sup>6</sup>

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3 <http://founders.org/fj51/the-importance-of-defending-the-trinity/> by Gannon Murphy. Gannon Murphy is Founder and Director of the Minnesota Apologetics Project.

4 “Wrestling with Angels: Conversations in Modern Theology,” p. 142. Rowan Douglas Williams

5 <https://www.adventist.org/beliefs/god/trinity/article/go/0/god-in-three-persons/>

6 Gerald S. Sloyan, *The Three Persons in One God*, 1964. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/beliefs/trinity\\_1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/beliefs/trinity_1.shtml)

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Being the central doctrine of mainstream Christianity, the Trinity is the base, the starting point, the foundation from which all other doctrines develop and radiate. It is used to guide all other doctrines. The Catholic Church speaks for all, “Upon it [the Trinity] are based all the other teachings of the church.”<sup>7</sup> This is to be expected. If the Trinity is a central doctrine about who God is, it must be the heart of all other doctrines that involve God, which is absolutely every other doctrine.

So deep-rooted is the trinitarian belief that it is recognized as a deciding doctrine. It has become a distinguishing belief that separates Christianity from all other religions.<sup>8 9</sup> Whosoever does not believe in the Trinity does not fit into the accepted definition of “Christian,” and is thus not acknowledged as a true follower of Christ by mainstream, popular Christianity.

Here I will quote Scripture, the very words of Jesus Christ Himself. Matthew 16:13-18 records a conversation between Jesus and His disciples. In this conversation, Jesus tells us what the central, foundational doctrine of His church is:

### Matthew 16:13 – 18

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

<sup>14</sup> And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

<sup>15</sup> He saith unto them, But *whom say ye that I am?*

<sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

<sup>18</sup> And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and *upon this rock I will*

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7 <http://omega77.tripod.com/centraldoctrine.htm>

8 <http://www.religionfacts.com/trinity> - “The doctrine of the trinity distinguishes Christianity from other religions...”

9 <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevindeyoung/2011/09/28/the-doctrine-of-the-trinity-no-christianity-without-it/> - “The Doctrine of the Trinity: No Christianity Without It.”

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*build my church*; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Christ has defined a foundation for His church: the revelation, belief, and confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Jesus asks, “Who do you say that I am?” The truth of who Jesus is, His identity, is the rock that Christ has said He will build His church on. The foundation that will secure the Christian from being overtaken by the enemy’s wiles and war, that is, that will save and which has salvific import, is believing the simple truth of who Jesus is: He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. According to Jesus Christ, this is the foundation of the Christian church, thus of every true individual Christian and of all doctrines about God.

And so we have two claims. Mainstream Christianity claims the Trinity as the foundation of the Christian church. Jesus Christ claims Matthew 16:16. Is the Trinity a counterpart of Matthew 16:16? Do they harmonize and support one another, or do these two claims amount to a controversy? Is there a conflict between the current Christian claim and the claim of Jesus Christ? This question will be answered in the following pages.

## 2. FRAMING THE DOCTRINAL HOUSE

*“When you build the frame of the house, you need to do three things. First and foremost, you have to build a safe and sound structure. Second, you have to build a structure that accommodates almost all the subsequent work on the house. As you build the frame, then you must look far into the future and provide for the needs of plumbers, drywall hangers, siders, finish carpenters, and other specialty trade contractors. Third, you should build a structure that meets acceptable standards of quality.”<sup>1</sup>*

Building a safe and sound frame of doctrine that meets acceptable standards of quality begins with a square, level, and stable foundation. This chapter explores this relationship between the quality of the foundation and the quality of the doctrine that it supports. The stability of the Trinity and Matthew 16:16 as foundations will be examined. Then the quality of the doctrinal framework that can be developed from each foundation will be determined.

Since Matthew 16:16 is the foundation that Christ has declared for His church, the examination will begin here. The reader will see that the doctrines that Jesus taught about God, about Himself, and about salvation essentially begin with Matthew 16:16. The reader will see how Matthew 16:16 is a perfect foundation, and how the doctrines that are developed from it become a

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Chapman, Scot Gibson, editors, “The Complete Visual Guide to Building a House,” 2013, Page 50, The Taunten Press Inc. Page

sturdy frame for the Christian's doctrinal house.

## FRAMING DOCTRINE FROM MATTHEW 16:16

*“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

The first thing to notice about Matthew 16:16 is that it is simple. Just like primary math is the foundation for secondary math, the foundation of Christ's church is simple. It can be, and must be, grasped before moving on to more complicated teachings. As the understanding progresses, the foundation - that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God - will support, direct, and stabilize each doctrine that develops from this truth. This will be shown below.

Not only is this foundation simple, but it is unchangeable. The fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God is solid. One plus one will always equal two, even as one advances on to more complex mathematical expressions. If this basic equation were changeable, then the more complex math that is built upon it would be nonsense and confusion - unpredictable and without consistency. The fact that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God remains intact and true even when considering more complex biblical teachings. Otherwise the more complex teachings will be nonsense and confusion - unpredictable and without consistency.

As the building begins, the reader will notice that Matthew 16:16 is Scripture. We have a “Thus saith the Lord” - a clear, unmistakable statement that the beginner can understand and be secure in. In fact, as soon as a child is mature enough to understand that they are a child and have a father they will be able to understand, according to their developmental level, the basis of Christ's church - He is the Son, and the living God is His Father. It is simple, straight forward, and easy to grasp.

From this point we can frame other truths of the Bible. The foundation will remain intact, and will be the heart of each succeeding doctrine. Beginning at the base, other fundamental truths naturally develop:

1. “Thou [Jesus] art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).

The basic, fundamental belief is a matter of Christ's identity, who He is. Jesus

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is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

2. Building upon this base, and, indeed, from within this very base, develops another basic truth. If Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, then there *is* a living God:

“But the LORD is the true God, he is *the living God...*” Jeremiah 10:10

“... the house of God, which is the church of *the living God*, the pillar and ground of the truth.” 1Timothy 3:15

There are many witnesses throughout the Bible harmoniously declaring that our God is the living God. Our foundation is sure, and the building being erected is stable.

See also Matthew 16:16; John 6:69; Acts 14:15; Romans 9:26; 2Corinthians 3:3; 6:16; 1Timothy 3:15; 4:10; 6:17; Hebrews 3:12; 9:14; 10:3;12:22; Revelation 7:2; Deuteronomy 5:26; Joshua 3:10; 1Samuel 17:26; 2Kings 19:4; Psalm 42:2; 84:2; Jeremiah 10:10; 23:36; Daniel 6:26; Hosea 1:10; etc.

3. The next truth to naturally develop from the base is the fact that Christ is *the Son* of the living God:

“Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is *his son’s* name, if thou canst tell?” Proverbs 30:4

“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten *Son*, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” John 1:18

“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. For God sent not his *Son* into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” John 3:16, 17

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“And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, *the Son* of the living God.” John 6:69

“She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the *Son* of God, which should come into the world.” John 11:27

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the *Son* of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” John 20:31

There is no controversy in the Word of God. Christ is God’s Son.

See also Mark 1:1; Luke 4:41; John Chapter 17; Acts 8:37; 9:20; Romans 1:3; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews Chapter 1; 3:6; 5:5; 1John 1:3; 1:7; 2:22; 3:23; 5:20; 2John 1:3; 1:9; etc.

4. Adding another layer to the foundation, we see that if Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, then the living God is the *Father*. Christ’s identity is defined by relationship. He is a Son - the Son of the living God. It naturally follows, then, that God’s identity is also defined by this relationship. The living God is the *Father*.

Every time God is declared to be the Father, an implicit declaration is being made that Christ is the Son. And every time Christ is declared to be the Son of God, an implicit declaration is being made that God is the Father.

“But to us there is but one God, the *Father*...” 1 Corinthians 8:6

“One God and *Father* of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” Ephesians 4:6

“As the *living Father* hath sent me, and I live by the *Father*: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.” John 6:57

In this sense, the identities of the Father and the Son, God and Christ, are united. The identity of each reveals the truth about the other. The truth about one testifies to the truth of the other. This is why in 1John 2:22, 23 we are

informed,

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.” 1John 2:22, 23

Bound up in the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, is the truth that God is the Father. Christ, then, can be denied from any of these points: by denying that Jesus is the Christ, by denying that the Christ is the Son of God, or by denying that God is the Father.

See also John 6:27; Romans 15:6; 1Corinthians 1:9; 2Corinthians 1:3, 11:31; Galatians 1:1, 1:3; Ephesians 1:3, 6:23; Philippians 2:1; Colossians 1:3; 1Thessalonians 1:1, 3:11, 3:13; 2Thessalonians 2:16; 2Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; 1Peter 1:2, 1:3; 2John 1:3; Jude 1:1; etc.

5. Continuing on, if Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and the living God is the Father, then the relationship between God and Christ is a *Father-Son relationship*. This relationship, in order for it to be an authentic Father-Son relationship, must express the structure of the Father being the Source.

The Father is most clearly acknowledged as the Source of His Son in John 3:16 where it is declared that the Son is the “only begotten Son of God.” The Son came from His Father. There can be no misunderstanding of this dynamic, unless the plain and simple reading of all three of the words “begotten” and “Son” and “Father” are complicated and altered contrary to integrity and common sense.

This structure of the Father being the Source of the Son is also revealed in Proverbs 8:22-26:

“The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, *I was brought forth*; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I *brought forth*: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of

the dust of the world.” Proverbs 8:22-26

Built into every mention and acknowledgment that Christ is the Son of God is the structure of the Father being the Source of His Son. It cannot be altered, unless the integrity of language is sacrificed, common sense is willfully reasoned into illogic, and the straight-forward and plain reading of the three words “Father,” “Son,” and “begotten” are abandoned.

Old Testament references (Proverbs 8:22-26; 30:4; Daniel 3:25) testify that Christ was God’s Son before the incarnation and before creation. Christ’s identity as the Son of God, then, reaches into the days of eternity. In the days of eternity, before the incarnation and before creation, outside of our concept of time, Christ was begotten of God. See also Proverbs 30:4; John 3:18; 8:42; 1John 4:9; Hebrews 1:5.

Just how was Christ begotten of the Father? David Sims explains in his book, “Bible Studies to Do at Home:”

“It is not for us to know exactly how the Son was brought forth, because God has not seen fit to reveal it to us. However, in the Genesis account of creation we find a rather interesting account:

And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man” (Genesis 2:21, 22).

This is one example of someone coming from the substance of another in a different way than children are born. I repeat, it is not for us to know how the Son of God was brought forth, but the point is that the Son “proceeded forth and came from God” (John 8:42), that he was “brought forth” of the Father “before the hills” (Proverbs 8:24, 25).”<sup>2</sup>

6. The doctrinal framework continues. Because Christ is the begotten Son of God, He has the same nature and substance as God, that is, *Christ is divine*.

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2 [www.seventhdayhomechurchfellowships.org](http://www.seventhdayhomechurchfellowships.org)

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Just as a human child inherits human nature and human characteristics, so Christ, the divine Son, possesses the divine nature and divine characteristics of His Father. Thus Christ possesses all the authority, dignity, abilities, and glory of God that differentiate the created from their Creator.

Being the only begotten Son of God, Christ has not only inherited all the characteristics of divinity from God, but He is the exact representation of the person of God. God is in Christ:

“[Christ is] the brightness of [God’s] glory, and *the express image of his person*” (Hebrews 1:3).

“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? *he that hath seen me hath seen the Father*; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” John 14:9

“I and my Father are one.” John 10:30

Because Christ is begotten of God and possesses all the traits of God, He rightfully claims His Father’s name as His own.

“... as he [Christ] hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name... unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, *O God...*” (Hebrews 1:4, 8).

God is in Christ. “A son always rightfully takes the name of his father; he has, to some extent, the features and personal characteristics of his father; not perfectly, because there is no perfect reproduction among mankind. But there is no imperfection in God, or in any of His works; and so Christ is the “express image” of the Father’s person. Heb.1:3. As the Son of the self-existent God, he has by nature all the attributes of Deity.”<sup>3</sup> The Son is a perfect representation of God.

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3 E.J. Waggoner, “Christ and His Righteousness,” Southern Publishing Association, Nashville, Tennessee, 1972, p. 12

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7. If Christ is the express image of God's person, the perfect representation of God, then not only is God seen in Christ, but Christ is seen in God. *They are one*, yet two distinct beings with distinct identities. They share the same nature (divine), have the same character (perfectly righteous), and the same purpose (the redemption of man i.e. Love).

In this same way we are to be one as the body of Christ, each Christian representing Christ. In this way we are one with the Father in Christ, and one with another, each reflecting the same Christ, but maintaining our individual identities and personalities:

“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” John 17:21

Just as Christ perfectly represented His Father - in nature, in character, and in purpose - Christ is to be perfectly represented in us. This is possible through the promises of the Bible:

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be *partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2Peter 1:4

First, we are born again:

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3

We receive the Holy Spirit:

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38

And by the Spirit we enter into fellowship with God and Christ:

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“We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.” 1John 1:3

“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit...” Philipians 2:1

Entering into fellowship with God and Christ means to partner with them, or to walk with them by partaking of the divine nature through the Word of God. Everyone who professes to be a Christian is to reflect Christ’s character and His purpose. This can only happen if we partake of the divine nature that He has so generously given us access to through the promises of the Bible. Through the mediation of Christ, and through the righteousness of our Mediator, we may partake of His divine nature. We may have the same righteous character, and the same holy purpose. We may be one with Him, and with His body, the church.

8. Still grounded in Matthew 16:16, we continue to build. Because the relationship between God and Christ is an authentic Father-Son relationship, the Bible not only testifies that the Father is the Source (see point 4), but that the Son is subject to His Father. Before the incarnation, during His incarnation, after His resurrection, at the present moment, and for all eternity Christ was, is, and will be subject to His Father without losing His inherited equality with God.

*Before the incarnation* -- John 3:16 declares that God sent His Son into the world. If God sent His Son into the world, then He had a Son to send into the world. This not only testifies of Christ’s Sonship before His incarnation, but of the authority of the Father before Christ ever graced the earth. Even though Christ laid His life down for us of His own free will, it was on His Father’s command that He was sent:

“Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself,

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but he sent me.” John 8:42

*While Christ walked the earth --*

“Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” John 5:19

“Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.” John 8:28, 29

*At the present moment --* 1Corinthians 3:23 and 1Corinthians 11:3 clearly state that this Father-Son structure is current. Notice the use of the present tense:

“And ye are Christ’s; and *Christ is God’s.*” 1Corinthians 3:23

“But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and *the head of Christ is God.*” 1Corinthians 11:3

*For all eternity --* 1Corinthians 15:27-28 expresses this same structure even after death is abolished and all things are restored:

“Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he “has put everything under his feet.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son

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himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.” 1Corinthians 15:24-28

See also Psalm 40:8; Matthew 26:39; John 3:16, 4:34, 5:19, 5:30, 5:36-37, 6:38, 6:57, 8:28, 8:42, 14:10, 14:28; 18:11, 20:17; 15:28; etc.

9. Following on, because Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and because the living God is the Father, it can be trusted that *God and Christ are two separate and distinct Beings*.

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father, *and* the Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 1:7

“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, *and* from the Lord Jesus Christ.” 1Corinthians 1:3

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty *and* the Lamb are the temple of it.” Revelation 21:22

See also John chapter 17; Acts 2:36, 4:10; Romans 8:34; 1Corinthians 3:23, 8:6, 11:3; 2Corinthians 1:2, 1:3, 11:31; Galatians 1:1, 1:3; Ephesians 1:2, 1:3, 6:23; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:3; 1Thessalonians 1:1, 3:11; 2Thessalonians 1:1, 1:2, 1:12, 2:16; 1Timothy 1:2, 2:5, 5:21; 2Timothy 1:2... etc... Revelation 1:1, 20:6, 21:22, 22:1, 22:3.

10. Because God and Christ are two separate and distinct beings, *there are boundaries that define who they are*, and that allow them to be distinguishable. Two examples of boundaries that allow God and Christ to be separate and distinguishable from one another are form and personality.

God has a form. We were made in the image of God. In character and in form, we were created to reflect God:

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” Genesis 1:27

Our God and Father, the Ancient of Days, has hair, a head, and a body that

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can sit:

“I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire.” Daniel 7:9

He has a face that the heavenly angels behold:

“Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven *their angels do always behold the face of my Father* which is in heaven.” Matthew 18:10

Jesus tells us that God has a shape, a shape that can be seen, even though we ourselves cannot see it:

“And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen *his shape*.” John 5:37

Christ had a form before being incarnated in the form of man. Being the begotten of God, He is the express image of God. “Express image” in Hebrews 1:3 means an exact representation. This includes God’s form, or God’s shape.

“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*... sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Hebrews 1:1-

Philippians 2:6 reveals that Christ was “in the form of God.” “Form” means “shape” as well as “nature.”

“[Christ] Who, being *in the form* of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God...” Philippians 2:6

As well as having form, God and Christ have likes and dislikes. These are

## THE TWO FOUNDATIONS OF WORSHIP

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boundaries of their personalities. Just like we have boundaries of what we will allow or disallow according to our likes and dislikes, so do God and Christ. In Proverbs 6:16-19 God lets us know that there are things that He hates:

“These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.” Proverbs 6:16-19

In Proverbs 8:30 God reveals something that He loves – He delights in His Son. Christ says,

“Then [time of creation] I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.” Proverbs 8:30

God delights in the upright.:

“They that are of a froward heart are abomination to the LORD: but such as are upright in their way are his delight.” Proverbs 11:20

The Son delights to do His Father’s will:

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” Psalm 40:8

God and Christ both love righteousness and hate wickedness:

“Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Psalm 45:7; Hebrews 1:9

11. Because God and Christ are separate and distinct beings with boundaries that define who they are, and because God and Christ are two distinct beings who participate in relationship, *God and Christ are personal Beings*. This

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means that we can know them. We can enter into a relationship with them that will grow and deepen in love and trust as we gain experiential knowledge of God and of His Son through relationship. As the Christian grows in understanding of who they are, this relationship strengthens. Not only is this the most wonderful privilege that could ever be afforded mankind, but it is a necessity if we are to receive the final fulfillment of our hope.

“And this is life eternal, that they might *know* thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:3

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and *learn of me*; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matthew 11:28, 29

“... and truly our *fellowship* is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” 1John 1:3

The deepest needs and desires of our soul are met through a relationship with God and Christ.

Summing it up, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. This foundation supports, directs, and stabilizes the following truths:

1. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God;
2. God exists. He is the living God;
3. Christ is the living God's Son;
4. The living God is the Father;
5. There is an authentic Father-Son relationship between God and Christ;
6. The Father is the Source of the Son;
7. The Son is divine through inheritance;
8. The Son is subject to the Father;
9. God and Christ are two separate beings;
10. God and Christ have boundaries that distinguish one from the other

and define who they are, their personalities;

11. God is a personal God, and Christ is a personal Saviour, who we have the privilege and necessity of knowing.

Starting from the same foundation in Matthew 16:16, we can move on to other lines of doctrinal development. For instance, when Peter answered Jesus' question, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," he was speaking to, and about, the *man* Jesus. Our foundation now directs, supports, and stabilizes the building of doctrine regarding the human incarnation of the divine Son of God. A view begins to open up to the condescension of the living God's only begotten Son, perfect in righteousness and wholly divine, leaving His splendorous, heavenly home and the bosom of His Father to take on the nature of fallen man, made of the seed of David according to the flesh.

Following another line, we see that Jesus is the *Christ*. He is the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. This Messiah is both the Son of man and the Son of God, both human and divine. And so the window begins to open to Christ's mediation between God and man, and what it means to be the Saviour.

It is nothing short of absolutely amazing how the confession of who Jesus the Christ is, so easy to understand in Matthew 16:16, and so simple in its design, can become the foundation for every doctrine about God, Christ, and salvation. Truly, it was neither from Peter's own intellect nor the wisdom of man that this confession was realized and given, but from the perfect wisdom and knowledge of God Himself:

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Matthew 16:17

Matthew 16:16 is a perfect foundation, even being declared by Christ Himself to be the enduring strength of His church. It is perfectly square, straight, and level. Therefore the doctrines built from this foundation are plumb to the line, forming a doctrinal frame that is stable and perfectly straight, and that will weather the fiercest storm that the enemy can howl upon the church of Christ.

The foundation of Christ's church, according to Christ, is established in

Matthew 16:16. It is simple, definite, and clearly stated in the Bible. Even young children can understand it. It rests in “Thus saith the Lord.” From it, we can build and establish sound doctrines about the existence of a personal God and a personal Saviour who is both the Son of God and the Son of man, who is our mediator between God and man, and who is our Saviour.

What about the doctrine of the Trinity?

### FRAMING DOCTRINE FROM THE TRINITY

*“God exists as three persons [God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit] ... but is one being [or one unit]... The members of the Trinity are co-equal and co-eternal... all three are eternal without beginning...”*<sup>4</sup> *“God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are each equally and eternally the one true God.”*<sup>5</sup>

There are two main differences between Matthew 16:16 and the trinitarian foundation to be aware of before looking at the doctrine itself. First, unlike the foundation that Christ has declared for His church, there is no “Thus saith the Lord” for the Trinity. The above trinitarian statement, and every trinitarian statement, cannot be found in Scripture. Nor can anything remotely similar be found. The idea is simply not expressed in holy writ. This is freely admitted by religious scholars who firmly believe in and defend the Trinity:

“What does the Old Testament tell us of God? It tells us there is one God... But it tells us nothing explicitly or by necessary implication of a Triune God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”<sup>6</sup>

“Certainly, it cannot be denied that not only the word “Trinity”,

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4 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity#Trinitarian\\_baptismal\\_formula](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity#Trinitarian_baptismal_formula)

5 <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t002.html>

6 Edmund J. Fortman, The Triune God, Introduction, page XV, 1972

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but even the explicit idea of the Trinity is absent from the apostolic witness to the faith.”<sup>7</sup>

“The formal doctrine of the trinity as it was defined by the great church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries is not to be found in the New Testament.”<sup>8</sup>

“There is no systematic doctrine of the “immanent” trinity in the NT [New Testament]. The nearest to such a proposition is the baptismal formula of Mt 28:19, though it must be noted that modern exegesis does not count this saying among the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus.”<sup>9</sup>

*(note: ‘ipsissima verba’ is Latin for ‘the very words’)*

“While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, it is assumed as a fact.”<sup>10</sup>

“The role of the trinity in a doctrine of God always raises questions. One reason is that the word itself does not appear in the Bible, nor is there any clear statement of the idea.”<sup>11</sup>

Because it is not explicitly stated in Scripture but “is assumed as fact,” the doctrine of the Trinity is more of a conclusion about Scripture than a foundation beginning with Scripture. There is the necessity, then, of finding another foundation that will support the trinitarian conclusion. This moves us away from the Trinity as a starting point because there is another foundation yet to discover, which the Trinity itself is built on. If there was a reference in the Bible that was explicit, clearly stating the trinitarian creed, then further study would not be required, and it might suffice as a beginning point.

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7 Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, Chapter 16, page 205, ‘The Triune God’.

8 Paul J. Achtemeier, *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, 1985, Page 1099

9 Karl Rahner, *Encyclopedia of Theology – A concise Sacramentum Mundi*, page 1755, 1975

10 *Review and Herald*, Special issue, Volume 158, No. 31 July 1981, ‘The Trinity’.

11 Richard Rice, *The Reign of God, An Introduction to Christian Theology from a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective*, page 89, ‘A constructive proposal’, 1985

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This leads to the second difference with using the Trinity as the starting point. Because the Bible student is required to search out a foundation for the Trinity, the Trinity as the foundation has become complicated. It is like starting the child with algebra or calculus rather than with counting. It is not an actual starting point in the Word of God, being neither clearly stated in Scripture nor simple.

In fact, it is far from simple. The concept of a trinitarian God is actually an unsolvable paradox. It is the type of intellectual challenge that forms the “ultimate passion” and madness of the world’s most renowned philosophers. According to Soren Kierkegaard, a nineteenth century Danish philosopher and forefather of existentialism,

“The paradox is the passion of thought, and the thinker without a paradox is like the lover without passion; a mediocre fellow. But the ultimate potentiation of every passion is always to will its own downfall, and so it is also the ultimate passion of the understanding to will the collision, although in one way or another the collision must become its downfall. This, then, is the ultimate paradox of thought: to want to discover something that thought itself cannot think.”<sup>12</sup>

Compared to the simplicity of “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” the trinitarian foundation is the “ultimate paradox of thought”, a masterpiece of puzzling impossibility. If it wasn’t believed that it was God Himself who said that three is one and one is three, then no person of sound mind would ever try to prove it, or to defend it, or to even consider it. It defies mathematical logic and is expressed nowhere in the natural world.

The sincere seeker must give room to the question: Is the trinitarian concept of God the work of God’s wisdom, which is pure and gentle, peacefully leading to obedience (James 3:17), or the passion of man’s philosophy, darkened by sin, laden with speculation, and leading the Christian away from

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12 Kierkegaard, Soren (1985). Hong, Howard V.; Hong, Edna H., eds. “Philosophical Fragments.” Princeton University Press. p. 37. ISBN 9780691020365.

obedience to God, that is, to their downfall? It does bear striking similarities with Kierkegaard's description of the philosopher's ultimate passion: "something that thought itself cannot think." Three is not one. One is not three.

Attempts have been made to simplify the trinitarian paradox using analogies, such as "God is like an egg",<sup>13</sup> but these are misleading and grossly insufficient. In the analogy of the egg, the three persons of God are compared to the three obviously visible structures within the egg - the yolk, the white, and the shell. This is used to illustrate how one God (the whole egg) is three persons (the yolk, the white, and the shell).

But this analogy completely misses the mark. The Trinity claims that God is three persons and each of these three persons are "equally and eternally the one true God (*God* the Father, *God* the Son, and *God* the Holy Spirit). The three Gods of the Trinity, even though they are three Gods, are not three Gods, but one God. The egg analogy does not even attempt to illustrate that one egg is three eggs, or that the yolk of an egg is the whole egg. It would be absurd. It is impossible for our thoughts to think of such a thing. One egg is never going to be three eggs. The yolk will never be the whole egg. Perhaps this is just the thing Kierkegaard has described. Perhaps we have discovered, in the Trinity, "the ultimate paradox of thought... something that thought itself cannot think."

These two differences between Matthew 16:16 and the Trinity make a direct comparison impossible for the following reasons:

1. There is no "Thus saith the Lord," so we don't have a starting point. It is not wise or responsible to build doctrine upon a statement about God that describes who He is if it is not explicitly found in the Bible. We may only accept it as a conclusion. If used as a foundation, we have nowhere to go with the Trinity. It only points to the need to prove its own validity. If we build upon the doctrine of the Trinity, we will be building upon the conclusions of man, rather than the Word of God.
2. The trinitarian foundation is not simple, but complicated. The process of building upon this foundation is more of a process of deconstruction.

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13 [www.adventist.org/beliefs/god/trinity/](http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/god/trinity/)

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We need to take the complex conclusion about scripture and work backwards. Rather than building from the simple to the more complex, the Christian is forced to either accept a complex doctrine without a “Thus saith the Lord” as a starting point, or he is forced to gather evidence to support a conclusion that has already been made.

For these reasons, the Trinity is not a true foundation. As such, it is not possible to use it as a base upon which to build lines of doctrine as was done with Matthew 16:16.

Since we can't build doctrine from the Trinity, we will place the Trinity next to Matthew 16:16 and will compare the features, the building blocks, of each. In this process, over the next three chapters, we will discover the foundation of the Trinity.

### 3. COMPARING THE ESSENTIAL FEATURES

Every feature that is within Matthew 16:16 is essential. Christ has spoken, and has established this truth as the foundation of His church. Thus every feature is critical in order that the “gates of hell” will not overtake the church. It is not enough to know and believe that Jesus is the Son of the living God, yet refuse the Christ, the Messiah of the world. Neither is it enough to know and believe that there is a Christ, the Messiah of the world, while refusing to believe that He became the man Jesus. All the features must be included in order for doctrine to be truthful as all the features are essential to sound understanding.

So closely are the features connected that if one is refused the others become perverted. For example, if Jesus is accepted as the Son of man but is refused as the Christ, then the truth about Jesus is perverted and ultimately lost, because He *is* the Christ. If Jesus is received as the Christ, but is refused as the Son of God, then the truth about the Christ, who *is* the Son of God, is perverted, and the Christ is ultimately lost. The identity, personality, and mission of Christ becomes perverted when one of the features is missing. Every feature is essential and has a close relationship with the other features.

Here I would like to remind the reader of two points. First, a foundation contains the building blocks to support, as well as to develop, all succeeding doctrine. If a doctrine is developed that does not harmonize with the building blocks in the foundation, then it is evident that doctrine has veered away from soundness. For example, one plus one equals two. If a student solves this simple mathematical equation but produces a different sum, we are able to discern that there is an error. The problem is re-examined to find and correct the error, and the student is not allowed to progress until the lesson has been correctly learned.

A solid foundation is what enables errors to be discerned, as well as to

ready the student for further education. So with doctrine. If a doctrine develops that does not harmonize with the foundational building blocks, we may discern that there is an error. A re-examination is appropriate in order to find and correct the error before attempting to understand subsequent doctrines.

The second point I would like to remind the reader to consider is that the Trinity is a conclusion about Scripture, not actually a starting point in Scripture with which to begin building doctrine. As this is the case, the following comparison will have the effect of checking the validity of the Trinity as a conclusion about Scripture. We will see if the said sum of Scripture (the Trinity) harmonizes with the foundational building blocks (Matthew 16:16).

If the following comparison shows that the building blocks of Matthew 16:16 are present in the Trinity, then we can count the Trinity as a sound doctrine concerning God. But if not, if the following comparison shows that the building blocks are not present, then we must acknowledge that the trinitarian conclusion is an error. If the Trinity as a conclusion is not sound, then the Christian who has produced it as the conclusion of their study will need to back-track and make the appropriate corrections.

Does the Trinity have the building blocks, the essential features, of Matthew 16:16?

**Matthew 16:16**

Thou [Jesus] art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

**Trinity**

God exists as three persons [God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit]... but is one being... The members of the Trinity are co-equal and co-eternal... all three are eternal without beginning.” “God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are each equally and eternally the one true God.

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### Features of Matthew 16:16

1. **Jesus** (Thou...)
2. **Christ** (... art the Christ...)
3. **The Son** (... the Son...)
4. **The living God** (... of the living God)
5. **Father - Son Relationship**  
(The living God is the Father, Christ is the Son of the living God)

### Features of the Trinity

1. **God** (God...)
2. **Three persons** (... exists as three persons...)
3. **God the Father** (... God the Father...)
4. **God the Son** (... God the Son...)
5. **God the Holy Spirit** (... and God the Holy Spirit...)
6. **Co-equal** (... The members of the Trinity are co-equal...)
7. **Co-eternal** (... and co-eternal...)
8. **Eternal** (... and all three are eternal...)
9. **No beginning** (... and without beginning.)
10. **Three in one relationship**  
(God is three Gods who are equally and eternally the one God)

There are five basic building blocks in Matthew 16:16: 1) Jesus, 2) the Christ, 3) the Son, 4) the living God, and 5) the Father-Son relationship. Are these five essential features of Matthew 16:16 present in the trinitarian declaration?

1. *Jesus* -- No. There is no specific reference to Jesus in the trinitarian declaration. Neither is there any Bible witness expressing the realization that God is the Trinity. This means that the trinitarian statement cannot be part of a conversation with Jesus as was Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16, or with

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any other Bible character. It is addressed to no one, and is a self-supporting statement with no biblical setting.

The significance of this missing feature is that there is no link to Jesus, the Son of man. The Trinity is disconnected from the truth that the divine Son of God came in the flesh. A foundation is the beginning point and must contain the building blocks that form the increase of knowledge. Since this essential building block is missing, doctrines that develop from the Trinity will be missing this feature. They will ignore, suppress, distort, confuse, or eliminate the truth about Jesus being the Son of God in the flesh of man.

2. *Christ* -- No. There is no specific mention of Christ in the trinitarian foundation. The Trinity makes no reference to the Saviour, the Messiah, the anointed One. The significance of this missing feature is that the Trinity is disconnected from the Christ, the Saviour of the world. There is no reference to Christ's saving mediation between God and man. The Trinity is a Christ-less foundation, and, as such, will never be able to produce a Saviour.

3. *The Son* -- Yes. The Son is a feature of the Trinity.

4. *The Living God* -- Yes. God is a feature of the Trinity. However, the Trinity does not speak of the *living* God.

5. *The Father-Son Relationship* -- No. The Father-Son relationship between God and Christ is not a feature of the Trinity. While the words "Father" and "Son" are used in the trinitarian creed, they are used in conjunction with an emphasis on the Son having "no beginning." This redefines the meaning of the words "Father" and "Son," which redefines the relationship that the Son of God has with His Father. The Father can no longer be the Source of His Son. This denies the existence of an authentic Father-Son relationship, where the Son is begotten of the living God.

Even though "Son" is a feature of the Trinity, we are prevented from the conclusion that He is a true Son, the only begotten Son. And while "God" is a feature of the Trinity, we are prevented from the understanding that He is the true Father of Christ, the One who begat His Son. The authentic Father-Son relationship between God and His divine Son has been perverted. And with

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this perversion, the identities of both God and Christ, Father and Son, have been distorted.

The meaning of “Son” has been hollowed out, and we are left with the problem of redefining and reinterpreting this word in a manner that will mean anything but the true and obvious meaning of the word “Son.” This leads to the same process of hollowing out the meaning of “Father,” and especially of the word “begotten.” These words must be redefined and reinterpreted to mean anything but what they really mean in order to keep the illusion of truth and harmony with Scripture.

The identity of the living God as the Father is replaced by the definition that God is three persons. The identity of the Son as the living God’s Son is replaced by the definition that the Son is Himself the same God, who is three persons. The Father-Son relationship between God and Christ is replaced by a one-in-three-and-three-in-one relationship where both are the same “one God” in identity. No longer are they two distinct individuals. The individuality of God and His only begotten Son merge into one individual [or one unit], the same one God.

Thus we see that the only features on which the Trinity might have agreed with Matthew 16:16 - “Son,” “Father,” and “God” - have actually become the nemesis of Matthew 16:16. These redefined and hollowed out words oppose the truth of Matthew 16:16 by eliminating the relationship between God and Christ. The outcome is loss. Injury has been done to the identities of God and His divine Son, and the Christian has been removed from the truth.

We are left with a God who is not really a Father, and a Son of God who is not really a Son. The Trinity as a foundation is disconnected from the true identities of God and Christ, and will never be able to connect with these truths, or produce doctrine that honors the relationship expressed in Matthew 16:16. At this point, we can return to the third and fourth features just examined and change the answers from “yes” to “no.”

There is no need of looking at the other features of the Trinity at this point, for it is evident that the Trinity does not include *any* of the features of Christ’s foundation in Matthew 16:16: Jesus is missing; the Christ is missing; the Father-Son relationship is missing; and therefore the living God and His only begotten Son are missing.

These differences assure us of something that is very important to note.

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There is absolutely no agreement between the Trinity and Matthew 16:16, just the illusion of one. And where there is no agreement with Scripture (Matthew 16:16), there is conflict. We have discerned conflict between the trinitarian conclusion and Christ's foundation in Matthew 16:16. The trinitarian conclusion is an error.

We can be sure, then, that the Trinity will never be able to produce the same doctrines as Matthew 16:16, because the building blocks are simply not there. And just as surely, because the building blocks are not there, doctrines that are based in the Trinity will ever oppose the sound doctrines that are based in Christ's foundation. Likewise, no matter how far the doctrinal line is advanced, the foundation of "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" will never produce a doctrine that has sympathy with the Trinity, because Matthew 16:16's building blocks are always there, being both the root and the heart of subsequent doctrines.

The Trinity and Matthew 16:16 are in such severe conflict that each cancels the other out. The God of the Trinity cannot be the living God who is the Father of the Son, our Lord Jesus the Christ. The God described in the Trinity is another God who is not the Father, but is three persons. Because of the close relationship between foundation and doctrine, any apparent connection between Matthew 16:16 and the Trinity is, in reality, non-existent. The two are as far apart as east and west, and never shall they meet.

### SUMMARY

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| 1. Modern Christianity defines Christianity by the Trinity.  | Jesus defines Christianity by Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16.   |
| 2. As a foundation, the Trinity is not an actual starting point, being neither explicitly stated in Scripture, nor simple. | As a foundation, Matthew 16:16 is the perfect starting point. It is declared to be the foundation by Jesus Christ Himself, is explicitly stated in Scripture, and is simple. |

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|---|---|
| 3. A line of doctrine cannot be safely developed from the Trinity.                                | A line of doctrine can be safely, and easefully, developed from Matthew 16:16.        |
| 4. The features of the Trinity are antagonistic to Matthew 16:16.                                 | The features of Matthew 16:16 are antagonistic to the Trinity.                        |
| 5. Doctrines that might be developed from the Trinity will not have agreement with Matthew 16:16. | The doctrines that develop from Matthew 16:16 do not have agreement with the Trinity. |

Since all of the elements of Christ's perfect foundation, Matthew 16:16, are missing from the Trinity, the Trinity is an uneven, unstable, and crooked foundation. It cannot lead to the construction of a stable frame of doctrine. A doctrinal house built upon the Trinity will not meet acceptable standards of quality. For this reason the Trinity also fails as a conclusion. As a sum of Scripture, it does not harmonize with the foundation taught by Christ. The honest Christian who believes in the Trinity will need to re-examine their faith and make the necessary corrections.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;  
prove your own selves.”  
2Corinthians 13:5

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:  
and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.  
Who is he that overcometh the world,  
but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”  
1John 5:4, 5

## 4. A MOST SERIOUS IMPLICATION

*“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?  
He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.”  
John 2:22*

The Christian foundation is not a concept, nor is it merely a belief. It is Christ Himself. 1 Corinthians 3:11 states,

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

This is what Peter realized and confessed: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Peter confessed Christ Himself, and Christ Himself confirms this as the foundation of His church: “Upon this rock I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). The most serious implication of using the Trinity as a foundation is that it is replacing the person of Jesus Christ.

Likewise, the Trinitarian foundation is much more than a concept, much more than a belief. The Trinity is a description of somebody real. It is a description of someone believed to be God, and all who believe in the Trinity believe in the God that the Trinity describes. They have a relationship with this God. They pray to Him. They contemplate Him. They work for Him. They devote themselves to Him. They receive of His Spirit. They love Him, and they worship Him.

The Trinity is far more than a concept of God, it is the name of the God it is designed to describe. It actually points to, identifies, and signifies the

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trinitarian God. This is why He is often addressed as “Blessed Trinity,”<sup>1 2</sup> and “Most Holy Trinity.” “Trinity” is a name that represents the God it is said to describe:

“The *name we give to God, The Trinity*, marks the depth and height of the Christian knowledge and experience of *who God is.*”<sup>3</sup>

And not only that, but the name, “Trinity,” also “marks” the experience that Christians will have when they worship this God:

“The name we give to God, The Trinity, *marks* the depth and height of the Christian knowledge *and experience* of who God is.”<sup>4</sup>

The conflict between Matthew 16:16 and the Trinity is not merely a conflict of opinions or of doctrinal interpretation. This conflict is much more ominous. It is a conflict between the foundation laid in Matthew 16:16, which is Christ Himself, and the God that the Trinity describes. It is a conflict between a genuine Christian experience, and a false Christian experience.

The Trinity has become the preferred foundation of Christianity. This means that the Trinity has taken the place of Matthew 16:16. And this means that the God of the Trinity has taken the place of Jesus Christ.

What is the proper biblical term applied to imposters taking the place of Christ? The proper biblical term is antichrist. At this point, we may remove the capital “G” from the God called the Trinity and replace it with a lower case “g,” demoting this god to its proper place as an idol and an imposter. The name “Trinity” can now and hereafter be understood as the name of a god, not merely the name of a concept or of a belief. When the word “Trinity” is used it is being used as the name of a real, imposter god who is the antagonist of Jesus Christ.

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1 <https://www.adventist.org/beliefs/god/trinity/article/go/0/god-in-three-persons/>

2 <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15047a.htm>

3 [http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20100528\\_1.htm](http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20100528_1.htm)

4 [http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20100528\\_1.htm](http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20100528_1.htm)

## A DEEPER LOOK: THE FOUNDATION OF THE TRINITY

As stated earlier, the Trinity points to the need to prove its own validity. It is not a true foundation as the declaration is not explicitly stated in Scripture, nor is it a simple concept to grasp. These two factors make it necessary to find out what the building blocks of the Trinity are. Therefore, the features expressed in the Trinity cannot be considered as essential building blocks, but must be regarded as the conclusion. The question arises, what then are the essential building blocks that formed the features specific to the Trinity? What is the foundation that the Trinity is built upon, and made-up of?

We have already clarified the 10 features of the Trinity:

1. **God** (God...)
2. **Three persons** (... exists as three persons...)
3. **God the Father** (... God the Father...)
4. **God the Son** (... God the Son...)
5. **God the Holy Spirit** (... and God the Holy Spirit...)
6. **Co-equal** (... The members of the Trinity are co-equal...)
7. **Co-eternal** (... and co-eternal...)
8. **Eternal** (... and all three are eternal...)
9. **No beginning** (... and without beginning.)
10. **Three in one relationship** (God is three persons who are equally and eternally the one God)

After looking at the above features, reflex will spur the Bible student who wishes to validate the doctrine of the Trinity to begin gathering Scripture that will prove each point. The student will set themselves to collect all the Scriptures that show that the Father is real, as is the Son, as is the Holy Spirit. They'll collect Scriptures that tell us that God is eternal, that He had no beginning, that the Son is equal to the Father, etc. This collection of Scripture will be used as the foundation for the Trinity.

But we must refrain from doing this. Not only is this backwards, but the Trinity contains none of the essential building blocks for sound doctrine

## THE TWO FOUNDATIONS OF WORSHIP

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about God. This means that all the Scriptures gathered will be disconnected from the true foundation and distorted to validate a doctrine that is antagonistic to Jesus Christ. This is a gross misuse of Scripture.

Rather than misusing Scripture, the foundation of the Trinity will be discovered by listening to what it actually says. Both Matthew 16:16 and the Trinity are declarations made by speakers. These speakers are giving their testimony about each foundation. Not only is the speaker of each foundation giving a testimony, but the foundation itself in turn gives testimony about the speaker.

For example, in Matthew 16:16, Jesus Christ becomes a witness for the true speaker. Peter's confession in Matthew 16:16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," was a revelation that God gave to him. The true speaker is God, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). Peter confessed what the Father had revealed. He believed and confessed the witness of God about His Son.

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son." 1John 5:9, 10

The speaker of Matthew 16:16 is God, and as the Father revealed the Son to Peter, the Son became a revelation of God, "for God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face [the visible person] of Jesus Christ" (2Corinthians 4:6). God gives knowledge of Himself when He reveals the truth about Jesus Christ. He speaks to us through His Son, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2). Christ is the Word of God (Revelation 19:3). As God reveals Jesus Christ to our understanding, the Word speaks, and Jesus Christ becomes a witness for God.

What does this revelation of Jesus in Matthew 16:16 tell us about God?

## CHRIST AND THE TRINITY

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This passage declares that the living God is a Father (because Christ is His Son); that the living God, the Father, has a Son who He sent into the world in the flesh (because God's Son was the *man* Jesus that Peter was speaking to); and that the living God has provided the Saviour for mankind (because the Son of God, who is also the Son of man, is the Christ, the Saviour). God reveals Christ. Christ reveals the Father. The witness of the Father about the Son, and the witness of the Son about God are one. They are united in the deepest harmony through the Father-Son relationship. Their witness cannot be separated. Christ is the foundation revealed in Matthew 16:16, and from this foundation we receive knowledge of God, the speaker.

What about the Trinity? Who is the speaker of the trinitarian declaration about God? If the trinitarian declaration is not a statement from the Word of God, nor a scripturally sound foundation, nor a scripturally sound conclusion, then where does it come from? In other words, who said so?

Just as the revelation of Christ pointed us to God, so the revelation of the god described in the Trinity points us to the speaker of the Trinity. We have established that the trinitarian declaration is not explicitly found in Scripture, so we cannot say that it comes directly from the word of God. Therefore, the speaker of the trinitarian declaration is not obviously a biblical character - God, Christ, or any other known witness. We have to make a determination based on what the Trinity is actually declaring about the speaker. The Trinity declares that the god it describes has the following characteristics:

1. Is a god, but is not necessarily the living God (the living God is not a building block of the trinitarian declaration);
2. Is a god, but is not the Father (there is no authentic Father in the trinitarian declaration);
3. Is a son, but is not the begotten Son of the living God (there is no authentic Son of God in the trinitarian declaration);
4. Is a god, but is not the God who provided the Saviour for mankind (both the Son of God and the Son of man are missing from the trinitarian foundation (Christ's mediation), as is Christ);

## THE TWO FOUNDATIONS OF WORSHIP

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5. Is not the living God, yet, claims to be equal with God, as well as having the divine attributes of God (He is claimed to be God, as well as being co-eternal, co-equal, and without beginning).

There is a biblical character that fits this description given in the Trinity. There is someone who is the antagonist of Christ, who has put himself in the place of Christ, who claims our worship, and who, while being neither the living God nor Christ, neither Father nor begotten Son, still claims equality with God:

“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!  
how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the  
nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven,  
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the  
mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend  
above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.” Isaiah  
14:12-14

*“For thou hast said in thine heart...” (v. 13) -- “I have determined to do this.”*

*“I will ascend into heaven ...” (v. 13) -- “I will climb up to the abode of  
God.”*

*“I will exalt my throne above the stars of God...” (v. 13) -- “I will raise my au-  
thority above that of an angel.”*

*“I will sit upon the mount of the congregation...” (v. 13) -- “I will sit in God’s  
place.”*

*“In the sides of the north...” (v. 13) -- “In His holy temple” (see Psalm 48:2).*

*“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds... I will be like the most High.” (v.  
14) -- “I will climb to the highest height. I will exalt myself to be like the liv-  
ing God, the Most High.”*

The prophet Isaiah has given this revelation of Lucifer and his fall. It is not a realization about God from a biblical witness, but the revelation of one

## CHRIST AND THE TRINITY

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who is an abomination (Isaiah 14:19), an angel, a rebellious created son, who has fallen from heaven through pride and self-exaltation, and who has determined in his heart to put himself in the place of the only true living God.

The speaker of the trinitarian declaration is the fallen angel named Satan, and he speaks of himself. He declares of himself, "I am a god of a different sort, neither Father nor Son, but an imposter god cloaked in an intriguing, impenetrable paradoxical, philosophical theory, and I will exalt myself. I am my own witness that I am god. I have a controversy with the living God and His Son. I have exalted myself, and I command your worship as if I am the living God."

The building blocks of the Trinity are the rebellious, prideful lies of Satan. Though disguised as truth, subtle and poisonous errors pervade: god, but not the living God; god, but not the Father; son, but not the begotten Son.

## 5. GOD IS LOVE

*“God is love.” John 4:16*

There is one more aspect of the two foundations to compare, and that is the character of each. We have established that each foundation is more than a concept or a belief. Each is actually a person: Matthew 16:16’s foundation is Jesus Christ; the Trinity’s foundation is Satan. Because both Christ and Satan have moral and ethical quality, each foundation has moral and ethical quality, that is, character. The character of Christ is of the finest quality, and is the soul of Matthew 16:16’s building blocks. The character of Satan is of the vilest quality, and is the soul of the Trinity’s building blocks.

Character is revealed through relationship. This truth is expressed in God’s law, the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: 1-17) are the measure of character for humanity, and each precept of this law expectedly involves relationship. The first four commandments encompass humanity’s relationship with God. The last six encompass humanity’s relationship with other people. Whether or not we conform to the law of God, lovingly acknowledging both Him and others when making our decisions, determines the quality of our character. When we conform to the law of God, applying its principles practically through our relationship with God and our relationships with people, our character is of a high moral and ethical quality. Thus character becomes visible through the channel of relationship.

Each of the foundations being examined is characterized by a relationship. In Matthew 16:16, the authentic Father-Son relationship between God and His Son is established. This relationship is the channel by which the character, the moral and ethical quality, of both God and Christ are made known. The love of God and Christ is made known through their relationship. In the Trinity, the three-in-one-and-one-in-three rela-

tionship is the channel for the character, the moral and ethical quality, of Satan. The deceit of Satan is made known through this relationship.

## LOVE AND THE FATHER AND SON

The Father-Son relationship between God and Christ defines the identities of God and Christ – God is a Father and Christ is His Son. Because they are relational, the identities of God and Christ, Father and Son, reveal their character. This relational love is the soul of Christ’s church, and it is established in the revelation of who Jesus is: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).

Because this love is made known in the revelation of who Christ is, it is also made known in the revelation of who God is. God reveals Christ, and Christ reveals God. What is understood about Christ, is understood about God. The only difference is a matter of identity. Christ is the Son and this love is revealed from the view of the divine Son. He is not only submissive to His Father’s holy desire and love for mankind, but He has inherited His Father’s character. The Father’s self-sacrificing love is also His own. Hence, in submission to His Father’s will, and also of His own free will, Christ gave Himself to save humanity from the perils of sin.

God is the Father, and so this love is also revealed from the view of our divine Father. God’s love is so closely tied to His identity as the Father that we may, by knowing the Father through His Son, know that “God is love. “There is no darkness in Him at all” (1John 1:5). See 1John 4:14-16:

“<sup>14</sup>And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. <sup>15</sup>Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. <sup>16</sup>And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.” 1John 4:14-16

The declaration that “God is love” (v. 16) is made in the context of relationship. God is the *Father* (“We have seen and do testify that *the Father*...” v. 14), which is a testimony of His *Son* (“... sent *the Son* to be the Saviour of the

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world..." v. 14), which is a testimony of what God has done for us. He sent His Son and has revealed Him to each one of us just as He revealed Him to Peter in Matthew 16:16.

In receiving this revelation and in confessing this truth ("... and we have known and believed the love that God hath to us [in giving His Son]..." v. 16), we may not only *know* God, but we will know that He *is* love ("... and we have known and believed the love that God hath to us [in giving His Son... God is love" v. 16). We will know what love *is*. Love is pure. It "seeketh not her own" (1Corinthians 13:5), but has sought each one of us. Love is self-sacrificing to the point of death. God gave us His Son that we might be sons and daughters of God, hence, God is self-sacrificing. God is this self-sacrificing love which is revealed and known through His Son, who is "the express image of God" even in giving Himself to die for us - the ungodly, the weak, and the enemies of God (Romans 5:6, 8, 10) - that He might be able to keep us in relationship with Him (2Corinthians 5:18, 19).

And the love of God even exceeds this divine revelation, for with the reception of this truth God will  *dwell*  in us, and we will be  *secured*  in Him: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love [in this knowledge of God] dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1John 4:16).

"Dwelleth" (verse 16) means "to stay" (Strong's G3306). The person who acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of the living God, that is, of the Father, "stays" in the love of God, which means he "stays" in God. He is anchored, and cannot be moved. By believing and confessing that Jesus truly is the Christ, the Son of the living God, we are anchored in the love of God, even in God Himself, and God "stays" in us. "And the gates of hell shall not prevail..." (Matthew 16:18).

Knowing who God is means knowing that God is the Father who gave Himself for us in Christ, and another truth brightens the mind: God's love is paternal. He cares for us, longs for us, protects us, seeks us, and wants us to love Him, and choose to be with Him, and to trust Him as our  *Father*  in heaven.

Many Christians desiring to fully trust God have had poor examples of paternal love from their fathers. The paternal love of God should have become a practical reality in their homes through the care and devotion of the

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father, but the opposite has been experienced. Distance, insecurity, fear, abandonment, and mistrust have been the practical reality of daily life. The result is confusion and apprehension toward God. Many who desire the healing balm of the love of God cannot trust Him to come close enough to find the full relief of healing.

For those who find themselves in this struggle, understanding the paternal character of God is a most important truth to understand. Rather than being a stumbling block to intimacy with God, as many who struggle with father issues deem it to be, it is the very thing that transforms the separation, anxiety, and fear into safety, security, and trust. It is the very thing that allows the struggling soul to overcome the confusion left by the father who failed, because it is the only thing that can restore what has been damaged and lost, that is, the image of the divine Father, the image of God.

The tender, selfless, fatherly love of God restores the loss and heals the wounds by dwelling in the heart darkened by sin and error. The truth of God the Father replaces the lies taught by a father who misrepresented God, and God's image is restored, which restores the wounded soul who was created in His image in the first place.

This healing, this restoration of man's understanding of God and relationship with Him, is found in no other way than through the Son. Most of those who struggle with the fact that God is our Father, are approaching God through the false son of the Trinity. A false son is the hindrance, not the fact that God is our Father. A false son cannot reveal the heavenly Father, and the distorted image of God in the hurting soul will remain. The healing love of the true God will not be able to fully restore the broken hearted, because the Father is not in the false son of the Trinity. There is only one who can show us the Father and reconcile us to Him, and that is the true Son, God's only begotten Son: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The healing truth of God and His paternal character is revealed and accessed through the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16).

If the truth of the Son is not received, the Christian is cut off from the knowledge of God that will fully restore. Without the reception of the Son, the Christian is left without the paternal love of God, that is, the Christian is without God: the Father.

“Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.” 1John 2:23

In receiving Jesus Christ, the Son and express image of God the Father, is received the true knowledge of God. When the Christian receives Jesus Christ by believing that He is the only begotten Son of the living God, as opposed to the unbegotten son of the Trinity, the Christian receives the truth about God, that He is our heavenly Father, and not a triune compound, and he enters into, and will dwell, in the safety of divine protective and restorative paternal love.

“He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.” 2John 1:9

## LOVE AND THE TRINITY

Currently in the Christian world, the Trinity is being held up as the supreme example of God’s character, i.e. God’s love:

“This [the Trinity] provides a model for the ideal human community, in which people are united by mutual love...”<sup>1</sup>

It is said that the tri-unity of the Trinitarian god is the perfect formula of love. In fact, it is said that if God were not three-in-one then He could not even *be* love, for it is impossible for God to *be* love if He is simply and purely “one,” that is, the Father. Christians teach that “one” cannot be love for love needs another to bestow love upon. The reasoning goes, if God *is* love, then, in His very essence, in His very nature, who God essentially *is* has to be more than one. In His essence, in His nature, God needs to have another to bestow love upon, and one becomes three. The one God, while singularly one, must be composed of plurality, that is, more than one. He must be all three of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and yet one:

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1 <http://www.stina.org/print-journal/volume-3/volume-3-no-summer-1999/holy-trinity-model-human-community>

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“Yet a perfectly loving Being [God] cannot perfectly love if he is not sharing that love with at least one other, since perfect love exists between at least two distinct entities. After all, love demands a subject who loves and an object who is loved.”<sup>2</sup>

“Love [God] is defined in the Bible as other-centered, self-giving action. In order for love to exist [in order for God to exist], there must be more than one. Love [God] cannot occur within the framework of an absolute, solitary self [the Father].”<sup>3</sup>

*Parenthetical comments added.*

In other words, God cannot exist if the one God is simply and plainly one God. The reasoning is presented that there can never be a time when God was truly one God and alone without someone to bestow love upon. God, therefore, cannot truly be the Father as the Bible teaches because then there would have been a point at which He would have been alone, without the Son. And if He was alone, He could not have been love. So, the argument is presented that if God *is* love (1John 4:8, 16), then God, who *is* one, must somehow also be *more than one*.

The reasoning extends: he must also be more than two. He must be three, because not only is one an impossibility for love, but so is two, for two means that each of the recipients only gives what He gets. This is said to be selfish. There must be a third person to love because then self-denial can be exercised. So, it is reasoned that the smallest number of true love must be three. Love is defined by, and limited to, a number which cannot be reduced to less than three.

Ty Gibson, in his book “A God Named Desire,” attempts to explain this philosophy of triune love, that is, a triune god:

“Three is the essential numeric value of love. Where there is only one

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.answering-islam.org/Responses/Osama/zawadi\\_trinity\\_love.htm](http://www.answering-islam.org/Responses/Osama/zawadi_trinity_love.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Ty Gibson in a letter of reply to Frank Kiln, <http://maranathamedia.com/119-myblog/adventist-perspectives/trinity/3011-letter-to-ty-gibson-regarding-the-trinity>

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person [one essentially singular God who is the Father], love cannot occur. Where there are two, each is a sole recipient of the other's attention, giving place for self-absorption. But the moment there are three [the three persons of the Godhead], each recipient of any one's love must also humbly defer attention to the third party, and each one is the third party to the other two. Pure selflessness can now occur by virtue of the fact that each one must love and be loved with both an exclusive and divided interest."<sup>4</sup> *Parentetical comments added.*

"Pure selflessness," it is believed, can only occur when there is no less than three. Therefore, since the Bible is absolutely clear that there is only "one" God - "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark 12:29); "But to us there is but one God" (1Corinthians 8:6); "There is none other God but one" (1Corinthians 8:4) - the assumption is drawn that the "one God" must somehow be three in His essence, or in His nature, meaning God must be preserved as "one" while also being understood as "three." It is even believed that love "demands" this arrangement.<sup>5</sup>

However, there are problems with this theory of love. First of all, it is built on the premise that God can be tempted if the right conditions do not exist. It is claimed that the reason that God cannot be essentially 'two', is because 'two' gives "place for self-absorption." At its very root, the doctrine of the trinity defames God's character. God cannot be tempted, whether He were one, two, or three: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:13).

Secondly, it denies the fact that Scripture clearly gives an identity to the one God: "But to us there is but one God, *the Father*" (1Corinthians 8:6). This Scripture by itself is enough to reveal the falsehood of the Trinity. At the very least, this one Scripture should instill a wary sense of caution to all who consider the doctrine of the Trinity.

The third problem is that even though the Trinity is said to be an inex-

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4 Ty Gibson, "A God Named Desire," [http://maranathamedia.com/119-myblog/adventist-perspectives/trinity/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1998:three-the-essential-value-of-love&catid=](http://maranathamedia.com/119-myblog/adventist-perspectives/trinity/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1998:three-the-essential-value-of-love&catid=)

5 [http://www.answering-islam.org/Responses/Osama/zawadi\\_trinity\\_love.htm](http://www.answering-islam.org/Responses/Osama/zawadi_trinity_love.htm)

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haustible example of oneness, cooperation, closeness, unity, and love, it must be remembered that the Trinity is antagonistic to God and His Son Jesus Christ. As God and Christ are our perfect example of love, any and all that are against God and Christ are against perfect love. While professing to be the ultimate revelation of love, the Trinity sets itself against God and Christ. This is a revelation of Satan's character – deception. The appearance of love hides enmity toward God.

The fourth problem with trinitarian love is that even the Trinity declares that god is one. So even though god is apparently three, and this picture of love is between three gods, these three gods are still one god. This picture of love still only involves *one being*, or *one unit* as some prefer to imagine. The trinitarian god has not gone outside of himself at all, or bestowed love upon anyone but his own self. This god takes his own love and seeks his own selves within himself. Thus, this love exemplified in the Trinity is ultimately self-seeking. This is the character of Satan.

In an effort to hold onto this apparently perfect picture of love that has been painted by Christian leaders, some resist the fact that the three beings are, in fact, one *being*, and view the three divine beings of the Trinity as a *unit* or as a *relationship* or *family*: “God is a *relationship* of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”<sup>6</sup> They maintain that the three gods of the Trinity are three distinct gods that do not merge into one god-being. “God the Father,” “God the Son,” and “God the Holy Spirit” cease to be one divine *being* while being maintained as one God, that is, a *unity* or *relationship* of three divine Beings. God is viewed as a family group, rather than as a personal God. God is viewed as something intangible, that is, a relationship and a unity, rather than a tangible personal Being.

But a relationship is not a personal God, neither is a unity a divine Being. For example, in human terms, no one has ever contacted me or my husband by asking to speak to our marriage, or to our unity. We do not pray to “a relationship.” We pray to God, our Father, a divine *Being* who hears our prayers and answers them: “After this manner therefore pray ye: *Our Father* which art in heaven” (Matthew 6:9). The result of identifying God as an intangible unity or relationship instead of as a personal Being, is to deny that the one

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6 <http://www.adventist.org/en/beliefs/god/trinity/>

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God is a personal God, while at the same time worshipping three gods. While worshipping three gods, the personality of the one God is done away with altogether. There is no longer one God with whom to personally relate. The Christian must relate to three gods.

The fifth problem with the trinitarian interpretation of love is that it leaves people with a grave misconception of what love is. A concept in which love cannot exist without someone to bestow love upon makes love dependent upon someone else. In essence, it makes God dependant. Love *needs* another to bestow love upon; God *needs* someone to bestow love upon. The core of trinitarian love is need, and love has now gained a self-interested limitation.

This paints a picture of love that depends upon self-interest, even if there are three beings involved in this reciprocation, because God's very existence depends upon, and is limited by, the need for *two* others. While it is said that love (that is, God) is "self-giving action," love (that is, God) *must* also receive from the other two gods in the Trinity. This need must be met by all three of the trinitarian gods. And so the need to receive is added alongside the giving. Saying that love cannot exist on its own is the same as saying *God* cannot exist on His own. And if God cannot exist on His own, then He has the limitation of a *need* that can only be, and must be, met by the presence of *two* others.

This love demands a reciprocal giving and receiving. God the Father cannot exist without God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. All three are interdependent, and were one to leave the "family", all would cease to exist. The destructive consequences of this concept of love are immeasurable: What does it do to the sacrifice of God's divine Son? Did He die on the cross? Do we have a complete sacrifice in the divine Son, or was the death on the cross somehow not a *real* death? What happens to a God who cannot be reduced to less than three, when one of the three dies?

The Trinity is a Christless doctrine because, according to its definition of love, the divine Son could not have died on the cross without destroying God, either taking Him out of existence or turning Him into something other than love, that is, a self-absorbed god who is two.

The self-sacrificing love that God *is* can never be fulfilled in the trinitarian model. God's need for two other members of the Godhead competes with man's need of a divine sacrifice. God needs His Son for His own existence

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and cannot fully give Him without destroying Himself, so man is left without the divine sacrifice, or without a selfless, loving God. Both of these options leave man to destruction.

Still, to most Christians this doesn't appear so wrong. To most Christians this idea of love even seems perfect. The argument is put forth that the highest ideal of human beings is to give and receive love, therefore the trinitarian model is ideal. It very well may be that man's highest ideal is to love and be loved, but we need to stop and thoughtfully consider whether or not this is God's highest ideal for man:

“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” Matthew 5:44

“But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you... love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” Luke 6:27, 35

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20:35

God's highest ideal for us is that we love when there is no other who will receive it; to give love when we stand alone in the hateful face of rejection and persecution. This is the kind of love that God is. Trinitarian love merely reaches the height of human idealism, but God's ideal for man stands far above the highest standard that any human can set. The Christian needs to reach beyond the human ideal of reciprocal love: “For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them” (Luk 6:32).

If God is love, where pure love is by *necessity* a reciprocal love, then where can we receive the ability to truly love those who do not reciprocate, even

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those who hate us and persecute us? Who will be able to love the hateful person who is excluded from reciprocal love because he has given himself to wickedness to destroy God's people? Who will be able to plead with God for his forgiveness as Jesus did while agonizing on the cross, and as Stephen did in the midst of being stoned to death? Who will seek out and serve the ones who hate him that they may be reconciled to God?

This ability surely doesn't come from within the human being. Fear and fighting are man's natural responses in the face of hatred and rejection. And it cannot come from God, the Source of all things (1Corinthians 8:6), if the purest love that flows from God is a limited, need-based love that has never been alone. In these circumstances we have no use for such love. So, where will the capacity to love and give come from when we are alone, endangered, and without any earthly support?

This love that gives without need is found in Matthew 16:16. It is found in the love of the Father. It is found in One who has been alone, yet has still been love. It is found in the patient desire of God to give life through a truly begotten Son, a Son who began and came from the love of God, from His very bosom, a truly distinct individual. This love that gives without need is found in the love of God our Father who gave His very own life and existence to His Son, to keep, to own, and to freely give. This love that gives without need is found in the love of God our Father who gave His divine Son to die for the world. This love that gives without need is found in the Son of the living God who gave Himself to the hatred and persecution of His own people so that He could be there for them, with hope, to save the very ones who murdered Him should their sin become realized and work repentance in their hearts.

God the Father is One, "but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things" (1Corinthians 8:6). He is the Source of *all* things. This includes pure and perfect, giving love. As finite beings, we are not able to comprehend the existence of God. To us, He simply is. It is just the same with love, because God *is* love. Since God simply is, love simply is. It is presumptuous, and the very height of arrogance, to think that the mind of man can comprehend the nature of God's existence by presuming to comprehend the nature of love, especially when the presumed trinitarian conclusion about the nature of love removes the Christian far from the expressed words of Jesus

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Christ and the foundation that He has declared for His church.

Pure selflessness can indeed occur when there is only One, where the One who gives wholly and unreservedly of Himself is not only love, but is also life, for “the Father hath life in Himself” (John 5:26). The love of God begets life. It gives, and the giving brings forth life. Therefore, there is a divine Son. Therefore, there is the world of creation that came from the Father by the Son. Therefore there is redemption.

Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father (John 1:14; 1:18; 3:16; 3:18; 1John 4:9). He came from the bosom of God, from the heart of life and love (John 1:18), from God Himself, and together their love brought forth the whole universe of creation. Before creation, before there were depths, before there were fountains abounding with water the Son of God was “brought forth” from God. Before the heavens were prepared, before a compass was set upon the face of the depth, before the clouds were established the Son of God was with His Father “as one brought up with Him” who was “daily His delight” (Proverbs 8:24- 30).

The life that is in the Father, that is, the love of God, is in His Son *because* He is the Only-begotten. And God, in giving His Son to mankind, has given His life to us in His Son:

“For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” John 5:26

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee [Father] the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” John 17:1-3

God exists. He is the only true God, the living God, the Father. He simply is. And the living God is love, even the very Source of love. He is dependant upon no one and no thing. From Him, in His only begotten Son, endless rivers of mercy pour out upon mankind. And sinful man can receive, through His Son, from the Father and Source of all things, this pure love that is with-

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out the minutest taint of self-interest or need so that we can experience this love in relationship with God, and be healed and purified by it, and meet the godly standard of love, even in times of rejection and persecution.

This love that gives, period, is the heart and soul of God, therefore the heart and soul of Christ, and therefore the heart and soul of Christ's church. The heart and soul of Satan, and therefore the heart and soul of those who will cling to the Trinity, is deceit. It is guile. But it is not just any deceit, it is the most dreadful deceit because it distorts, corrupts, and degrades our understanding of love. And since it does these things to our understanding of love, it does the same to our understanding of God, for "God is love" (1John 4:8; 1John 4:16).

Satan has usurped the place of Christ as the foundation of the church. In the name of the Trinity, he robs the Christian of the true experience of God's love. The Christian who tenaciously worships the Trinity in the face of the truth about God will not be able "to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that [they] might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:18, 19), because the love they are experiencing is an imposter. It is a perversion of the true self-sacrificing love of the living God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Having already believed the lie of the Trinity, having already been deceived by the very source of deception and father of lies, the Christian's only hope is to cry out with David for healing, "Who can know his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults" (Psalm 19:12); "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139: 23, 24). And God will do it in the willing heart. He will make the crooked paths of the darkened mind straight and change the darkness of error into the light of truth:

"And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Isaiah 42:16

The fullness, the perfection, and the healing of God's paternal love will be

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known in the faithful worshipper. It will surely be manifested in the Christian who worships God the Father in spirit and in truth, for “the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him” (John 4:23). “Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it” (1Thessalonians 5:24).

## 6. THE BIG QUESTION AND THE LITTLE CHURCH

*“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Luke 12:32*

The big question arising from the previous chapters is this: How can so many Christians be entangled in satanic idolatry? The sheer magnitude of the statistics might render it an inconceivable scene. In 2010 there were 2.18 *billion* Christians worldwide.<sup>1</sup> And there is a bigger question that follows: How can it possibly be that the various denominations, all executing missions all over the globe, are misusing their sacred trust by misleading so many sincere, seeking people? According to the Pew Research Center, ninety-nine percent of the world’s denominations that identify as Christian worship the Trinity.<sup>2</sup> That means that nearly *all* of the Christian denominations are preaching falsehood about God and His Son, and are teaching this error to those whom they proselytize.

Here the reader would do well to check himself: Do you find safety in numbers? Do you give room to the belief that a majority consensus validates a doctrine? It is only necessary to look at a few biblical examples to show how unreliable such a method of discernment is. First, it was the majority of Israelites, God’s very own and chosen people, who shouted and screamed pleading with Pilate for the Saviour’s death. And for what reason? For no other reason than that He claimed to be the Son of God: “The Jews answered him, we have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the *Son of God*” (John 19:7).

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1 <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>

2 <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>

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And while they sought to crucify God's Son, who were they worshipping? God's people, while they prided themselves as favoured and blessed of God, were worshipping Satan: "Jesus said unto them, *If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not*" (John 8:42-45).

The Jewish nation rejected Jesus as the Son of God, and they worshipped Satan. Though they did not recognize it, it was evidenced in their rejection of the truth about God's Son. They would not hear that Jesus Christ was the Son of God who proceeded from God, that is, who "issued from" God, i.e. was begotten of God,<sup>3</sup> and was sent by God (v 42). They would not receive the truth that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." John 1:11

Let the reader put aside the presumptuous thought that God's people of the present day are immune to the same idolatry. God has sanctioned the use of Israel's failures as a profitable study for our generation: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1Corinthians 10:11). We are warned by Israel's failures, and for what reason? For the reason that we are equally susceptible to the same fall as they were.

Our leaders are as equally prone to pride as were the Israelite rulers who fought to secure the murder of the Son of God. Thus they are equally prone to guide with deception. And we are equally vulnerable to worship in vain by placing undo trust in church leaders who teach "for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). The outward appearance of righteousness can easily mask a wayward heart and win the affections of the majority. If any place their trust in the majority consensus, if any discern what is true by the flow of human accord, they are likely to find themselves following "blind guides" who "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men," who neither go

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3 See Strong's Concordance number G1831 for definition of "proceeded from."

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in themselves, nor “suffer them that are entering to go in” (Matthew 23:16).

Second, Jesus has linked us to the trials of Noah by pointing us to the antediluvian world as an example of the days in which we are now living, the last days when the Lord will soon come.

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Matthew 24:27

In all the earth only one man and his immediate family, a mere eight people (Genesis 7:7), stood for the truth and were saved from the judgments of God. Those who are standing for the truth in the last days will, like Noah, have membership with the minority, “because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14). The word translated as “few” means “puny” (Strong’s G3641). The group who will find, and enter through, the straight gate and walk the narrow way will be very little, even puny.

Third, we must remember that there is a class of people, a class of Christians, who will have done great things as Christians, having “prophesied” in the name of Jesus, having “cast out devils” in the name of Jesus, having done “many wonderful works” in His name, who have dined with Him, and who have heard His teaching, but will, nonetheless, become cognizant of a great and terrible error on their part. They will realize a most fearful reality as judgment closes: they have not known the Lord, and He has not known them. Consequently, they will be rejected from His presence: “But he shall say, I tell you, *I know you not* whence ye are; *depart from me*, all ye workers of iniquity” (Luke 13:27); “And then I will profess unto them, *I never knew you: depart from me*, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:23). Those who do not know the Lord, even though they have performed great and wonderful works, even in His name, are classed with those who are workers of iniquity. They are classed with fools: “The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest *all* workers of iniquity” (Psalm 5:5), even those who are professedly Christian.

But those who do know the Lord are those who are built on the solid foundation, and the Lord calls these wise. They are workers of righteousness in His name, for they hear the sayings of Jesus and do them. “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto

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a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock” (Matthew 7:23-25).

The wise mans house is “founded upon a rock.” “And upon *this* rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). “*This*” rock is the truth of who Jesus is. He *is* the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). This foundation means the difference between being received by the Saviour as a wise man who *knows* the Lord and who does the works of righteousness, or being rejected as a fool who does *not* know the Lord and who does the works of sin.

Being founded on the Rock, the wise man has been enabled to actually keep the words of Jesus in their daily living, because the Rock *is* the faith that overcomes:

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even *our faith*. Who is he that overcometh the world, but *he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* 1John 5:4, 5

The foundation of our faith *is* the Rock that Christ’s church is built upon, which Christ Himself has declared, validated, spelled out, and made crystal clear. The reception and confession of the revelation of the Father about His Son to the hearts and minds of man enables the believer to overcome all the sin and temptations of self and the world - and nothing else will.

A fourth example showing the follies of using the majority consensus to discern truth is Psalm 91. Psalm 91:7, speaking of the last day judgments, states, “A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.” In the final days, the Christian will be outnumbered. The wicked, who will suffer the judgments of God, and which class includes professed Christians as pointed out above, will out number the true Christian, as given in this Psalm, by eleven thousand to one. To give you an idea of those numbers just look at a large city, such as Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, where the population is counted at 2.4 million people. If eleven thousand wicked are falling beside one Christian, that leaves a mere 218 true followers of Christ among 2.4 million Vancouverites. Yet 868,800

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people claim the name of Christian in Vancouver.<sup>4</sup> That would mean that less than 0.03 % of professed Christians in Vancouver, Canada are actually true followers of Christ. If we want to be counted with Christ, we cannot be among those who are counted with the majority, even the majority of professed Christians. A church of 218 faithful members among 2,400,000 people is a very small, even a puny, little church.

The population of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada is estimated at 895,000 people. At eleven thousand to one, that leaves approximately 80 true followers in that city. However, more than half of Edmontonians, 67.1%, claim to be Christian.<sup>5</sup> This means that only 0.01% (that's only one one hundredth of a percent!) of those claiming to be Christians are truly following Jesus Christ. The true church in Edmonton is little indeed at perhaps only 80 followers among 895,000 people.

How can it possibly be that so many Christians can be entangled in idolatry? How can it be that a full ninety-nine percent of Christian denominations are preaching falsehood about God and His Son? <sup>6</sup> It is no mystery; they have been deceived. This should not be surprising to the Christian, for the Bible is abundant with warnings against this very offense:

“And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.” Genesis 3:13

“Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them.” (Deuteronomy 11:16)

“A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?” Isaiah 44:20

“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew

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4 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Vancouver#Religion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Vancouver#Religion)

5 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_Edmonton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Edmonton)

6 <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>

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great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Matthew 24:24

“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” 2Corinthians 11:3

“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Hebrews 3:13

“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.” (1John 5:19-21)

“And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.” (Revelation 12:9)

How many will consider the possibility that they may have been deceived? How many of the 2.18 billion of the world's professed Christians will place themselves fairly in the odds? If the ratio of the wicked to the saved in the last days, as given in Psalm 91:7, is in the vicinity of eleven thousand to one, then the worldwide ratio of true Christians amounts to the same small number as in the cities of Vancouver and Edmonton, which is around 0.03%. So, 99.97% of professed Christians around the globe are excluded from the true church of Christ.

Is that you? The odds scream that it likely is. How do you know? You must measure your house. Did you build on the solid foundation? Is the frame stable? Are the walls and upper levels plumb to the line? The strain and stress of renovating a failing house, while very great, is far less than the strain and stress of being utterly swept away with it when the storm comes.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a

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foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.” Isaiah 28:16, 17

More than ninety-nine percent of the world’s Christian churches are defined by their devotion to the Trinity. Logically, then, a defining characteristic of the remaining one percent is that “these groups often depart from traditional Christian beliefs with respect to the trinitarian nature of God...”<sup>7</sup> But simply rejecting the Trinity is not sufficient to make one safe. Using the ratio given in Psalm 91:7, only 3% of the 1% of Christians who have not bowed their knee to the trinitarian god will belong to Christ’s true church.

The Christian’s doctrinal house, what the Christian believes and understands of the Word of God, begins at the foundation, but all that is developed from that point must be built with due care and diligence that the building remains in-line and squared with the foundation. The whole house needs to be sound, and the Word of God informs us that there will be but few who are diligent, care-full builders.

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

Matthew 7:14

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7 <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-traditions/#defining>

## 7. THE RETURN TO TRUE WORSHIP: RESTORING THE FOUNDATION

*“Fear God, and give glory to him.”*

Nestled in the heart of the book of Revelation is an urgent call for reformation given to all people: “Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come” (Revelation 14:7). Every single person on the earth, both Christian and non-Christian alike, is called to prepare himself for the great day of the Lord without delay, for the hour of God’s judgment has *already* begun. The judgment hour will close; the character of each human being will have reached its full development, either for good or for evil, setting his eternal fate; then the Lord will come with the reward of His judgment. Each person gets to keep the character which they have chosen for themselves: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12).

This end-time call for reformation is given by God’s puny, little church, who is here likened unto an angel with a voice as glorious as the high noon sun in the heavens, spanning the whole face of the globe - “There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard” (Psalm 19:3):

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” Revelation 14:6, 7

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We know that this message is not given by a literal angel to the world, for angels have not been commissioned to preach the gospel to mankind, but the followers of Jesus Christ have received this commission (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19). As an angel from God bearing this message to the world, Christ's church has the everlasting gospel to preach, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, with its call to repentance, with the matchless charms of Christ and His righteousness, and with its warning of judgment (John 16:8).

This call for reformation is a call to leave errors and ignorance behind and begin worshipping God in truth - "Fear God, and *give glory* to him... and *worship* him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." In order to worship God in truth, we must know who He truly is: our Creator is the only true God, the living God. He "made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." The called-for reformation, then, is a call to *know* our Creator, the only true God and "Father of whom are all things," "even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," "who created all things by Jesus Christ (1Corinthians 8:6; Romans 15:6; Ephesians 3:9). "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:23). The hour "cometh, and now is."

Those who have embraced the doctrine of the Trinity will have difficulty with this reform. Objections will surface. As the truth established in Matthew 16:16 is expressed in this call to worship God, it will clash with the beliefs of the trinitarian. Objections will arise because the triune paradox is directly challenged by the call to worship the "one God and Father of all" (Ephesians 4:6). It will appear as though the Son has been demoted from His trinitarian position, as well as His identity as wholly and equally the one true God. It will seem as though the Holy Spirit has been mutinied from His existence and place in the Godhead.

Rather than being readily received as a call to reform, this urgent, end-time message is liable to be perceived as a threat, thrusting the believer into a crisis. Will he examine his faith, testing his belief by the foundation of Christ's church (2Corinthians 13:5; Matthew 16:16), or, desiring to avoid the demands of such a courageous, soul-searching examination, will he bore himself deeper into a false sense of security by defending the Trinity? The

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doctrine that he has regarded as having “salvific import,” and which has been the very foundation of his faith, is called into review by this plea from God in Revelation 14:6, 7.

Here I would like to remind the reader what defenders of the trinitarian faith have readily and openly admitted - that the doctrine of the Trinity is nowhere to be found in Scripture. This is extraordinarily significant.

“What does the Old Testament tell us of God? It tells us there is one God... But it tells us *nothing explicitly or by necessary implication* of a Triune God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

“Certainly, it cannot be denied that not only the word “Trinity”, but *even the explicit idea* of the Trinity is absent from the apostolic witness to the faith.”<sup>2</sup>

“The formal doctrine of the trinity as it was defined by the great church councils of the fourth and fifth centuries is *not to be found* in the New Testament.”<sup>3</sup>

“There is *no systematic doctrine* of the “immanent” trinity in the NT. The nearest to such a proposition is the baptismal formula of Mt 28:19, though it must be noted that modern exegesis does not count this saying among the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus.”<sup>4</sup>

*(note: ‘ipsissima verba’ is Latin for ‘the very words’)*

“While no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity, *it is assumed* as a fact.”<sup>5</sup>

“The role of the trinity in a doctrine of God always raises questions.

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1 Edmund J. Fortman, *The Triune God*, Introduction, page XV, 1972

2 Emil Brunner, *The Christian Doctrine of God*, Chapter 16, page 205, ‘The Triune God’.

3 Paul J. Achtemeier, *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, 1985, Page 1099

4 Karl Rahner, *Encyclopedia of Theology – A concise Sacramentum Mundi*, page 1755, 1975

5 *Review and Herald*, Special issue, Volume 158, No. 31 July 1981, ‘The Trinity’.

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One reason is that the word itself does not appear in the Bible, *nor is there any clear statement of the idea.*"<sup>6</sup>

I repeat, the Trinity's absence from the the Word of God is *extraordinarily* significant. Scripture "tells us nothing explicitly or by necessary implication of a Triune God." "Even the explicit idea of the Trinity is absent" from holy writ. "There is no systematic doctrine of the 'immanent' trinity in the NT," and "no single scriptural passage states formally the doctrine of the Trinity." Neither is there even *one* "clear statement of the idea" in the whole Word of God. It is a conclusion about the nature of God that He has not taught. And not only that, but it is a conclusion about God that changes the truth of what He has taught: It mystifies God and Christ by enmeshing their identities as the same one God; it denies the Father-Son relationship between God and His Son; it turns the true identity of God the Father into a lie; and it denies that Christ is the "only-begotten Son of God" (John 3:16, etc.).

Rather than being satisfied with, and respecting, the limits upon knowledge that are fixed by God's word, the trinitarian believer has gone out of the bounds that God has placed upon knowledge of the Divine. He has eaten the fruit of this transgression, satisfying a disobedient curiosity about the nature of God. By disrespecting the bounds of God's Word, He has trained his mind to be rebellious and undisciplined. He has accustomed himself to generating his own answers where God has withheld, either about Himself or about questions that arise from a false doctrine.

While such a one will confess that the nature of God is a mystery which the human mind cannot comprehend, while he will generously give the advice that silence is golden when it comes to the nature of God and that there are limits that need to be respected, his admonitions are in regard to the limits of the human mind to understand the paradoxical Trinity, rather than in reference to the limits that God has placed upon knowledge of His divine nature by what He both has, and has not, revealed in His Word.

Thus the objections that arise in the mind that has been so trained are brewed with the confusion of disobedience. They need to be bridled by God's

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<sup>6</sup> Richard Rice, *The Reign of God, An Introduction to Christian Theology from a Seventh-day Adventist Perspective*, page 89, 'A constructive proposal', 1985

word, but not necessarily resolved. The trinitarian's objections need to be set aside as far as they do not prevent him from returning to the foundational teaching of Christ, which is not only appropriate, but absolutely necessary. The Trinity believing Christian must humble himself and return to the beginning.

And what will God teach the beginner? Matthew 16:16. God will reveal the truth about His Son to the mind so that the believer may be established in the foundation of His church, and then be built up, line upon line, with the "rest wherewith [he] may cause the weary to rest" (Isaiah 28:10, 12).

This is the refreshing (Isaiah 28:12), and the everlasting gospel: rest for the soul wearied by sin in none other than the Son of God, Jesus Christ: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:28, 29).

God brings man to His Son, and, in the truth of His Son, man is reconciled to God, our heavenly Father and Source of all things, of all peace and of all comfort, of all strength and of all victory over sin. Worshipping God in truth and honoring Him as the Creator, as the "Father of whom are all things," requires the foundation of the knowledge of Jesus Christ who is "the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16). There is no other way to faithfully respond to this call for reformation. There is no other gospel to preach, but the everlasting truth in the Son of God. There is no other way to worship God but through the truth of His only-begotten Son:

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." 1John 4:9

"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." John 5:26

"In him was life; and the life was the light of men." John 1:4

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“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” 1John 5:11

“He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” 1John 5:12

“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true [God], and we are in him that is true [God], even in his Son Jesus Christ.” 1John 5:20

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:3

“Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:10-12

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” 1John 1:1-3

“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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth

on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” John 3:16-18

“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.” John 6:38-40

The everlasting gospel is the blessed hope found only in Jesus Christ, which is the promise of God: “And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life,” “and this life is in His Son” (1John 2:25; 5:11). The gospel is the good news of God’s mercy and tender affection toward “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people” in redeeming us from the fall of sin to eternal life in His Son.

But the everlasting gospel is not without warning, for everyone that “seeth the Son and believeth on Him” will be raised up on the last day, but he that believeth not will be condemned, indeed, is “condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God” (John 3:18).

And what is the name of the only begotten Son that we must believe in? “He hath *by inheritance* obtained a more excellent name” (Hebrews 1:4). The name of the only begotten Son is the Father’s name which He has inherited. Believing in the name of the Son means believing that Christ is God’s only-begotten. It means believing in the unchanging, authentic Father-Son relationship between God and His Son, who received all things, including His eternal life, from the Father through inheritance (Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 16:15; John 17:7; John 10:18; Revelation 2:27; etc.).

In believing the truth about who the Son really is through inheritance, “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16), the Son’s name, which is the Father’s name, is written in the mind of God’s people who will see His Son’s appearing, for they have “his Father’s name written in their foreheads” (Revelation 14:1).

The Father’s name is not written *on* their foreheads, like a visible stamp on the skin, but it is written *in* their foreheads, where the pre-frontal cortex

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is found, the part of the brain that regulates thought, emotion, and behavior, i.e. the mind, or character. God's holy name is the character of God (the mind of God), which is the character of Christ (the mind of Christ). It will be manifested in those who worship God in truth.

“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws [God's relational character, His moral and ethical quality] into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them” (Hebrews 10:16).

The believer's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors will reflect the character of God and of Christ: “But we have the mind of Christ...” “that ye may with one mind [one character] and one mouth [in unity] glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1Corinthians 2:16; Romans 15:6). We will worship God in truth, and glorify Him: “Fear God and give glory to Him” (Revelation 14:7); “Glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:6).

In contrast, believing in the son of the Trinity is a brick wall between the believer and the gift of glorifying God, because the son of the Trinity is a son who has inherited nothing. It was shown earlier in this study that the Trinity is a Christless foundation because it does not have in it the Son whose Father is God. It has a son who is his own life source. A son who has his own life source is a son without the Father. A son without the Father is Fatherless. In God's kingdom, one who is Fatherless is an orphan. Even though the son of the Trinity is professedly equal to God in power, in authority, in sourceless existence, he is an orphan. Believing in this son, the Christian inherits orphanhood. He will be without the Father's name. He will be an unnamed orphan who has not received adoption into God's family, because he has not received His true Son, the only begotten Son, by believing in His name, which is the name of inheritance:

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power [privilege] to become the *sons* of God, *even to them that believe on his name*: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of

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God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of *the only begotten of the Father*,) full of grace and truth.” John 1:11-14

To be adopted as a child of God is to be born of the Spirit. To be born of Spirit is to believe that Jesus is His only begotten Son. To believe that Jesus is God’s only begotten Son is to believe that He has received His “more excellent name,” which is the name of “Son,” and “God,” through inheritance (Hebrews 1:4-8) rather than through his own inherent power, which is what the Trinity declares.

“But as many as received him, to them *gave he power [privilege] to become the sons of God*, even to *them that believe on his name*.” John 1:12

“For *whatsoever is born of God* overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that *believeth that Jesus is the Son of God*?” 1John 5:4, 5

The one who is born of God believes that Jesus the Christ is His Son. He believes the revelation of the Father about his Son in Matthew 16:16. In this he receives the Spirit of the Son, which is the Spirit of the new birth, which is the Spirit of adoption, and the believer has a new name (a new character), which is the Father’s name, i.e. God’s character in the Son:

“But as many as received him, to them *gave he power [privilege] to become the sons of God*, even to them that believe on his name.” John 1:12

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth *the Spirit of his Son* into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Galatians 4:6

“But ye have received *the Spirit of adoption*, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Romans 8:15

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“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, *having his Father’s name* written in their foreheads.” Revelation 14:1

Without the foundation of Matthew 16:16, which is the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the believer is without the Father’s name, and will not stand in the closing climax of earth’s history. He will be Fatherless through this great tribulation. That is, he will be without God when he needs Him the most. But not for failure on God’s part, for God is pleading with and warning “every nation, and tongue, and people” (Revelation 14:6).

Thus, as we near the Lord’s great and terrible day and stand on the cusp of His appearing, this message of mercy and warning is given with a “loud voice” so that the people will be ready: “Fear God, “even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:6) and give glory to Him, and worship Him” “that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters” “by Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9) “for the hour of his judgment is come” (Revelation 14:6,7).

“The hour of His judgment is come,” and with it “the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God” (1Peter 4:17), but it will not end with the house of God. “If it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (1Peter 4:17, 18). Every Christian and non-Christian alike will be judged in this judgment hour. Each life will be held up to the light of God’s law, the ten commandments, the “law of liberty”: “So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty,” “for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil” (James 2:12; Ecclesiastes 12:14).

The judgment hour is upon us. Indeed, it has already come (Revelation 14:7), and the required preparation specified by God’s word is to fear God and give glory to Him, and worship Him without delay. This is God’s counsel to *all* people, believers and unbelievers, that we may be prepared to stand in the judgment, and be received in His Son when He comes in His and His Father’s glory (Luke 9:26).

This reformation in worship will prepare those who will heed it to stand

in that great day: “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand” (Revelation 1:3). If received by the hearer, God’s call to reform will produce a reformed character that meets the standard by which he will be weighed. He will glorify our Father in heaven through the Son: “and whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (John 14:3); “Fear God and give glory to Him” (Revelation 14:6).

And, when we are finally redeemed from the earth, we will sing the new song of praise and deliverance before the throne of God and of the Lamb with praise and adoration for the only living and true God and His only begotten Son (Revelation 14:3; 22:1).



# ON-LINE STUDY RESOURCES

## Studies from Restitution Ministries

1. Who is the God of the Bible?

[http://acts321.org/studies/godhead\\_studies/god\\_of\\_the\\_bible.htm](http://acts321.org/studies/godhead_studies/god_of_the_bible.htm)

2. Jesus Christ, the Son of God

[http://acts321.org/studies/godhead\\_studies/jesus\\_christ\\_son\\_of\\_god.htm](http://acts321.org/studies/godhead_studies/jesus_christ_son_of_god.htm)

3. The Holy Spirit of God

[http://acts321.org/studies/godhead\\_studies/the\\_holy\\_spirit.htm](http://acts321.org/studies/godhead_studies/the_holy_spirit.htm)

4. Another Jesus, Another Gospel

<http://acts321.org/books.htm>

5. The Deity of Christ

<http://acts321.org/books.htm>

## Studies from Seventh Day Home Church Fellowship

1. Bible Studies to do at Home

Topics include - Eternal Life, The Personality of God, The Father and Son, the Holy Spirit, God's Love on Trial, The Only True God and Jesus Christ, etc.

<http://seventhdayhomechurchfellowships.org/Pages/Resources.php>

## **Book from Second Advent Revival**

The Source

<http://secondadventrevival.org/thesource.html>

## **Links from Second Advent Revival**

[http://secondadventrevival.org/study\\_sources.html](http://secondadventrevival.org/study_sources.html)

## **Studies from the Prophet Still Speaks**

<http://theprophetstillspeaks.co.uk/Index.htm>