

The Nature of God and the Son of God

Additional study material

A discipleship training to equip
Christians for works of service,
so that the Body of Christ may
be built up (Ephesians 4:11-16).

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This study wants to help people understand something more about the nature of God and the Son of God to the extent God has revealed himself to man. **Read** the Bible passages in brackets.

Christians believe in the God who revealed himself in the Bible and in no other 'god'. Christians believe in ONE GOD (Deuteronomy 6:4). The word 'one' does not express a mathematical term, but that he is 'unique', 'the only One of his kind', 'the only God'. There is only one divine being with one divine nature that *manifests* himself to mankind. He only is God and there is no other 'god' (Isaiah 43:10-11).

God did not remain aloof from his creation, his people and from whatever happens to his people in history. He has *revealed and expressed* himself within his own creation and within human history!

1. THE NATURE OF GOD IS UNFATHOMABLE.

The God who revealed himself in the Bible is exalted above everyone and everything. He is sovereign and majestic. He is Spirit, not 'flesh' as people are. As Spirit he is not 'countable', but omnipresent (everywhere present), omniscient (all knowing) and omnipotent (all powerful).

▪ The God of the Bible is unfathomable: he cannot be defined or measured.

The God who revealed himself in the Bible is unfathomable (Job 11:7-8a; 1 Timothy 6:15-16). No religious, philosophical or scientific person can *define or adequately describe* the nature of God. If he could he would be greater than God! Without God's Self-revelation we people can never even know that there is a God and we can never understand something about the nature of God.

But God desires that we know who he is. Therefore he has revealed himself to us so that we may know him. However, we *people can understand the nature of God only to the extent that God himself has revealed his nature to us*. God revealed himself: first in creation, then through the prophets in the Bible and finally in Jesus Christ. Beyond God's Self-revelation, his nature remains a mystery for mankind. We can say about God only what he himself has said about himself to us in the Bible.

▪ The God of the Bible is Spirit and therefore invisible.

The God who revealed himself in the Bible is Spirit (John 4:24). Ordinary people cannot *see* God with their physical eyes (John 1:18).

But God desires that we see what he is like. Therefore he has revealed himself *visibly* to us so that we may see what he is like. Without letting go of his divine nature he took on the human nature and entered his own creation and our human history through Jesus Christ (John 1:1,14,18). Jesus Christ is the *visible image* of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15).

All the fullness of the divine nature dwells in Jesus Christ *bodily* (Colossians 1:19; Colossians 2:9). Therefore Jesus can say, “He who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

- **The God of the Bible lives in an unapproachable light and therefore *natural man* cannot approach God.**

The God who revealed himself in the Bible is unapproachable (1 Timothy 6:16). No man can approach God in his own way, by his own power or by his own wisdom. People cannot climb up to God by means of keeping the law or by means of doing good works or by means of practising any religion.

But God desires that we have a personal relationship with him. Therefore God approached us! We can have a personal relationship with God, not by climbing up some kind of ladder to God, but only by God coming down to us in Jesus Christ (and in the Spirit of Christ).

2. GOD REVEALED AND EXPRESSED HIMSELF SO THAT PEOPLE MIGHT KNOW HIM.

Although the nature of God is unfathomable, God has *revealed and expressed* himself so that people may know him.

- **God has revealed and expressed himself in CREATION.**

God has revealed himself in the creation of the universe. He has revealed to man that he exists, that he is very powerful and orderly (Psalm 19:1-7; Romans 1:19-20). God even revealed and expressed his presence in fire when he gave the Law (Exodus 3:2-4; Exodus 19:18; Deuteronomy 4:12,24) and his presence in a cloud when he acted to save his people (Exodus 13:21). God revealed and expressed himself in his creation and in human history, but is above the realities of “energy”, “matter”, “space” and “time” because he is the Creator of these realities!

While God is not limited to the realities of his creation and to the realities of human history, he created man to be subject to “energy” and confined to “matter”, “space” and “time”. Just as it is impossible for a clay pot to understand the potter, likewise it is impossible for man to understand his Creator. The scientist and the religious person must humbly acknowledge that a creature does not and cannot fathom the nature of the Creator! But just as it is possible to know a human person without scientifically understanding his human nature, so it is possible to know God without scientifically understanding his divine nature!

The creation reveals the reality, presence, power, beauty and orderliness of God.

- **God has revealed himself within THE HEART OF MAN.**

God has revealed to man that he is a God who hates what is wrong and loves what is right by writing some of his moral laws on every human heart and giving him a conscience to accuse or acquit him (Romans 2:14-15; Isaiah 5:20). Therefore no human being in history can excuse himself by saying: “I did not know!” The ignorance of man is never complete (Romans 2:19-20)!

The heart of man reveals the fact that God is a moral person and possesses moral standards.

- **God has revealed himself in SPEAKING WITH A VOICE.**

God not only sent an angel to speak to a prophet, but God Himself spoke audibly to the prophet Moses (Exodus 3:4-6; Exodus 19:19; Numbers 7:89), to the assembly of Israel (Deuteronomy 4:12,32-36; Deuteronomy 5:22-26), to the prophet Elijah (1 Kings 19:11-12), to John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17) and to three disciples of Jesus (Matthew 17:5).

God spoke within human history to our forefathers through all the prophets in the Old Testament at many times and in various ways, but in these last days (that is, the New Testament period) he has spoken to us by his Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). The words of God have been recorded in THE BIBLE (2 Timothy 3:16) so that all people in the world could live by these words (Matthew 4:4)!

The words in the Bible reveal God’s perfect and infallible thoughts, plans and will.

- **God has revealed and expressed himself in HIS ACTS WITHIN HUMAN HISTORY.**

God acted within his creation and within human history by miraculous signs and wonders, by testings and war, by his mighty hand and outstretched arm and by his great and awesome deeds (Deuteronomy 4:34). When God acts no one can reverse his acts (Isaiah 43:13)! Not only the words of God, but also the acts of God within creation and within history have been recorded in THE BIBLE.

The events in the Bible reveal God’s almighty and sovereign deeds of salvation and judgement.

▪ God has revealed and expressed himself in TRANSFORMED LIVES.

God's words and acts, as revealed in the Bible, transform the lives of those people who believe these words and acts. For example, before Paul became a believer he hated Christians and persecuted them. Then one day Jesus appeared to him and turned his heart. Jesus forgave his sin and saved him. Paul's life changed and he began to live a complete new life. Who changed Paul's life so much? Paul gives a testimony that it was God through the work of Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 1:15-16).

Millions of Christians in every language and culture give testimonies of how their lives have changed through what God in Christ has said and done to them. Behind these real Christians in history is the real God. It is he who transformed them and it is he who is still transforming them today. When you look at the lives of real Christians and listen to their testimonies, then you can get to know the real God who transforms lives.

The transformed lives of Christians reveal the saving purpose and transforming power of God.

▪ God has revealed and expressed himself in A HUMAN BEING, JESUS CHRIST.

God is Spirit (John 4:24) and therefore invisible. Nevertheless, God revealed and expressed himself visibly by taking on a human body in Jesus Christ. Without laying down his divine nature, God took on the human nature and entered into his own creation and into human history in Jesus Christ (Luke 1:26-37; John 1:1,14,18; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 1:15,19; 2:9). By doing this, God did not become two separate individuals – Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30).

It was not the man, Jesus Christ, who became God (or: who took on the divine nature). It was the Unique God who became a human being (or: who took on the human nature as well) in Jesus Christ (John 1:1,14)! Jesus Christ is “the radiance of God's glory” (the visible revelation of God's divinity and divine attributes) “and the exact representation of God's being” (the visible expression of God's invisible being) (Hebrews 1:1-3). That is why Jesus said, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

Jesus Christ reveals the divine being, personality, character, words and deeds of God.

Some people say that God could never exist in a human being. But the Old Testament says, “The Angel of the Lord (i.e. the LORD himself) appeared to him (Moses) in flames of fire from within a bush. ... God called to him from within the bush, ‘Moses! Moses!’” (Exodus 3:2-4). If God can exist or dwell in a burning bush, he is surely able to exist and dwell in a pure human body! Remember the essence of God's divine nature is that he is the “omnipresent Spirit”!

Religious people must not think of God as they are themselves. While a man is an individual created body, limited to a very small space and time within the universe, God is a unique spiritual Being, present everywhere in the created universe and even above and beyond the created universe. From man's perspective, God can at the same time be in heaven and on earth, and also in the east and in the west!

▪ God has revealed himself in THE HOLY SPIRIT.

After the ascension of Jesus Christ according to his visible human body to heaven, he himself returned to the earth “to be with us” and “in us forever” through the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-18). The Bible calls the Holy Spirit with the following names: “the Spirit of God”, “the Spirit of Christ”, or “Christ in us” (Romans 8:9-10)!

“Heaven” is the spiritual name for the place where God dwells. Heaven is not simply a place very far above the earth, because God is omnipresent. “God is not far from each one of us.” Therefore God wants all people from all nations “to seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him” (Acts 17:26-27). Heaven is a dimension beyond the three dimensional empiric creation in which man has been created and exists.

Through the Holy Spirit Jesus Christ returned to be with us and in us within this three dimensional empiric world of energy, matter, space and time. He returned in order to work in the hearts of non-Christians and Christians on earth: “to convict the world of guilt (and shame) in regard to sin, (and to convince them) of righteousness and judgement” (John 16:8-10). Since the first coming of Christ the Holy Spirit dwells “in the hearts and bodies of Christians” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) and “within the Church, which is the assembly of all Christians in the world” (Ephesians 2:22).

The Holy Spirit reveals the glorious presence and powerful work of God in the lives of his people. This is expressed in the sanctifying work of the Spirit (1 Peter 1:2), the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and the gifts of the Spirit (Romans 12:6-8).

3. ANGELS AND CHRIST.

1. Who is the angel of the LORD?

In some passages of the Bible, the Angel of the LORD is identified directly with the LORD (Hebrew: JahWeh) himself, while in other passages he is distinguished from the LORD.

▪ **The Angel of the LORD is the Revelation of the LORD.**

In Exodus 3, the Angel of the LORD appeared to Moses in flames of fire from within a bush and then spoke to him as “the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” and revealed his name as “I am who I am”. This name means that it is impossible to express the being of God in any name or in any description, but it also expresses God’s faithfulness to his covenant (Exodus 3:2-15). Here the Angel of the LORD is “the Revelation of the LORD”.

Read John 1:18 and John 17:6. Compare the Angel of the LORD with Jesus Christ, who reveals God to men.

▪ **The Angel of the LORD is the Presence of the LORD.**

In Exodus 23, the LORD promised Moses and Israel to send “the angel who bears his name” ahead of them, in order to guard them along the way and to bring them to the place he had prepared for them. In verse 22, the angel of the LORD and the LORD himself are interchangeable personalities, because it says, “Listen carefully to what *the angel* says and do all that *I* say.” Moreover, the angel of the LORD can forgive sins. This is something only God can do! The name of the LORD is in him, that is, the LORD who reveals himself in this angel is really present (Exodus 23:20-23).

In Exodus 33, the LORD promised that his angel would go before them and explained to them that in this way “the LORD’s presence” is going with them (Exodus 33:2,14). Here the Angel of the LORD is “the Presence of the LORD” with his people.

Read Matthew 1:23 and Mark 2:5-7. Compare the Angel of the LORD with Jesus Christ, who is called “Immanuel”, which means, “God with us” and who forgives sins as Jesus Christ does (Mark 2:10-12).

▪ **The Angel of the LORD is the Protector and Deliverer from the LORD.**

In Psalm 34:7 and Psalm 35:4-7, the Angel of the Lord encamps around those people who fear the LORD and he drives their persecutors away. Here the Angel of the LORD is “the Protector and Deliverer” from the LORD.

Read John 10:9-10. Compare the Angel of the LORD with Jesus Christ, who saves and protects his sheep.

▪ **The Angel of the LORD is the Judge from the LORD.**

In 1 Chronicles 21, the LORD sent the Angel of the LORD to destroy a part of Jerusalem as a judgement of king David’s sin (1 Chronicles 21:15-19,27). Here the Angel of the LORD is “the Judge” from the LORD.

Read Revelation 19:11-16. Compare the Angel of the LORD with Jesus Christ, who will judge the unrepentant nations.

▪ **The Angel of the LORD is the Mediator between the LORD and his servants.**

In Zechariah 1, the LORD sent a group of riders on horses to go throughout the earth in order to survey it. When they returned, they reported to the Angel of the LORD (Zechariah 1:8-11). Here the Angel of the LORD is “the Mediator between the LORD and his servants”.

Read 1 Timothy 2:5. Compare the Angel of the LORD with Jesus Christ, who is the Mediator between God and men.

▪ **The Angel of the LORD is the Intercessor for others with God.**

In Zechariah 1, the Angel of the LORD addressed the Lord Almighty (Hebrew: JaHWeH Tsebaoth), pleading for mercy for Jerusalem and the towns of Judah (Zechariah 1:12-13). Here the Angel of the Lord is “the Intercessor for others with God”.

Read Hebrews 7:25. Compare the Angel of the LORD with Jesus Christ, who always lives to intercede for us.

▪ **The Angel of the LORD is the Advocate, who speaks to the LORD in another’s defence.**

In Zechariah 3, the high priest Joshua stands before the Angel of the LORD while he is accused by Satan. The Angel of the LORD, who is called “the LORD” in verse 2, defended him and took away his sins (Zechariah 3:1-7). Here the Angel of the LORD is “the Advocate, who speaks to the LORD in another person’s defence”.

Read 1 John 2:1-2. Compare the Angel of the LORD with Jesus Christ, who speaks to the Father in our defence.

▪ **The Angel of the LORD is the Mediator of the covenant.**

In Malachi 3, the Angel of the Lord is called “the LORD” (Hebrew: Adonai) as an indication of his majesty as King and Judge and he is called “the Angel or Messenger of the covenant”, because he is the Mediator of the covenant (Malachi 3:1-5; cf. Hebrew 8:6). Here the Angel of the LORD is “the Mediator of the covenant in both the Old and New Testaments”. In verse 5 he is identified with the LORD himself, who comes to refine and purify as well as to judge.

Compare the Angel of the LORD with Jesus Christ, who is the Mediator between God and men, who came to purify Israel and the Gentiles and who will come again to judge everybody.

▪ **Conclusion.**

It is clear that the Angel of the LORD is not a created angel. **The Angel of the LORD is the visible revelation of the LORD (JaHWeH) himself in the Old Testament! He is to be identified with the Lord Jesus Christ before his incarnation.** Like the Angel of the LORD in the Old Testament, the second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God in the New Testament, was the visible manifestation of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). After the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Angel of the LORD does not appear again.

Both the Angel of the LORD and Jesus Christ were sent by God and had similar ministries, namely, revealing, mediating, interceding, leading, protecting, saving and judging. The Angel of the LORD is distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit, because they never take bodily form as he does. (See also Genesis 16:7-14; Genesis 22:11-18; Genesis 31:11-13).

2. Angels in comparison with Jesus Christ.

The comparative adjective “better” is used 14 times in the book of Hebrews to contrast Christ and his new order with what went before his incarnation and exaltation. Jesus Christ is very much superior to angels (Hebrews 1:4). The name Christ inherited is superior to that of angels (Hebrews 1:4). Christians are confident of better things that accompany salvation (Hebrews 6:9). The high priesthood of Christ introduces a better hope by which people can draw near to God (Hebrews 7:19). Christ is the guarantee of a better covenant than the Old Testament covenant (Hebrews 7:22). The covenant of which Christ is the Mediator is superior to the old covenant, because it is founded on better promises (Hebrews 8:6). The heavenly things are purified with a better sacrifice than the Old Testament sacrifices (Hebrews 9:23). Christians have better and more lasting possessions than the property they loose on earth in persecution (Hebrews 10:34). Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain, because he was righteous while Cain was unrighteous (Hebrews 11:4). The Old Testament believers looked forward to a better country (heaven) than their earthly country (Hebrews 11:16). Believers suffered torture and refused to be released (in return for apostasy) so that they might gain a better resurrection (Hebrews 11:35). God has planned something better for New Testament believers so that Old Testament believers would be made perfect only together with the New Testament believers (Hebrews 11:40). The sprinkled blood of Christ speaks a better word than the blood of Abel (Hebrews 12:24). Because God has no greater Messenger than his Son, Jesus Christ, he has no further message beyond the New Testament!

In Hebrews 1:4-14, facts are stated about Jesus Christ, which show that he is superior to all the angels. His greatness shows why the revelation given to him is the highest revelation God can give.

- **Christ’s superior position: As Son of God he inherited the highest possible title and all things.**

Christ was exalted to the right hand of God and he inherited the title “Son of God” and all things (verse 2) by the eternal appointment of God the Father. The various Old Testament quotations firstly shows that the final message of God, which was communicated by the Son, is safeguarded by even more majestic sanctions than those which attended the law, which was communicated by angels (Hebrews 2:2).

- **Christ’s superior position: As Mediator he reigns over the new world.**

The new world over which the Son reigns as Mediator far surpasses the old world in which various nations were assigned to angels for administration (Hebrews 2:5). This emphasis of Christ’s superiority to angels was probably given to avoid the Hebrews from being carried away by all kinds of strange teachings (Hebrews 13:9). Remember, a false doctrine of worshipping angels had also been introduced among the Colossian Christians (Colossians 2:18).

- **Angels worship Christ.**

In Hebrews 1:6 we read that angels, who are called to worship the LORD (Hebrew: JaHWeH) in the Old Testament, are called to worship Jesus Christ in the New Testament. They are called to do this from the time of his introduction to the world as the Son of God, that is, at his exaltation and enthronement as sovereign ruler of the inhabited universe (Hebrews 2:5; Ephesians 1:20-21; 1 Peter 3:22; Revelation 5:6-14).

- **Angels serve Christ.**

In Hebrews 1:7-8 we read that angels, although they have a high place in the divine administration of the universe, are far inferior to the supreme position given to Jesus Christ. While in the Old Testament (Psalm 104:4), the natural elements, wind and fire, fulfilled the commands of God, in the New Testament the angels execute God’s commands with the swiftness of wind and the strength of fire. In contrast to the servant function of angels, Christ is addressed as “God”. And in contrast to the temporariness of angels, Christ’s divine rule will last forever.

In Hebrews 1:13-14 we read that, while the most exalted angels may *stand* in the presence of God (Daniel 7:10; Luke 1:19; Revelation 8:2), none of them has ever been invited to *sit* in the unique place of honour at God’s right hand as Christ has. Their posture of standing is a sign of their promptness to execute the commands of him who is seated on the throne. Their service is especially performed for the benefit of a favoured group of people, namely, the Christians.

- **Angels mediated the law, while Christ mediated the gospel.**

In Hebrews 2:1-4 we read that Christ’s superiority to angels is based on the fact that, while the Old Testament ceremonial law was communicated by angelic intermediaries (Deuteronomy 33:2; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19), the gospel was mediated by Jesus Christ.

- **Angels administrated the old world-order, while Christ administrates the new world-order.**

In Hebrews 2:5 we read that, while angels executed the administration of the universe before the incarnation of Christ, Jesus Christ inaugurated his reign over the new world-order from the time of his exaltation and coronation and he will complete it at his second coming. This new world-order of *realities* far surpasses the old world-order of *shadows* (Hebrews 8:5-8,13; Hebrews 10:1).

▪ **Christ reduced the fallen angels to impotence and came to save people, not angels.**

In Hebrews 2:7 we read that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels. Jesus fulfilled the words of Psalm 8, by becoming the True Representative of the human race. He humbled himself to a state lower than that of the angels and took on the state of sinful and lost man. In Hebrews 2:14-16 we read that by his death and resurrection, Jesus reduced the devil, who is a fallen angel, to impotence.

For people who recognise death as the penalty of sin, death is the greatest terror. And the devil uses this fear of death as a means of intimidation, compelling people to do his will. However, for people who believe in Christ, the meaning of death has been transformed from judgement to blessing and from bondage to liberation. When their death comes, it will take the character of Christ's death and resurrection! Death can no longer separate them from the love of God (Romans 8:37-39)! Christ was incarnated, not to help and deliver angels, but people who believe in him!

3. Angels in the life of Jesus Christ.

▪ **Angels announced the coming of Jesus Christ.**

In 539 B.C., the angel Gabriel announced the coming of Jesus Christ to Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27). He also announced to Mary the birth and divine nature of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:26-38). An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and announced the virgin birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:18-25).

▪ **Angels during the incarnation of Jesus Christ.**

When Jesus Christ was born, an angel announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds and a great company of angels appeared and praised God (Luke 2:8-15). A little later, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, ordering him to flee with Mary and Jesus to Egypt, because king Herod planned to kill him (Matthew 2:13-23). When Jesus began his public ministry, after he was tempted by the devil, angels came and served him (Matthew 4:11). Three years later, when Jesus prayed in Gethsemane on the night before his crucifixion, an angel appeared and strengthened him (Luke 22:43-44). When a large crowd armed with swords and clubs arrested Jesus, Jesus said to Peter that he could call on his Father and more than twelve legions of angels would at once be put at his disposal. However, Jesus chose not to call in their help in order to fulfil the Scriptures and die to save sinners (Matthew 26:52-56).

▪ **Angels during the exaltation of Jesus Christ.**

In Matthew 28, Luke 24 and John 20, we read that angels were present at the resurrection of Jesus Christ. An angel rolled the stone of the tomb away, not to let Jesus out, but to let people into the tomb to see that he was resurrected. This angel's appearance was awesome and the guards were terrified of him. Several angels moved about the tomb when the women came to see what happened. The angels said, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

Forty days later, when Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, two angels stood beside his disciples and announced the second coming of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:10-11).

In 1 Peter 3:22 and Ephesians 1:21 we read that Jesus Christ now sits at God's right hand, with angels, authorities and powers submitting themselves to him. In Ephesians 1:22 and Hebrews 2:5 we read that from now on the world was no more subjected to angels, but that God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be Head over everything. In Revelation 5:11-12 we read that uncountable number of angels worship Christ and in loud voices sing praise to him, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!"

▪ **Angels during the second coming of Jesus Christ.**

In Matthew 24:30-31 and Matthew 25:31-32 we read that all the nations will see Jesus Christ return with power and great glory. Christ will send his angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather Christ's elect from everywhere and separate people one from another in judgement. In Matthew 13:24-43 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 we read that Christ will send his angels to weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. Angels will be present when Christ punishes them with everlasting destruction and shut them out of his presence. The angels will be present when Jesus Christ acknowledges those who belong to him, because they acknowledged Christ among the people on earth (Luke 12:8-9). They will be present when he rewards each person according to what he has done (Matthew 16:27).

4. THE EXPRESSION 'SON' IN THE BIBLE.

The expression "Son of God", as used in the Bible, should not be misunderstood. The Bible speaks of three kinds of "sons" and these must be clearly distinguished:

- physical sonship
 - symbolic or spiritual sonship
 - and metaphysical or ontological sonship.
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5. JESUS CHRIST IS *NOT* THE PHYSICAL SON OF GOD.

▪ Created people are physical sons and daughters of their parents.

The expression “son” in the Bible sometimes refers to physical descent: a physical son. John 3:6 says, “Flesh gives birth to flesh.” With people a physical child is born from a physical father and a physical mother. *His physical sonship (existence) has a beginning* in creation and in history when he has been conceived.

▪ Jesus Christ has never been created or procreated.

Jesus Christ has never been created or procreated (produced)! *The existence of Jesus Christ has no beginning! Jesus Christ is not the physical Son of God!* The expression ‘Son of God’ with reference to Jesus Christ does not refer to Jesus as ‘the physical son of God’ as some other religions falsely claim that Christians teach.

- **Jesus Christ has a unique physical nature.**

According to his divine nature Jesus Christ existed from all eternity (John 1:1). But according to his human nature he was born in time (in human history) from his physical mother, the virgin Mary (John 1:14). But his human nature was not derived from his *legal* father, Joseph, but was the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in Mary (Luke 1:35). Unlike all other people on earth, Jesus according to his human nature had no *physical* father! And unlike all other people in history Jesus was completely sinless (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15)! And unlike all other human beings at the present time, Jesus Christ has been resurrected from the dead and possesses a glorious resurrected body (1 Corinthians 15:42-44; Philippians 3:21).

- **God the Father or God the Spirit has no physical body.**

We do not call the physical body of Jesus ‘the physical body of God’, because God has no physical body. Also God has no physical relationship as a man with a woman. The Holy Spirit is Spirit and has no physical body. He created the physical body of Jesus in the virgin Mary (Luke 1:35). But we do not call Mary ‘the mother of God’, because she was only the mother of the human nature of Jesus Christ.

- **Jesus Christ took on the human nature in time.**

From all eternity Jesus Christ according to his divine nature is God. From all eternity Jesus Christ as ‘the Son of God’ possesses the divine nature. But in time (in human history) he also took on the human nature and entered the created world and human history with a human body through the virgin Mary.

It was only in his human nature that he died on the cross to make atonement for the sins of his people. And it was only in his human nature that he rose from death to guarantee for us a transformed life. He promises and guarantees for us a transformed life *before* we die physically and he promises and guarantees for us a resurrected body *after* we die physically.

- **The relationship between the divine and human nature of Jesus Christ will remain a mystery for people.**

Jesus Christ is absolutely unique: he is God who took on the human nature (Isaiah 9:6). Besides Jesus Christ no one else in human history is “Immanuel”, which means, “God with us” (Matthew 1:23)!

6. JESUS CHRIST IS *NOT* THE SPIRITUAL SON OF GOD.

▪ Christians who have been born-again (regenerated) are spiritual sons and daughters of God.

The expression “son” in the Bible sometimes refers to spiritual descent: a spiritual son. John 3:6 also says, “The Spirit gives birth to spirit.” The Bible clearly distinguishes between “a physical son” and “a spiritual son”.

- **The Christian becomes a spiritual child of God after rebirth (regeneration).**

A person *before* regeneration is “the physical child of his physical parents on earth”. But *after* his rebirth by the Holy Spirit he has also become “the spiritual child of God in heaven” (John 1:12-13). His former dead spirit (Ephesians 2:1-3) has been made alive (Ephesians 2:4-5). He is born again by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-8) when he believes in Jesus Christ! Through rebirth (regeneration) he becomes a spiritual child of God (John 1:12-13).

The Christian is predestined by God to be adopted as God’s spiritual son before the creation of the world. He is actually adopted (i.e. accepted) by God as his spiritual son (Ephesians 1:5) when he is born again by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:15). And he will only enter into the full enjoyment of his adoption as God’s spiritual son when he is released from his mortal earthly body (Romans 8:23).

- **The Christian only possesses a spiritual nature that shares certain divine characteristics.**

While the physical nature of the Christian comes from his physical parents, the spiritual nature of the Christian comes from God the Holy Spirit. While the Christian does not receive and possess the divine nature, he receives and possesses a spiritual nature that shares certain divine characteristics like: knowledge, godliness and love (2 Peter 1:3-9). His spiritual nature is no longer a slave to the guilt, shame, power and destruction of sin, but has been set free

to grow more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ. And his spiritual nature is no longer a slave to the devil and he is no longer forced to do the devil's will (2 Timothy 2:26). He has become a child of God who does what is right in God's eyes and loves God and his brother (1 John 3:10).

- **The spiritual sonship of the Christian has a beginning in history.**
His spiritual sonship begins when he is born again.

- **Christ never needed to be born-again.
He is never the spiritual or religious son of God.**

Jesus Christ never needed to be born again! *The Sonship of Jesus Christ has no beginning! Jesus Christ is not the spiritual Son of God.* He is not the religious Son of God.

- **Jesus Christ possesses the divine nature from eternity to eternity.**

From all eternity Jesus Christ is the Son of God in his nature or divine essence. From all eternity he possesses the divine nature! He did not receive a new born again (spiritual) nature in time as Christians do, but possesses the divine (spiritual) nature from eternity to eternity. From all eternity he is the Son of God, because he possesses the same essential divine nature as God does.

- **Jesus Christ is the Son of God from eternity to eternity.**

Jesus Christ is the Son of God *before* he took on the human nature (Psalm 2:6-7; John 3:16)! Jesus Christ did *not become* the Son of God at his birth (that is, at the birth of his human nature), but as the eternal Son of God he took on the human nature in human history in a human body in the virgin Mary (Luke 1:26-37).

He is still the Son of God *after* he took on the human nature, because at his baptism with water God did not say, "You have become my Son", but God said, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:11). Also Jesus himself says that he is the Son of God (Matthew 11:27; Matthew 21:37-39; Matthew 27:43). The apostle John says that he is the Son of God (John 3:35-36; John 5:19-30). And the apostle Paul says that he is the Son of God (Romans 1:3-4,9; Romans 5:10; Romans 8:3).

- **Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.**

Jesus Christ is from eternity to eternity the Son of God, but in time *reveals* his divine nature to man. He is the *visible* radiance of God's glory (that is, of God's essential divine attributes) and the *visible* print (impression, representation) of God's invisible divine being (Colossians 1:15,19; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3). That is also the meaning of the words, "The only-begotten God (Son), who is at the Father's side, has *made him (God) known* (has expressed and explained God)" (John 1:18; cf. Matthew 11:27).

- **Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God.**

Note what other Scriptures say about Jesus Christ as the Spirit of God. Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God that spoke through the prophets during the Old Testament period before he took on the human nature, i.e. *before his incarnation* (1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19-21). Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God that took on a human body in the virgin Mary *at his incarnation* (Luke 1:26-37). Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God that saved, healed and delivered people *during his ministry on earth* (Luke 4:18-19). And Jesus Christ is the Spirit of God *during his ministry in heaven after his ascension*: he takes away the veil that covers the eyes, minds and hearts of unbelievers when they try to understand the Bible (2 Corinthians 3:14-18). Finally he lives in believers after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Romans 8:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Galatians 4:6-7)!

- **Jesus Christ is the Word of God.**

Note what other Scriptures say about Jesus Christ as the Word of God. Jesus Christ is the Word of God who is God from all eternity (John 1:1). He is the Creator of everything (John 1:3, cf. Genesis 1:1-3; Psalm 33:6). He is the Word of God that took on the human nature in human history (John 1:14,18). He is the final Word of God in human history about the final revelation of God and God's will. There would be no revelation through other prophets after Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2)! And he is the Word of God that will have the last word in human history in the final judgement of all people (Revelation 19:13-16).

7. JESUS CHRIST IS NOT THE SYMBOLIC SON OF GOD.

- **Christians who have been born-again (regenerated)
are symbolic sons and daughters of God.**

The expression "son" in the Bible sometimes has a symbolical meaning: a symbolic son. The word "son" together *with the Genitive case of something* denotes a person who has come to stand in a close relationship to this something and has come to possess the unique characteristic of this something. For example, the expression "son of light"¹ (Luke 16:8) refers to a Christian who stands in a close relation to the Light, Jesus Christ and possesses the unique characteristic of

¹ The Greek original says: "The sons of the light" and the English translation says: "The people of the light".

Christ as the Light, namely, his holiness, righteousness, mercy, love, trust and honesty, wisdom, purity, etc. Likewise the expression “sons of the world”² refers to non-Christians. The non-Christian stands in a close relationship to this dark world and possesses the characteristics of this world: he is unholy, unrighteous and merciless, hates and seeks revenge, lies and is corrupt, foolish, impure, etc.

Nevertheless, the symbolic sonship (existence) of the Christian as “light” in this world has a beginning in history when he is born again and grows to live out the characteristic of light (Matthew 5:14).

- **Christ never needed to be born-again.**

- He is never merely a symbol of God or the symbolic son of God.**

Jesus Christ never needed to be born again! *The Sonship of Jesus Christ as the Son of God is never simply symbolic!*

- **Jesus Christ is not a symbol that represents God, but is God himself.**

Jesus Christ does not simply stand in a close relationship to God or simply possess the spiritual characteristics of God. He is God! He is not a symbol of the light, but he is the Light itself (John 1:4-9; 8:12)! He is not merely a symbol that resembles God, but is the reality itself: he is God himself (Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:3; Hebrews 2:8-9; 1 John 5:20)!

- **Jesus Christ has no beginning and no end.**

Nowhere in the past history does Jesus Christ *become* ‘the reality’. He is the reality from all eternity (John 1:1)! *His divine Sonship (reality) has no beginning and also has no end* (Revelation 1:8; Revelation 2:8; Revelation 22:12-13)!

- **Jesus Christ is not the symbolic Son of God.**

Expressions using the Genitive case ‘of God’ are not intended to be literal, but symbolic. Expressions like: “the arm of God” and “the ear of God” (Isaiah 59:1-2) do not suggest that God has *physical* arms and ears, but rather that God really hears prayers and really saves people. The expression “the eyes of God” (2 Chronicles 16:9) does not suggest that God has physical eyes, but rather that God really sees everyone and everything (Hebrews 4:13).

However the expression ‘Son of God’ does not suggest that Jesus Christ is the symbolic son of God, but rather that he really is the metaphysical and ontological ‘Son of God’.

8. JESUS CHRIST IS APPOINTED (DECREED) AND ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE THE SON OF GOD AFTER HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

- **Jesus Christ is the Son of God before his first coming.**

Through the Old Testament prophets God said about Jesus Christ, “*I will be his Father, and he will be my Son*” (2 Samuel 7:14; 1 Chronicles 17:13; Hebrews 1:5b). While the author of 2 Samuel 7:12-16 spoke about David’s son (i.e. Solomon), the author of 1 Chronicles 17:11-14 said that these words would be fulfilled in “one of David’s sons” (i.e. Jesus Christ), the only One in whom these words could be fulfilled! “His throne will be established forever” (1 Chronicles 17:14). The words of the angel Gabriel to Mary confirmed that this prophecy would be fulfilled in Jesus Christ: “The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end” (Luke 1:32b-33).

The prophet Isaiah proclaimed, “For to us a child is born, to us a son³ is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God⁴, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

- **Jesus Christ is the Son of God at the announcement of his birth.**

At the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ the angel Gabriel said to Mary: “He (Jesus Christ) will be great and will be called *the Son of the Most High*” (Luke 1:32a). He would receive this title at his enthronement in heaven (Luke 1:32b-33). It was only at his enthronement that *it became clear in human history* that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, clothed with absolute divine power.

- **Jesus Christ is the Son of God at his baptism with water.**

When Jesus was baptised with water by John the Baptist, the voice of God from heaven said, “You are *my Son, whom I love*; with you I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11).

- **Jesus Christ is the Son of God before and after his resurrection from the dead.**

² The Greek original says: “The sons of the world” and the English translation says: “The people of the world”.

³ Hebrew: ben

⁴ Hebrew: <el gibbor (cf. Isaiah 10: 20-23)

Paul speaks of “the gospel ... regarding God’s Son” (Romans 1:1-3a). He speaks of the human nature of the Son of God and differentiates between Jesus “as to the flesh” and Jesus “as to the Spirit” (Romans 1:3b-4). The “flesh” or human nature of Jesus after his birth from the lineage of David was characterised by “weakness”: he became tired, hungry and thirsty; and he experienced anxiety and temptation; his human nature was truly mortal.

The human nature of Jesus after his resurrection from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit was characterised by “power”: his resurrected body was no longer subject to the laws of nature (e.g. energy, matter, space, time), but was completely controlled by the Holy Spirit! He passed through grave clothes, a rock tomb and closed doors. He could appear and disappear. Finally he ascended into heaven and sat at the right hand of God.

The words: “Through the Spirit of holiness Jesus Christ was *once for all appointed* (designated, declared)⁵ with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4) does not mean that Jesus Christ only *became* the Son of God when he was resurrected. Because Jesus Christ is God from all eternity, the emphasis falls on the words: “in power”, meaning: “clothed with power”. After his birth his power in all its glory was hidden so that we could not see it. But after his resurrection from the dead Jesus Christ was declared (appointed, decreed) to be the Son of God clothed with all power in heaven and on earth (cf. Matthew 28:18; John 13:3; Ephesians 1:20-22), something that surpassed his human state before his resurrection. *Although Jesus Christ is from all eternity the Son of God (in metaphysical, ontological, trinitarian and eternal sense), he begins to exercise his absolute sovereign power on earth and in human history at his resurrection, ascension and enthronement.* Only after he had proved his absolute obedience in his death and resurrection, the Christian Church began to spread over the whole world (John 12:31-32; Romans 1:5; 16:25-26).

▪ **Jesus Christ is the Son of God at his enthronement in heaven.**

In the letter to the Hebrews God says: “You are my Son; *today I have become your Father*” (literally: “today I have begotten you”) (Psalm 2:7; Hebrews 1:5a). Although angels may collectively be called “sons of God”⁶ (Genesis 6:2,4; Job 1:6; Job 2:1), no angel is ever called ‘the Son of God’ – an expression that gives him a separate and chosen status. Psalm 2:7b-9 apparently originated from the liturgy used during the enthronement of the king of Judah, but on the whole Psalm 2 is a prophecy about the Messiah-King, who would come from the lineage of David (Jeremiah 23:5-6; Ezekiel 37:24-28). The New Testament regards Psalm 2 as a Messianic Psalm (Acts 4:25-26; Acts 13:33). In Psalm 2 the Messiah (God’s Anointed) quotes these words as the ground of his trust when the kings of the earth and the powers in the world gather against him (Psalm 2:2).

God’s words: “Today I have begotten you” do not mean that Jesus Christ became the Son of God at his birth! The context in Hebrews 1 shows that the word ‘today’ refers to the exaltation and enthronement of Jesus Christ (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 1:13). Thus, at his resurrection, ascension and enthronement Jesus Christ was clothed with royal dignity and he received the title “*Son of God*”. This is a position above all the people on earth (Acts 2:36; Philippians 2:9-11) and above all the angels in heaven (Hebrews 1:3-5). The title “Son of God” refers to what he really is and to what he is acknowledged and confessed to be since his resurrection, ascension and enthronement, namely, the Son of God in metaphysical, ontological, trinitarian and eternal sense.

9. JESUS CHRIST IS THE SON OF GOD IN METAPHYSICAL, ONTOLOGICAL, TRINITARIAN AND ETERNAL SENSE.

▪ **The God of the Bible is the Father of Jesus Christ in ontological sense.**

“Ontology” means “the doctrine of the existence of things”. God the Father and God the Son have the same divine being and divine nature from all eternity. The relationship between God the Father and God the Son is always an inner relationship in metaphysical, ontological, trinitarian and eternal sense. It is never a physical relationship as some religions falsely say that Christians teach.

The God of the Bible is “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3). Jesus Christ is “God’s Son, the Beloved, with whom God is well pleased” (Matthew 3:17; 17:5). He is “the only-begotten Son of God” (John 1:18; 3:16). He is “God’s own Son” (Romans 8:32). He is “God’s eternal Son” (John 17:5,24). All the other “gods” of all the other religions in the world are not “the Father of Jesus Christ” in metaphysical, ontological, trinitarian and eternal sense and therefore are not God at all! They have nothing in common with the God of the Bible! The Old Testament calls Jesus Christ “the mighty God” and “the everlasting Father” (Isaiah 9:6; cf. Isaiah 10:20-21). And in the New Testament Jesus teaches that “God the Father” and “God the Son” are one (John 10:30).

The Christian Church believes and confesses one God. He has a unique divine being and a unique divine nature. And he has revealed himself in his creation and in human history as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19).

⁵ Greek: $\alpha\omicron\rho\tau\zeta\omega$ (aorist tense)

⁶ Hebrew: bene ha-Elohim

- **The God of the Bible is the Father of Christians, not in an ontological sense, but only in a spiritual sense.**

Christians are never “God” and never become “God”, but always remain creatures of God. Before they believed in God, Christians were enemies of the God of the Bible (Romans 5:10). But after they began to believe in Jesus Christ they became “the (spiritual) sons and daughters of God” (Ephesians 1:5) or “the (spiritual) children of God” (John 1:12-13). As spiritual children of God, Christians receive more and more the spiritual characteristics of the God of the Bible (Ephesians 4:24; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:1-3).

The God of the Bible exercises his reign from heaven *over* all Christians, executes his plan of salvation for all Christians *through* Jesus Christ, and dwells *in* all Christians through the Holy Spirit. The unity among Christians can only be derived from the unity of the God of the Bible and from the unity between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit within the divine nature. The unity of the Christian Church is demonstrated by Christians worshipping the same God of the Bible, by having the same Saviour of their sins, by having the same Holy Spirit dwelling in them and by the same faith, the same hope and the same love (Ephesians 4:3-6)!

10. JESUS CHRIST IS THE PHYSICAL SON OF MARY (HIS HUMAN NATURE) AND THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD (HIS DIVINE NATURE) AT THE SAME TIME.

- **The genealogies of Jesus Christ prove that Jesus was the physical son of Mary.**
 - **The legal genealogy of the Gospel of Matthew via Joseph.**

Matthew wrote his Gospel especially for Jews and was therefore very interested in legal matters. He gives the legal genealogy of Jesus in descending line from Abraham to Jesus. In Matthew 1:1-12 the genealogy goes from Abraham, David, via Solomon (not Nathan) to Zerubbabel (538 B.C. at the time of the return of the Jews from Babylon) (Ezra 1:11 - 2:2). In Matthew 1:13-16 the genealogy goes from Zerubbabel via Abiud (not Rhesa) to Jacob (not Heli), “the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ” (Matthew 1:13-16). Jacob was the *physical* father of Joseph. Joseph was not the physical father of Jesus, but the legal father of Jesus, because he was the legal husband of Mary. Thus Matthew concludes: Jesus is very important for Jews!

Jesus Christ according to his human nature is thus the physical “son of Abraham” (Genesis 22:18; Matthew 1:1; Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:8,16), the physical “son of David” (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Luke 1:32; Revelation 22:16) and the physical “son of Mary” (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:31), but not the physical son of Joseph. *According to his physical human nature he descended from Abraham, David and Mary* (Matthew 1:1,16). This is how the invisible and eternal God entered the visible creation and time in the history of this world.

- **The physical genealogy of the Gospel of Luke via Mary.**

Luke wrote his Gospel especially to Gentiles and was therefore very interested in the historical facts (Luke 1:1-4). He gives another genealogy, namely, the physical genealogy of Jesus in ascending line from Jesus to Adam and God. In Luke 3:23 Luke wrote: “Jesus was the son, so it was thought (by the Jews), of Joseph, the son (in-law) of Heli”. As proved below, this probably means: “Joseph was the son-in-law of Heli” and Heli was the father of Mary and the grandfather of Jesus according to his human nature! Mary was the physical mother of Jesus. In Luke 3:23-27 the genealogy goes from Joseph via Heli (the father of Mary, and not via Jacob, the father of Joseph) and Rhesa (not Abiud) to Zerubbabel. And in Luke 3:27-31 the genealogy goes from Zerubbabel via Nathan (not Solomon) to David and in Luke 3:28-37 via all the most important generations via Abraham right up to Adam. Thus Luke concludes: Jesus is very important for the whole human race (all the people in the world)!

The genealogy in Luke is most probably the genealogy of Mary and not of Joseph for the following reasons:

Luke carefully researched the facts concerning the announcement of the birth of Jesus, the birth of Jesus and the genealogy of Jesus (Luke chapters 1-3).

The angel Gabriel announced to Mary that Jesus would not be the physical son of Joseph, but he would be *the physical son of Mary*, a miracle of virgin birth by the power of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:26-37). Gabriel also said that Jesus would be *the heir of the throne of David*, but with this difference: he would be the last and final king in the line of David and his kingdom would never pass to another – his kingdom would never end (Luke 3:32)!

The priest Zechariah, filled with the Spirit, prophesied that Jesus would be *the promised Saviour coming from the house of David* (Luke 1:69). Because women in Israel could also become the legal heir (Numbers 27:8), Mary has an extremely important place in the genealogy of king David!

The genealogies in the Bible only mention the most important names within the lineage and skip over other members of the same lineage. For example, Matthew skips over the kings Ahaziah, (Athaliah,) Joash and Amaziah between king Jehoram and king Uzziah and he calls Jehoram “the father of” Uzziah, while in reality he is “the great great grandfather of” Uzziah (Matthew 1:8-9)! Thus the words “the father of” could also mean “the

grandfather or the great grandfather or the great great grandfather of” someone, because the names of unimportant generations were skipped over. Matthew mentions 17 names between David and Zerubbabel, while Luke mentions 23. Even Luke skips over many generations. He mentions only 34 names between David and Adam, a number far too few for the period of time covered!

Moreover, the expression: “Adam, the son of God” cannot be understood literally (Luke 3:38).

Likewise the sentence: “Jesus was, so it was thought, the son of Joseph, *the son of Heli*” (Luke 3:23) is not a literal statement. It could also have skipped a generation. Therefore, Joseph was most probably “*the son-in-law of*” Heli, which means that Mary was the daughter of Heli. But **because the genealogies were recorded along the male and not the female line, Joseph, the legal husband of Mary, was recorded instead of Mary.**

The Jewish Talmud calls Mary “the daughter of Heli”. This can only be true when the genealogy of Luke is the genealogy of Mary. A Sinaitic-Syrian manuscript translated Luke 2:4 as follows: “Because THEY (Joseph and Mary) belonged to the house and line of David”. Thus, both Scripture (Luke 1:31-33) and other historical documents outside the Bible regard Mary as belonging to the lineage of king David. That is why Luke 3:23 must be regarded as “Joseph was *the son-in law* of Heli”, while Matthew 1:16 says that Joseph was *the physical son* of Jacob.

Conclusion. Thus, while Matthew presents *the legal genealogy* of Jesus via his legal father Joseph, Luke presents *the physical genealogy* of Jesus via his physical mother Mary.

Jesus Christ is the physical “son of Abraham”, the physical “son of David” and the physical “son of Mary” in the sense that according to his human nature he descended from Abraham, David and Mary (Matthew 1:1,16). This is how the invisible and eternal God entered the visible creation and time in the history of this world.

- **But Jesus Christ was not the physical Son of God. He is “the only-begotten Son of God” (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18).**

We will first explain the Greek word “gennaò” which is translated with the word “beget (procreate, father, produce)” or “give birth”

Then we will explain the Greek word “monogenès” which is translated with the word “only-begotten”.

And finally we will explain the theological word “Trinity (Triune, trinitarian).

- **The Greek word “gennaò” has three meanings:**

(1) To *physically* procreate

- by a man (Genesis 4:18)

- by the influence of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35)

To *spiritually* procreate

- by a man (1 Corinthians 4:15)

- by the influence of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5)

To become (acknowledged and confessed) as the *metaphysical or ontological eternal* Son of the Father (Romans 1:4; Hebrews 1:5a)

(2) To become a *physical* mother (John 16:21)

To become a *spiritual* mother (Galatians 4:24-25)

(3) To *produce* (2 Timothy 2:23)

(1) Gennaò means “to beget” or “to become a father” in a physical, spiritual (figurative) or unique sense.

- **Physical sonship.**

The physical meaning of “gennaò” is “to *physically* beget (procreate, produce)”, “to become a *physical* father”.

To physically procreate is a word used of a man. See the genealogies: A procreated B (Genesis 4:18 etc.). Passive: “what is procreated (conceived) in her” (Matthew 1:20); “procreated (conceived) by one man” (Hebrews 11:12); “not procreated (conceived) by adultery” (e.g. outside the marriage relationship) (John 8:41); “procreated (conceived) in sin” (John 9:34).

To physically procreate is also a word used of the influence of the Holy Spirit. Luke 1:35 says: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one that is procreated (conceived) will be called the Son of God.”

The Holy Spirit exercised a divine influence on the virgin Mary and created only the physical body of Jesus in her. He did not create the divine nature of Jesus, because his divine nature is eternal! The eternal God was born as a physical human being within his creation and within human history. He received the name “Jesus”, which means “Saviour”. He received his human nature from his mother, but not from any father! In no way was Jesus physically procreated as with other human beings, because God has no physical body!

- **Spiritual sonship.**

The spiritual (figurative) meaning of “gennaò” is “to beget spiritually”, “to become a *spiritual* father”.

To spiritually procreate is a word used of the influence of a man. Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “In Christ Jesus I became your father (literally: I procreated you) through the gospel” (1 Corinthians 4:15). This means that Paul became their spiritual father by preaching the gospel to them.

To spiritually procreate is a word used of the influence of God’s Spirit. When people believe in Jesus Christ, they are “born of God”⁷ (John 1:13; 1 John 2:29; 1 John 3:9; 1 John 4:7; 1 John 5:1,4,18); or “born from above”⁸ (John 3:3); or “born of the Spirit”⁹ (John 3:5). God the Holy Spirit is the Origin and Cause of their spiritual rebirth.

“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is *procreated from God*” (is given spiritual life as a new creation by God)¹⁰ (translated: “is born of God”)(1 John 5:1a).

“And everyone who loves *the Procreator* (of spiritual life as a new creation)¹¹ (translated: “the Father”), loves *the one procreated from him*”¹² (translated: “his child as well”)(1 John 5:1b). This could refer to Jesus Christ, but most probably refers to the Christian brother (cf. 1 John 2:9-10).

- **Metaphysical or ontological sonship.**

The unique *metaphysical or ontological* meaning of “gennaò” is “to become (acknowledged and confessed) the *metaphysical or ontological eternal* Father”.

Through the influence of God the Holy Spirit at the resurrection, ascension and enthronement of Jesus Christ, *the Son of God began to exercise* his absolute sovereign power on earth and people *began to acknowledge and confess him as the Son of God* who has all power in heaven and on earth (cf. Matthew 28:18; Romans 1:4; Revelation 1:5-6). Of this event God said, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father”¹³ (Hebrews 1:5a; cf. Psalm 2:7). Jesus Christ has been the Son of God from all eternity (John 17:1-5) and before his first coming (John 3:16; Hebrews 1:6), but *begins to exercise* his full authority as the Son of God after he made atonement for sins.

(2) Gennaò means “give birth”, “become a mother” in a physical or in a spiritual (figurative) sense.

- **Giving physical birth.**

The *physical* meaning of “gennaò” is “to give birth”, “to become a *physical* mother”.

“She gave birth to a son” (Luke 1:57). “A woman giving birth to a child” (John 16:21). “For this reason I was born” (John 18:37). “In his own language in which he was born” (Acts 2:8). “I was born a (Roman) citizen” (Acts 22:28).

- **Giving spiritual birth.**

The *spiritual (figurative)* meaning of “gennaò” is “to become a *spiritual* mother”.

The covenant from Mount Sinai (Hagar) “bears children who are to be slaves”, slaves of sin and slaves of the law (Galatians 4:24-25; cf. Galatians 3:21-23).

(3) Gennaò means “to produce”, “to cause”.

“Foolish and stupid arguments give birth to (produce) quarrels” (2 Timothy 2:23).

- **The Greek word “monogenès” means ‘only-begotten’.**

In John 1:18 this term does not refer to anything akin to the human world. It does not refer to any beginning somewhere in the past. It is a term that describes Christ’s trinitarian sonship (the relationship of Jesus Christ to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit).

(1) Only-begotten cannot refer to the beginning of the human nature of Jesus.

The word “only-begotten” cannot refer to Jesus being the physical begotten Son of God, because he was already the only-begotten Son *before* he took on the human nature (John 3:16)! *The word “only-begotten” therefore has no connection to this created world!* The only-begotten Son is above creation (metaphysical).

(2) Only-begotten cannot refer to the beginning of the office of Jesus as the Messiah.

The word “only-begotten” is *not* derived from the words: “only”¹⁴ and “generation”¹⁵ as if Jesus is unique among the people born in the human race. Jesus is God (John 1:1) and he is “the only-begotten God” (John 1:18 in the best Greek manuscripts). And because God is eternal, *the word “only-begotten” cannot refer to any beginning* as among people! It can only refer to his metaphysical, ontological, trinitarian and eternal Sonship.

⁷ Greek: εκ θεου εγεννηθησαν

⁸ Greek: γεννηθη ανωθεν

⁹ Greek: γεννηθη εξ πνευματος

¹⁰ Greek: εκ του θεου γεγεννηται, perfect tense

¹¹ Greek: τον γεννησαντα

¹² Greek: γεγεννημενον εξ αυτου, perfect tense

¹³ Greek: γεγεννηκα σε, perfect tense

¹⁴ Greek: μονος

¹⁵ Greek: γενος, which is derived from Greek: γινομαι, ‘to be born’

The task of Jesus as the Messiah in human history had a beginning at his birth and an end at his second coming. Therefore the word “only-begotten” cannot refer to the office of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, which is in time (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:24-28). The only-begotten Son is above time (metaphysical)(cf. 2 Peter 1:11).

(3) Only-begotten can only refer to the trinitarian Sonship of Jesus.

Because the word “only-begotten” refers to *someone above creation and above time*, it must have the meaning: “*unique in his kind*”, or “*the one and only in his category*”! That is why the NIV translates the word “only-begotten” with “the One and Only” Son of God. *The word “only-begotten” must therefore refer to the trinitarian Sonship of Jesus Christ.*

Jesus Christ is the Son of God in metaphysical and ontological sense – he possesses the divine nature. Jesus Christ is God (cf. John 1:1; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 1:8,17-18; Revelation 2:8; Revelation 22:13). He is God for all eternity!

▪ **The Trinity or Triune God.**

(1) God is only known through Jesus Christ.

God can only be known to the extent that he has revealed himself to man. God has especially revealed his existence and power in the created universe (Romans 1:19-20), his spiritual and moral laws in the heart and conscience of man (Romans 2:14-15), his mighty acts and words in the history of his people (the whole Bible) and finally his divine nature, divine character and divine plan in Jesus Christ.

There is not a single human being or any religion who knows God than only the Son and the people to whom the Son chooses to reveal him (Matthew 11:27; John 10:15; John 17:25-26)! Therefore, no matter language, culture or religion, every human being stands or falls with respect to his relationship to Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Matthew 10:40; Luke 10:16; Luke 2:34; 1 Peter 2:6-8)!

(2) God’s three distinct modes of existence.

There is only *one God* (Mark 12:29) with *one name* (Matthew 28:19). And yet this One God reveals himself in the Bible as God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:3-6). He himself reveals to us that there is *an inner distinction within the unity of his divine nature*. This surpasses our ability to understand or to describe, because we are limited created individuals. This requires our obedient submission to God’s Self-revelation in the Bible. From all eternity God exists in this unique relationship as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit to one another.

The word “Trinity” is not a biblical word, but a theological word which expresses that Christians believe in one God, a unique divine being who revealed himself in three modes (ways, manners) of being. In the Latin language the term “person” was used to express “a mode of being”. However in the modern languages the word “person” has come to mean “an individual being” and that was not what the original Latin word meant.

In the original Greek language the term “*upostasis*”¹⁶ means “substantial nature, essence, actual being” and was used to express “a mode of being”. It never expresses the idea of an individual person, but expresses only the idea of an inner distinction that exists within the unity of the divine nature! It expresses the fact that the One God has revealed himself within creation and within human history as God the Father in heaven, as God the Son (in metaphysical, ontological and eternal sense) on earth and in heaven (John 17:5) and as God the Spirit dwelling in his people on earth (John 14:16-18).

The Bible never speaks of God and Jesus Christ as two separate individuals or two separate Gods, but rather of *the Unique God, the Only God*, who revealed and expressed himself as “the God in heaven” and at the same (human) time as the same “God with us on earth” (Matthew 1:23). The Triune God is not only “omnipresent” (everywhere present) in the created universe, but also above (with respect to existence) and before (with respect to time) the created realities of “energy”, “matter”, “space” and “time”, because he is the Creator of these realities that define people as created human beings! That is also why people cannot define God in terms of natural science, mathematics, philosophy or religion. People can only speak about God in the way he revealed himself to people.

(3) God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is one God in the sense of the only God, the unique God.

Christians are baptised into “the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). The words “the name” is singular, not plural! *The one Name of God* reveals that he is “the unique God”, “the only one of his kind” (Deuteronomy 6:4). “Know me and believe me and understand that I am he (the one who revealed himself and acted in creation and history). Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I even I, am the LORD (i.e. I am who I am) and apart from me there is no saviour. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed – I, and not some foreign god among you” (Isaiah 43:10-12)!

The words, “the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” reveal that there is *an inner distinction within the unity of the divine nature*. The unique divine Being reveals himself as the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have *one and the same divine nature*.

¹⁶ Greek: υποστασις

(4) God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have different functions.

As “God the Father” the God of the Bible is the eternal God, the Creator and Origin of everything and everyone and the One who determines the destiny of everything and everyone (Romans 11:36). He is the Originator of creation, revelation, salvation and recreation. As God the Father he is the Head of his family in heaven and on earth (Ephesians 3:14-15), born-again Christians are his children (John 1:12-13) and they speak to him as “our Father in heaven” with whom they have a personal and close spiritual relationship (Matthew 6:9-13).

As “God the Son” the God of the Bible took on the human nature without laying aside his divine nature and entered his creation and human history through the virgin Mary (Philippians 2:6-7; Colossians 2:9). He is “God with us” (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23). He is “the Word of God” that was expressed in creation and human history (John 1:1,14,18). The divine and human natures of Jesus Christ are “unmixed, unchanged, undivided and inseparably united.”¹⁷ In his self-revelation God the Son is equal to God the Father in sovereign rule and knowledge (Matthew 11:27), in honour (John 5:23), in power (John 1:3; 5:21,27), in possessing life in himself (John 5:26), in work (John 10:30), in possessions (John 16:15), etc. On the ground of human misunderstanding of his divine Sonship, Jesus Christ was condemned to death (John 10:30,33; Matthew 26:63-66).

And as “God the Holy Spirit” the God of the Bible dwells on earth in the hearts and lives of Christians (John 14:16-18; Romans 8:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20) and in the midst of the world wide Christian Church (Ephesians 2:19-22).

A very limited illustration is “fire” (the sun). Fire (the sun) is one essential substance, but has three distinctive modes of being: the fire exists (has being), it is visibly seen as light and it is invisibly felt as warmth. Likewise God exists (as the only divine Being in and above the universe); he manifests himself visibly in creation and in history in Jesus Christ and he is invisibly experienced in the Holy Spirit.

(5) Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are called God.

Because God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit have one and the same divine nature, Jesus Christ is called “God with us” (Matthew 1:23), “the Son of God” (Matthew 26:63-64) and even “God” (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1; Romans 9:5; Acts 20:28; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8-9; 1 John 5:20). And therefore the Holy Spirit is called “the Spirit of God”, “the Spirit of Christ”, “Christ in you” (Romans 8:9-10) and even “God” (Acts 5:3,5).

Conclusion. The expression “Son of God” can only refer to *the Sonship of Jesus Christ that has no beginning*. Jesus Christ is the Son of God in metaphysical sense, in ontological sense, in trinitarian sense and in eternal sense. The eternal invisible God revealed himself to be the visible God by taking on a human body in the virgin Mary and thus entering his creation and our history on earth.

11. JESUS CHRIST CALLS HIMSELF “THE SON OF MAN”.

▪ A human being is a son of man.

In the Old Testament the term “son of man” simply means “man” (Psalm 8:4). It is a reference to man in all his weakness and dependence, as with the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:1,3,6,8; Ezekiel 3:1,3,4,10,17,25, etc.). Similarly the expression “sons of wickedness” (2 Samuel 3:34) means “wicked people”; “son of a foreigner” (Exodus 12:43) means “a foreigner”; “sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17) means “men characterised by fiery zeal”. Likewise “the daughters of music” (Ecclesiastes 12:4) indicates “musical notes”.

▪ Jesus Christ is the Son of Man.

(1) The description of “a son of man” in Daniel 7:9-14 becomes the title of the Messiah in the Gospels.

In every case in the Gospels (except John 12:34) the title “Son of Man” is applied by Jesus to himself. Compare Matthew 26:64 with Daniel 7:13. Only Stephen says that he sees the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7:56). Nowhere else is it found in an address to him or in a saying or narrative about him. Also Revelation 1:13 and Revelation 14:14 applies the title “son of man” to Jesus Christ in *his function as Messiah, the Mediator of salvation and judgement*.

(2) The title “Son of Man” indicates Christ’s humiliation in some passages.

The Son of Man has no permanent home (Matthew 8:20), is going to be subjected to bitter suffering (Matthew 12:12), shall be betrayed and put to death (Matthew 26:24) and shall be buried (Matthew 12:40).

(3) The title “Son of Man” predicts his exaltation in other passages.

The Son of Man shall rise from the dead again (Matthew 17:9), having left the earth he shall return in the glory of his Father, he shall be accompanied by angels (Matthew 16:27; Matthew 24:27,30,44) and shall sit on the throne of his glory as Judge (Matthew 25:31; Matthew 26:64).

¹⁷ As formulated by the fourth ecumenical synod of Chalcedon in 451 A.D.

(4) The title “Son of Man” for Jesus Christ never refers to a mere man, but to God who took on the human nature.

The Son of Man is the Lord of the Law (the Sabbath)(Matthew 12:8). The Son of Man has authority to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6). The Son of Man came into this world with the purpose to give his life as a ransom for sins in exchange for many people (Matthew 20:28). The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). And the Son of Man will rise again from the dead (Mark 10:33-34).

(5) By using the title “Son of Man” in speaking to the Jews, Jesus was able to reveal himself gradually, not all at once.

If Jesus Christ had immediately called himself “the Messiah”, the Jews would not have accepted him. But now the Jews began to wonder, “Who is this Son of Man?” (John 12:34).

So Jesus Christ challenges them and us: “What do YOU think about the Christ (the Messiah)? Whose son is he?” (Matthew 22:42).

12. JESUS CHRIST IN JOHN CHAPTER 14.¹⁸

John chapters 14 to 17 consists of the discourses and prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper.

In John chapter 14, *Jesus comforts* his disciples. He promises the continuous presence of the Holy Spirit and greater works that the disciples will do.

▪ **John 14:4-6. Jesus is the Way to God the Father.**

14:4. And where I am going (vipa)¹⁹, you know (by relationship, reflection and intuition)(G: oida)(vira) the way.

14:5. Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know (G: oida)(vira) where you are going (vipa). How can (vipn) we know (G: oida)(vnra) the way?”

14:6. Jesus said to him, “I am (G: egò eimi)(vipa) the way and the truth and the life; no one comes (vipn) to the Father, but by me.”

Jesus had previously revealed the way to God the Father (John 10:7,9; cf. Matthew 11:27-30). But Thomas had not been listening very well. Maybe he thought like the Jews (John 7:35) that Jesus would go to an unknown place among the Gentile nations and that no one knew where that was. Thomas was thinking about the way Jesus had to take to get to that unknown place. But Jesus spoke about the Way which the disciples had to take to get to heaven!

This is the sixth ‘I AM’ statement of Jesus. All three words have the definite article.

• **Jesus is the way.**

Jesus Christ is not simply one of the possible ways to God, as some religions teach, but the only way! He does not merely show the way to God. Jesus Christ himself is the only way to God the Father (Mark 12:14; Luke 20:21)! There is simply no other way to God! In his divine nature he is equal to each one of God’s divine attributes, because he possesses each attribute in an infinite degree. For example, he not only has love or exercises love, but he is love and nothing but love. Likewise, he is righteousness and nothing but righteousness, etc. And likewise he is the way, the truth, the life and nothing but the way, the truth and the life. In every one of his deeds, words and attitudes, Jesus Christ is the way between God and his elect.

Jesus Christ is the only way from God to man (John 1:18). He revealed God to man and during his incarnation represented God visibly with man. All the divine blessings come down from God the Father through God the Son (Ephesians 1:3).

Jesus Christ is also the only way of man to God (John 14:6). He is the only means of access to God the Father. He only reveals who the true God is. He is the only One who can restore the broken relationship of man with God. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ will have uninhibited access to God. He is the Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5).

• **Jesus is the truth.**

Jesus Christ is not simply one of the many religious truths, as some religions teach, but the only truth about God and man, the only truth about salvation and judgement. He is the embodiment of truth (John 8:36). He is the ultimate reality to which all the Old Testament shadows pointed (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:5; Hebrews 10:1).

He is also the absolute dependable source of truth (John 8:31-32)! He is the only visible image (manifestation) of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15,19; Colossians 2:9). Whoever knows him, knows God the Father (John 14:7). He stands directly opposed to every lie and all lies in religions, politics, jurisdiction, science and society. He hates lies and opposes lies. Only he is the truth that sets people free from every kind of slavery. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ will

¹⁸ Study the Gospel of John, chapter by chapter, cf. www.deltacourse.org

¹⁹ G=Greek, v=verb

i=indicative, s=subjunctive, o=optative, =m=imperative, n=infinitive, p=participle, r=participle with imperative sense

p=present, i=imperfect, f=future, a=aoist, r=perfect, l=pluperfect

a=active, m=middle, p=passive, d=deponent

know the Creator and Saviour more and more until he will know him fully. The truth will take hold of him and influence him powerfully. The truth will set him free, guide him and sanctify him completely (John 8:31-32; John 16:13; John 17:17).

- **Jesus is the life.**

Jesus Christ is the Creator of all physical life (John 1:3), but is not simply physical life himself. He is the life of God himself: he possesses all the glorious divine attributes (John 1:4). Because he has life in himself, he is the source of life for Christians. He is the life that stands opposite to every form of death: spiritual death caused by sin (John 5:24) and physical death (John 5:28-29; John 11:25) and eternal death (John 3:16) as the judgement on all evil. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ will have spiritual life, will be resurrected from physical death and will never suffer eternal death in hell! The life in Jesus will produce the regenerate life of his spirit, the immortal physical life of his body and cause him to share eternal life in fellowship with the Living God (John 17:3). Just as 'death' means separation from God, 'life' means fellowship with God! As 'the light of life' Christ reveals the attributes of God. As 'the word of life' Christ reveals the will of God to Christians so that they may have fellowship with God the Father (John 6:68). He came into the world so that Christians may have life and abundance (John 10:10).

- **Jesus is the only way!**

"No one comes to the Father except through me." The Christian faith is absolute (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5)! No other so-called 'god' actually exists. There is no saviour outside Jesus Christ (Isaiah 43:10-11; Isaiah 45:21-22). These facts make Christian missions necessary and urgent!

- **John 14:7-11. Jesus' essential relationship with God the Father.**

- **To know Jesus is to know God (John 14:7).**

John 14:7 may be translated in two ways:

14:7. If you have come to know (G: ginòskò)(vira) me, you will also know (G: ginòskò (vifd)(papyri, Sinaiticus, Bezae Cantabrigiensis) my Father.

or:

If you had come to know (by study, observation and experience)(G: ginòskò)(vira) me, you would also have come to know (by relationship, reflection and intuition) (G: an èdeite from oida)(vsla)(Vaticanus, Ephraemi) my Father.

From now on you do know (by experience)(G: ginòskò)(vipa) him and have seen (G: horað)(vira) him (and his spiritual image remains constantly before your eyes).

We choose the second option with the first verb 'to know' the Greek 'ginòskò' in the perfect tense and for the second verb 'to know' the Greek 'oida' in the pluperfect tense. If the disciples had come to know Jesus Christ through everyday observation and experience, they would also have come to know God the Father by intuition and reflection.

Jesus says that his disciples had too often failed to see that he is the only way that gives access to God, the only truth that sets free, and the only life that transforms. If they had more carefully pondered his words and observed his deeds, then they would have learned to know Christ. And then they would also have known the Father, that is, they would have gained insight by mental reflection into the person of God the Father. No one in the Old Testament has had this privilege to see, recognise and know (by relationship, reflection and experience) God the Father in such a concrete, visible and even permanent way!

The disciples know and recognise the invisible God the Father through what Jesus said and through daily observation and experience of his visible image in Jesus Christ. The visible image of the invisible God remains constantly before their eyes.

- **To see Jesus is to see God (John 14:8).**

14:8. Philip said (vipa) to him, "Lord, show (vmaa) us the Father and it will be sufficient (vipa) to us (i.e. we will be content)."

14:9. Jesus said (vipa) to him, "So long a time I have been (I am)(vipa) with you, and yet you have not learned to recognise (G: ginòskò)(vira) me, Philip? He who has seen (G: horað)(vpra) me, has seen (G: horað)(vira) the Father. How can you say (vipa), 'Show (vmaa) us the Father'?"

Philip desired a visible revelation or appearance of God the Father as Moses and others received before (Genesis 16:7,13; Exodus 24:9-11; 33:18-23; Numbers 12:6; Isaiah 6:1; Ezekiel 1:1; Ezekiel 8:3; Ezekiel 40:2). But he does not realise that he is seeing much more than Moses and the others ever saw (John 1:1,14,18; John 14:9)!

All three perfect tenses in verse 9 express an ongoing result. The disciples have come to know Jesus Christ by observation and experience for such a long time. That knowledge is a continuing reality. They have seen Jesus and his visible image continues to be before their eyes. Thus they have also seen God the Father and his invisible image continues before their spiritual eyes. Their recognising, knowing and seeing is a continuous reality. Outside Jesus Christ there is no visible revelation of God (John 12:45; Hebrews 1:3) or any salvation. The disciples had a sincere faith, but it was not yet mature.

- **Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus (John 14:10)**

14:10a. Do you not believe (vipa) that I am in the Father, and that the Father is (vipa) in me?

The ‘god’ of a rationalistic and pure mathematical monotheism (as in Judaism) cannot unfold his divine essence in several divine modes. But the God of the Bible reveals himself as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in one divine essence. The three different modes of existence are one in divine essence, that is, one in all their divine attributes. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit never exist separate as human individuals (personalities) do, but constantly exist in one another and through one another as aspects of one divine self-conscious life. This is what is expressed in the word “Triune”.

- **To hear Jesus is to hear God.**

14:10b. The words that I speak (vipa) to you I do not speak (vipa) of myself (i.e. does not originate only in Jesus Christ and are not simply on his own authority), but the Father who constantly dwells (vppa) in me is continuously doing (present) his work (i.e. speaking and acting) (i.e. in and through God the Son, the Mediator).

The ontological (essential) Triune God is reflected in the functioning of the Triune God. Whenever Jesus Christ speaks, God the Father is speaking through the speaking of Jesus Christ. Every single spoken word of Jesus Christ is the word of God and the work of God the Father in Jesus! We must not think that God the Father is speaking through Jesus Christ as a ventriloquist. On the contrary, God the Son speaks what is in the mind of God the Father, because it is also his mind! When God the Son speaks, the work of salvation of God the Father is carried out. The acts or works of God the Father are not limited to the words of Jesus, but also includes his miraculous signs.

- **To believe in Jesus is to believe in God (John 14:11).**

14:11. Believe (vmpa) me that I (am) in the Father, and the Father in me; but if not, then believe (vmpa) me because of the works themselves (i.e. on the evidence of the miracles themselves).

Continue to believe in God and in Jesus Christ (cf. John 14:1) on the basis of what Jesus Christ said about the essence of God the Father and God the Son. But if that is too difficult, continue to believe in God and in Jesus Christ on the basis of the divine works of Jesus Christ (cf. John 9:31-33; John 10:37-38; John 11:39-40; John 20:30-31; Acts 2:22). To believe in Jesus Christ is also to believe in God who sent him (John 12:44).

▪ **John 14:15-18. The promise of the Holy Spirit.**

- **The importance of obedience in receiving the Holy Spirit (John 14:15).**

John 14:15 may be translated in two ways:

14:15. “If you love (vspa) me, (then) keep (vmpa) my commandments.”

[Then the verb ‘keep’ is a command in the present continuous tense. Obedience comes before love. Obedience is the prerequisite for love.]

Or:

“If you love (vspa) me, you will keep (vifa) my commandments.”

[Then the verb ‘keep’ is in the future tense. Love comes before obedience. Love is expressed in obedience, This second translation has preference.]

“God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey him” (Acts 5:32), that is, to those people who have come to love him after they heard the message about him. The word ‘obey’ here refers to the response of faith to the gospel message. The people who hear and believe the gospel, receive the Holy Spirit as a seal (Ephesians 1:13-14; cf. Acts 38-41;44-48; Acts 11:14-18; Acts 15:7-11). Thus, true believers are characterised by their ability to obey and their actual keeping of Christ’s instructions with respect to love (John 13:34-35), faith (John 14:11) and prayer (John 14:13-14).

- **Jesus Christ requests the Father to give his disciples the Holy Spirit (John 14:16).**

14:16. And I will request (G: eròtaò)(vifa) the Father and he will give (vifa) you another Helper (Representative) (G: paraklètos) in order that he may be (vspa) with you forever.

The Greek language has two verbs for ‘asking’:

- The verb ‘ask’ (G: ‘aiteò’) is always used when an inferior asks something from a superior. The word is always used of Christians praying to God and means ‘begging’ (John 4:9-10; John 14:13; John 15:7,16; John 16:23-24,26).

- The verb ‘request’ (G: eròtaò) is always used when someone makes a request to his equal. The word is always used when Jesus Christ makes a request to God the Father. It is a request on the basis of equality (John 14:16; John 17:9,15,20)! We may never picture Jesus as someone begging favours from God the Father. Jesus Christ has earned all the answers to prayers on the basis of his completed work of salvation. In John 11:22 Martha did not have the correct image of the relationship between God the Son and God the Father, because she said: “I know that even now God will give you whatever you *ask*”, that is, “whatever you beg” (G: aiteò).

- **The Holy Spirit is the Paraclete.**

The word ‘Paraclete’ literally means someone called to stand at your side and help you. However, it does not have the passive meaning of ‘Advocate’ or ‘Counsellor’, someone called to assist you as in the Latin translations of the Bible. It also does not have the passive meaning of ‘Comforter’ as in the Greek translation of Job 16:2. It rather has the active meaning of ‘Helper’, ‘Mediator’ and ‘Representative’ as in other Greek literature.

Jesus Christ is the Representative of believers in heaven and speaks on their behalf to God the Father (1 John 2:1). Jesus Christ represents Christians with God in heaven. He is the Mediator between Christians and God. He actively intercedes for Christians with God in heaven. He is the Helper of Christians in heaven.

The Holy Spirit is also a Representative. He is the Representative of Jesus Christ on earth and speaks on behalf of Jesus Christ to believers (John 14:16-17; John 16:13-15). The Holy Spirit represents Jesus Christ with Christians on earth. He is the Mediator between Jesus Christ and Christians. He actively explains Christ's words to us on earth (John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:14).

He applies Christ's completed work of salvation (justification and sanctification) in people's lives on earth. He glorifies Jesus Christ among Christians on earth (John 16:13-15). He is the Helper of Christians on earth.

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal power, as Unitarians believe, but a Person. The word 'Person' does not refer to or represent *an individual personality*, but a mode of existence of God that has the personal attributes or characteristics of God, like the ability to be rational (think, decide, plan, know, speak, etc), to be emotional (feel, have emotions, be joyful or sad, etc), and to be spiritual (relate to God the Father and God the Son, to be intuitive, have a conscience, be creative, etc). The Holy Spirit is a Person with personal attributes (John 14:26; John 15:26; Acts 15:28; Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 12:11; 1 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 22:17). He is a Person (a distinctive mode of God's existence) just as God the Father and God the Son (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:1-2). He has the same divine nature and is in his essence one with God the Father and God the Son.

The Holy Spirit is not different than Jesus Christ or God. He is not 'another' Representative or Mediator (John 14:16) in the sense that *he differs from* Jesus Christ, but a Representative or Mediator *just as* Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus Christ is the Representative of believers with God in heaven, so the Holy Spirit is the Representative of Jesus Christ with Christians on earth. The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of Jesus Christ with and in Christians" (John 14:16-17). The Holy Spirit is "Christ in you" (Romans 8:9-10; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18)! The Holy Spirit is "present everywhere on earth" (cf. Revelation 5:6) and takes the place of Jesus Christ, who during his incarnation was only present in one place on earth. The Holy Spirit is everything to Christians on earth what the incarnated Jesus Christ would have been to them if he were still on earth!

The functions of the Triune God are based on the ontological (essential, substantial) being of the Triune God. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit (the baptism with the Spirit) is the work of God the Father (Acts 2:17; Acts 11:16-17) and of God the Son (Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:33). As God the Father and God the Son, so God the Holy Spirit teaches (John 14:26), guides Christians on the way of all the truth (John 16:13) and convicts people of sin, righteousness and judgement (John 16:8).

Just as the ascension of Jesus Christ is a unique historical event, likewise the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost is a unique historical event. Ascension and Pentecost are never again repeated!

- **The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17).**

14:17. the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot (vipn) receive (vnaa), because it neither sees (observes) (G: theðrèð)(vipa) nor knows (by observation and experience, therefore: acknowledges)(G: ginòskò)(vipa) him. You do know (by observation and experience and consequently: acknowledge)(G: ginòskò)(vipa) him, because he dwells (vipa) by your side and will be (vifd) within you.

Jesus Christ is called the Truth (John 14:6), because he fulfilled the Old Testament shadows and inaugurated the New Testament realities (John 1:17; Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:5; 10:1). The Holy Spirit is called 'the Spirit of Truth' (John 14:17), because he applies Christ's completed work of salvation that was earned at his first coming to the lives of new believers throughout the history of the world.

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit 'the world' cannot accept him, because it neither sees (observes) him nor knows (acknowledges) him. The 'world' (cf. John 1:9) is here the world of lost people (John 3:19), the realm of evil that is openly hostile against God, Christ and Christians (John 15:18). This world follows the lies of Satan (John 8:44; cf. John 14:30), cannot discern or possess spiritual matters (1 Corinthians 2:12-14) and do not acknowledge the Spirit (John 12:22-37; Acts 2:12-17). The word 'to know' means to know by observation and experience and to acknowledge. Both verbs 'sees' and 'knows' are in the present continuous tense. Genuine Christian believers *continually* see, observe and discern the Holy Spirit and his work with their spiritual eyes and *persist* to know and acknowledge him in their lives.

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he (i.e. the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus Christ) comes to dwell in the bodies of Christians (1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The Holy Spirit will be 'with' and 'in' Christians, that is, in their hearts and lives and at their side to help them. God (Christ) through his Spirit comes to live in the midst of the Christian Church (Ephesians 2:22) and makes this Christian Community to be "God's people" consisting of kings, priests and prophets from every nation in the world (1 Peter 2:9-10). They are not God's people, because they belong to a particular race (e.g. the Jewish race), or because they perform certain required religious duties (e.g. praying three times a day, fasting twice a week, giving one to three tithes of their income and making three pilgrim journeys to Jerusalem every year). They are God's people consisting of people from every race on earth, because God loved them first and because Jesus Christ made atonement for their sins.

God's Old Testament people ended the Old Testament period of preparation of being "children under tutelage of the law" and entered the New Testament period of being "mature sons and heirs" (Galatians 4:1-7). God's Old Testament people laid down their national (Jewish) character, determined by the ceremonial law (consisting of holy people, holy places, holy times and holy actions), and have become God's international people (Revelation 5:9-10).

God's New Testament people is the continuation of God's Old Testament people, but on a higher plane: that is, the 'shadows' of the Old Testament Law and the prophecies and promises in the Prophets have been fulfilled in the realities of the New Testament (Matthew 5:17; Colossians 3:13-17). God's New Testament people is the continuation of God's Old Testament people, but on a larger scale: that is, the number of believers in Israel have been extended and enlarged to include the believers coming out of all the Gentile nations (Romans 10:12-13; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-29; Ephesians 3:2-6; Colossians 3:11; Revelation 5:9-10)!

- **The Holy Spirit makes the presence of God and Christ a reality (John 14:18).**

14:18. I will not leave (vifa) you as orphans; I am coming (vipn) to you.

Although Jesus Christ in his divine-human nature left his disciples behind on earth in order to ascend to heaven, he himself returned to them in the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit reminds believers of everything Jesus Christ said when he was on earth, teaches them all things they should know (John 14:26), testifies about Jesus Christ (John 15:26), glorifies Jesus Christ (John 16:13-15), that is, makes the divine attributes of Jesus Christ a visible reality among Christians and puts Jesus Christ in the centre of the lives of Christians. He applies the merits and completed work of salvation of Jesus Christ at his first coming in the lives of Christians everywhere today.

Thus, when the Holy Spirit is poured out at Pentecost, Jesus Christ returned to his followers! John 14:18 does not refer to the future second coming of Jesus Christ, but to his coming in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost! That is why the knowledge and experience of a confidential relationship and connection with Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9-11,15-17; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13). God the Father and God the Son have come to live with and in the believer through the Holy Spirit (John 14:23)! This is a reality which no other religion in the world experiences!

▪ **John 14:19-24. A confidential spiritual relationship with Christ is based on love and obedience.**

- **Jesus Christ will depart from this evil world and will no longer be seen with physical eyes (John 14:19).**

14:19. Still a short while and the world no longer observes (see with physical eyes)(G: theòred)(vifa) me, but you observe (G: theòred)(vifa) me. Because I live (vifa), you also will live (vifa).

Unbelievers did not see Jesus physically anymore after his death. 'The little while' (cf. John 7:33; John 12:35; John 13:33; John 14:19; John 16:16-20) is until his public trial that same night and his crucifixion the next day. Until then the world of unbelievers (the Jews with their religion and the Romans with their politics) will observe Jesus Christ. But after his resurrection he appeared visibly only to believers (1 Corinthians 15:1-8)! The world of unbelievers did not see him with their physical eyes anymore!

In the Gospel of John (written A.D. 70-96) the distinction between the various phases of the promised coming of Jesus to his disciples is a vanishing distinction:

- First, the coming of Jesus to his disciples (during a period of forty days) after his resurrection from the dead (John 14:19; John 16:22; cf. John 20:20!).
- Second, The coming of Jesus in and through the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (for the duration of the whole New Testament period)(John 14:17-18; cf. Matthew 28:20).
- Third, the coming of Jesus (through his Spirit) throughout the whole New Testament period to discipline his congregations (Revelation 2:5,16).
- Fourth, the second coming of Jesus at the consummation of the world (John 6:39,40,44,54).

Believers will continue to see Jesus with their spiritual eyes after Pentecost. Because in John 14:16-23 Jesus is speaking of *his* coming (John 14:18) in the Spirit (John 14:16-17), he is almost certainly speaking of the end of the visible personal fellowship with his disciples on earth. Here he will come in order to manifest himself to believers and in order to make his home (through the Spirit) with believers on this present earth (John 14:21,23).

And because the believers have been born-again and the Spirit of Christ lives in them, their spiritual eyes have been opened and they will continue to observe Jesus Christ after he returned to his Father. They will be able to see him with their spiritual eyes. However, unbelievers and believers will only see Jesus Christ again with their physical eyes at his second coming (Revelation 1:7).

- **Jesus Christ has an ontological relationship with God the Father, but a confidential spiritual relationship with Christians (John 14:20).**

14:20. in that day you will recognise (understand, realise)(G: ginòskò)(vifd) that I (am) in my Father, and you (are) in me, and I (am) in you.

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and throughout the whole New Testament period Christians will recognise and acknowledge the essential (ontological) relationship that exists between God the Father and God the Son. And they will also recognise and acknowledge the spiritual relationship that exists between Christ and Christians. The ontological relationship of God the Son to God the Father is not the same as the spiritual relationship of Christ to Christians, but it is the example for the relationship between Christ and Christians. The relationship of unity and love in the Triune God is the example for the unity and love among Christians (John 17:21,26; John 14:31). The two relationships are not of the same order: the essential (ontological) relationship between God the Father and God the Son remains the same for all eternity and does not grow. But the spiritual relationship between Christ and Christians has a beginning, grows and continually bears more fruit in the character of Christians and in their works. The spiritual and confidential relationship that exists between Christ and Christians is also depicted as the relationship between the Shepherd and his sheep (John 10:16), as the Vine with its branches (John 15:5) and as the Head with its Body (Ephesians 1:22-23).

- **Jesus Christ continues to manifest himself in the experience of Christians (John 14:21).**

14:21. He who has (vppa) my commands and keeps (vppa) them, he it is (vipa) who loves (vppa) me. And he who loves (vppa) me will be loved (vifd) by my Father, and I too will love (vifa) him, and I will manifest (vifa) myself to him.

All three verbs are in the present continuous tense. One of the characteristics of a true disciple of Jesus Christ is that he obeys Christ's instructions (John 15:8,10). In John 14:15 *love precedes obedience*, but in John 14:21 *love follows obedience*. Love and obedience are inseparable (John 15:14)! Jesus speaks of obedience (John 14:21,23) after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17), because obedience without the Holy Spirit is impossible (Romans 5:5)!

The love of Christ precedes the love of Christians (Romans 5:6,8,10), but also follows it (John 14:21,23). God's first love for us (John 3:16; 1 John 4:7-10,19; Romans 8:28-39) creates in us a desire to obey him. Our obedience proves our love and creates another cycle of the love of God and of Christ for us. And this in turn creates another cycle of obedience to Christ.

The way in which Jesus Christ shows himself to a Christian is always in and through the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ may appear to him in a vision or dream, but will certainly show (reveal) himself in his Word, the Bible! That is why Satan tries to keep the words of the Bible away from people (Luke 8:12). That is why the enemies of Christ on earth prohibit the possession of Bibles and confiscate and destroy Bibles! The reading of the Bible will cause people to believe in Jesus Christ and will bring them eternal salvation. The revelations of the Holy Spirit, either objectively in salvation history or subjectively in the experience of Christians, will never conflict with the objective revelations of Christ in the Bible (Ephesians 6:17; 1 Timothy 3:16)! The Spirit is the Spirit of truth (John 14:17). The Bible is the truth (John 17:17) and Jesus Christ is the Truth (John 14:6).

- **The evil world cannot experience the spiritual relationship between Christ and Christians (John 14:22).**

14:22. Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, what has happened (vira) that you intend (vipa) to manifest (vnpa) yourself to us and not to the world?"

This Judas was Thaddaeus (Matthew 10:3) or Judas, son of James (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13). Not only Philip (14:8), but also Judas (14:22) misinterpreted the words of Jesus. He was thinking of a public manifestation of Jesus by means of miracles or of a visible appearance of Jesus as in his second coming. But Jesus was speaking of a revelation through the Holy Spirit. The revelation of Christ to his disciples is of a spiritual nature. But the disciples kept dreaming about a future material Jewish-national kingdom on earth (cf. John 7:3-4; Acts 1:6). That is why Judas asked why Jesus was not aiming for a public manifestation of his power and victory (just like modern political leaders do when they campaign for leadership).

- **The spiritual relationship between Christ and Christians is based on love and obedience and the Triune God will manifest himself through the Spirit to Christians (John 14:23-24).**

14:23. Jesus replied (viao), "If someone loves (vspa) me, he will keep (vifa) my word, and my Father will love (vifa) him, and we will come (vifd) to (G: pros) him and make (vifm) our home (dwelling-place)(G: monè) with him (i.e. we will stay with him).

14:24. He who does not love (vppa) me, does not keep (vipa) my words (G: logos); and the word, which you hear (vipa) is (vipa) not mine, but the Father's who sent (vpaa) me.

The singular 'someone (anyone)' emphasises the personal responsibility of every believer. When people really love Jesus Christ, the one and only God will certainly love them. When people say that God is their Father (like Jews tended to do), then they will certainly love Jesus Christ (John 8:42). Whoever loves God the Father will also love Jesus Christ (1 John 5:1). But whoever rejects Jesus Christ, also rejects the God of the Bible (Luke 10:16), who is the only God that exists (Isaiah 43:10-11; Isaiah 45:21-22)!

In the Holy Spirit the Triune God comes to stand face to face with the Christian and makes his home at the side of the Christian (John 14:23) and in the Christian (John 14:17; cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The presence of the Triune God is a reality that is experienced. It leads to justification, sanctification and glorification. In verse 23 the Triune God through his Spirit makes his home with the believer in Jesus Christ. But in verse 2 and 3 the believer in Jesus Christ makes his home with the Triune God at Christ's second coming! Then the believer will not only see God

with spiritual eyes, but also with his physical eyes (Revelation 22:4), because Jesus Christ is forever the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15)!

The 'logos' is the teaching of Jesus Christ (John 14:24) and this 'logos' is the standard for Christians doctrine and Christian life. The 'Logos' is God who also took on the human nature (John 1:1,14) and he is the embodiment (tangible expression) of everything he taught. Thus: whoever loves the Logos (the Word or Jesus Christ) also loves the logos (the teaching or word of Jesus Christ). "Whoever loves me, obeys my teaching" and "Whoever obeys my teaching, loves me". The logical conclusion is that whoever rejects Christ and Christ's teaching as revealed in the Bible rejects God and God's teaching (cf. John 7:16; 1 Thessalonians 4:8). A mere acknowledgement of Jesus, the Messiah, as a historical person or as a religious prophet is not enough! To such a person the Living God will not reveal himself!

▪ **John 14:25-26. The functions of the Holy Spirit.**

- **The Holy Spirit completed the teaching of Jesus Christ during his first coming (John 14:25-26).**

14:25. These things I have told (vira) you while still remaining (vppa) with you.

15:26. Moreover, the Helper (Representative), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send (vifa) in my name, he will teach (vifa) you all things and he will remind (vifa) you of all things that I myself said (viaa) to you.

In these verses, Jesus draws a distinction between his teaching during the time he was still on earth and his teaching through the Holy Spirit during the time he is gloriously exalted in heaven! While he was with his disciples on earth, he taught them many things. The four Gospels are full of the teachings of Jesus Christ while he was still on earth.

But some of the most important events had still not taken place! The crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and enthronement of Jesus Christ in heaven and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit had still not taken place! The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom as a testimony to all the nations (Matthew 24:14), the making of people from all nations disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19), the establishment of local congregations in every place on earth (Matthew 16:18), the tribulation of Christians on earth (John 16:33) and the second coming of Christ (John 14:3) have not yet taken place!

This continued instruction of Jesus was necessary, because these important events in God's salvation history had not yet taken place and needed to be explained so that the people in the world would be able to understand the significance of these events. Especially the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ needed to be understood, because religious Jews regarded these events as "a stumbling block" and natural Gentiles regarded these events as "foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:20-31).

Only after these events would the apostles have the deep and complete insight into God's eternal plan of salvation, which was hardly registered when it was first heard (John 2:22; John 12:16). Before the indwelling Holy Spirit became a reality the apostles could hardly understand what Jesus taught. Jesus Christ had to explain the Old Testament Law and Prophets to them and had to open their minds so that they could understand the Holy Scriptures (Luke 24:25-26,44-45)! Therefore later the apostle Paul says, "This is what we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom (Jewish theologians and Greek philosophers) but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words" (1 Corinthians 2:13).

Jesus Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would remind his apostles of everything he had taught them while he was still on earth with them. And Jesus Christ promised that after his physical departure from the earth he would make many things much clearer to them through the coming Holy Spirit. He promised that the Holy Spirit would teach his disciples everything that is necessary for their salvation and for their task as Christ's witnesses.

Jesus Christ had begun his task as "the Prophet" (Deuteronomy 18:15,18-20; Acts 3:22-23) during the Old Testament period when his Spirit spoke through the Old Testament prophets (1 Peter 1:9-12). And Jesus Christ completed his task as "the Apostle" (Hebrews 3:1) during the New Testament period when his Spirit spoke through the New Testament apostles (14:26; 15:26-27; 16:13-15). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of God (Romans 8:9-10).

The Holy Spirit would *recall* all the truths that Jesus spoke while he was still on earth (14:26b). Why recall these old truths? Jesus Christ guarantees that the Holy Spirit would see to it that the recording of the four Gospels would be the absolute complete, infallible and intact revelation of God to man!

The Holy Spirit would *teach* the apostles everything they need to know about God's message of salvation and about God's task in the world (14:26a). Why teach these new truths? Jesus Christ through his Spirit would continue his teaching through his apostles (15:26-27) so that the recording of the Acts of the Apostles, the Letters of the New Testament and the book of Revelation would be the absolute complete, infallible and intact revelation of God to man!

All major religions and cults in the world have only one human witness, one so-called 'prophet' of their religion or one so-called 'founder' of their cult. But Jesus Christ has twelve apostles as eye-and ear witnesses of his life, death, resurrection and ascension (Luke 24:44-49; John 15:27; Acts 1:1-8,21-22). And he has at least five hundred other people who have been eye-witnesses of his resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15: 3-8)!

The apostles would need the Holy Spirit, because especially they would be Christ's eye- and ear-witnesses. They would be the official witnesses of his death, resurrection and teachings. They would be his instruments to plant the Christian

Church among the Jews, the Samaritans and the Gentiles. They would be his instruments to write the books of the New Testament. They would be the authoritative interpreters of the teachings of Jesus and thus establish Christian doctrines. That same Holy Spirit teaches Christians today to understand the Bible and reminds Christians in their daily situations of life of what Jesus wants them to do.

Some religions have so many religious books that there is no unified message in it. Another major religion has deliberately destroyed all other hand-written copies of their original religious book, because there were too many differences and deviations in these copies! But the hand-written copies of the original Bible books have never been deliberately destroyed by Jews or Christians. Also the contents of the Bible have never been changed, as one major religion falsely accuses Jews and Christians of doing. There is not a single archaeological, historical or literary proof to substantiate that false accusation! Jesus Christ forbade any addition or subtraction from his teaching (Revelation 22:18-19). And the apostle Paul taught that no one should go beyond what is written in the Bible (1 Corinthians 4:6)! The Qumran manuscripts of some books from the Old Testament (between 150-50 years B.C.) prove that the Old Testament has never been changed! And the thousands of manuscripts of the New Testament in the original Greek language (dating back to between the first and fifth century A.D.) and the thousands of manuscripts of translations of the New Testament in the Latin, Syriac, Coptic and other languages in the first three centuries A.D. prove without any doubt that the New Testament has never been changed! There is not one other document in history that is so overwhelmingly attested as the Bible! Anyone implying the opposite simply cannot prove his lies!

- **The Holy Spirit brings real peace (John 14:27).**

14:27. Peace I leave (vipa) with you; my peace I give (vipa) to you; not as the world gives (vipa) I give (vipa) to you. Let not your hearts any longer be troubled (vmpp), nor let them remain afraid (cowardly, timid) (vmpa).

Jesus gives his peace to Christians. This peace is not the peace the world gives. The word 'peace' has two distinct meanings in the Bible:

- Negatively, 'peace' means the absence of outward disputes and war, the absence of inward irritation, anger, fear, turbulent feelings, moral conflicts, etc. This is what the world regards as peace.
- Positively, 'peace' means making whole what was previously broken. 'Peace' means that a broken relationship has been restored, an aborted goal in life has been taken up again, hurt feelings have been healed and everything that God deems necessary has been established in your life. Only Jesus Christ gives this peace!

Genuine peace is inseparably bound to Jesus Christ: it is the peace which God makes with sinners and his enemies (Romans 5:6-11); the peace which believers experience in their relationship with God (Romans 5:1); and the peace which Christians who come from different backgrounds (as Jew and Gentile) make with one another (Ephesians 2:11-18). It is the peace which is the fruit of restored relationships and of doing what is right in God's eyes (Isaiah 32:17). It can therefore also be the peace deep in your heart even when the storm of persecution and hatred of the world rages around you, because you know that you are speaking and acting the truth!

The kingdom (kingship) of God is a matter of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17)! The God of peace will soon crush Satan under the feet of Christians (Romans 16:20).

The word 'troubled' points to being moved by sorrow and unrest (cf. John 11:33; John 12:27; John 13:21; John 14:1,27). The word 'peace' in this context means an absence of spiritual unrest, a deep assurance of being saved and a genuine realisation of God's loving nearness under all circumstances. This peace is the result of focussing on God, trusting in God and contemplating the promises of God. Someone said, "Peace is the smile of God reflected in the heart of his child." Therefore there is no reason for a Christian to be afraid, cowardly or timid. God has not given Christians a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1:7).

- **John 14:28-29. The two natures of Jesus Christ**

14:28. You heard (viaa) that I said (viaa) to you, 'I am going away (vipa) and I am coming (vipn) to (G: pros) you. If you were loving (viiia) me, you would be glad (viao) that I am going (vipn) to the Father, for the Father is (vipa) greater than I.

14:29. And now I have told (vira) you before it happens (vnad), in order that when it does happen (vsad) you may believe (vsaa).

Jesus predicts his going away. It refers to his death, resurrection and ascension into heaven (John 14:2-3,12). He also predicts his coming to be face to face with them. This refers to his coming in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (John 14:3,18,19,21,23).

Before his first coming, Jesus Christ was completely and perfectly God and possessed all the glory (divine attributes) of God (John 17:5; Philippians 1:6).

After his first coming to the earth, Jesus Christ was completely equal to God the Father with respect to his divine nature (John 10:30)! But he was inferior to God the Father with respect to his human nature (John 14:28)! He still had to die on the cross to make atonement for the sins of people. This inferior and humble state of Jesus Christ from his incarnation (birth) to his resurrection has to do with God's history of salvation, predicted in the Old Testament period and fulfilled

in the New Testament period. Before his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ possessed the weak human nature with all its limitations with the exception of sin (Romans 1:3; Hebrews 2:14,17-18).

But after his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ possessed the glorious and powerful human nature that is able to bring everything under his control (Matthew 28:18; John 13:3; Romans 1:4; Philippians 3:21).

Within God's history of salvation, Jesus Christ emptied himself of the right to be equal with God and humbled himself as God by taking on the nature of man (Philippians 2:6-7). He became a poor man in order to make all believers (spiritually) rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). He humbled himself in his human nature by taking on the service of a slave (Luke 22:27; Philippians 2:7). Then he humbled himself even more by taking on himself the sins of all believers and by dying as a criminal on a cross in order to make atonement for sins (Mark 10:45; Romans 3:25; Philippians 2:8). He was perfectly innocent, but died as a transgressor (Isaiah 53:5).

As the Great Prophet, Jesus Christ told all this to his disciples, so that when these events happen, they would not begin to doubt, but instead grow stronger in faith, because everything is happening exactly as he foretold them (the betrayal, the denials, the trials, the crucifixion, but also the resurrection).

- **The two natures of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.**

The human nature of Jesus Christ. Isaiah predicts, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders" (Isaiah 9:6)

The divine nature of Jesus Christ. Isaiah continues, "And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). In Isaiah 9:6, Jesus Christ is called 'the mighty God' (Hebrew: El gibor) and in Isaiah 10:20-23, the LORD (JaHWeH), the Holy One of Israel, is called both 'the mighty God' (Hebrew: El gibor) as well as 'the Lord LORD Almighty' (Hebrew: Adonai Jahweh Tsibaoth, that is, the Lord of the heavenly armies of angels).

Thus, the prophet Isaiah reveals Jesus Christ as having a human and a divine nature!

- **The two natures of Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John.**

The human nature of Jesus Christ. Only because John 14:28 is interpreted apart from the rest of the Bible, someone concludes that Jesus is not God or not one with the Almighty God. That conclusion is wrong. When this verse is interpreted in the context of the Gospel of John, it is clear that Jesus is here *referring not to his divine nature, but especially to his human nature!* God is Spirit, omnipresent and thus far greater than any human being that is always limited to a particular location. As the Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ took on the human nature as well and in his human nature he is inferior to God the Father. It means that during the period before his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ was subject to the suffering of bearing the sins of his people in the world and dying in their place.

Only after his resurrection from the dead, his ascension and enthronement in heaven does Jesus once more possess the same glory he possessed before he became a human being (John 17:5)! When Jesus says that God the Father is greater than him, he is preparing his disciples that he is going to die (cf. Mark 8:31; Mark 9:31; Mark 10:32-34).

The divine nature of Jesus Christ. In Luke 16:8, the expressions 'sons of this world' refers to people who possess all the characteristics of this present sinful world. The expression "sons of light" refers to people *who possess all the characteristics of light*. Likewise, when Jesus says, "I am the Son of God" (John 10:36), he expresses the truth that he possesses all the attributes of God.

That is why Jesus says, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). "The Father is in me and I in the Father" (John 10:38). "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

That is why the apostle John says, "The Word was God" (John 1:1) and "God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known" (John 1:18). Jesus is fully equal to God the Father with respect to his essence.

- **The two natures of Jesus Christ in the Letters.**

The human nature of Jesus Christ. When God took on the human nature in Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ made himself not only a man, but also a servant of all men and even became obedient to death for the sake of saving man (Philippians 2:7-8). Only as Mediator between God and man has Jesus Christ made himself subject to God the Father, so that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

The divine nature of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ possesses the very nature of God and is equal with God (Philippians 2:6). Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15). All the fullness of God dwells in Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:19). All the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form in Jesus Christ (Colossians 2:9). Jesus Christ is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being (Hebrews 1:3).

Conclusion: Jesus Christ has two natures: as God he is fully equal to God the Father and as man he is inferior to God the Father. But because his two natures are never separated and also because he is never separated from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, Christians must view Jesus Christ as “the visible manifestation of the invisible Almighty God” (Colossians 1:15).

- **Jesus Christ receives the same honour as God the Father.**

Jesus says that all power in heaven and on earth has been given to him (Matthew 28:18). Paul says that God’s plan is to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, Christ (Ephesians 1:10). Peter says that angels, authorities and powers are in submission to Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:22). Let no one dishonour Jesus Christ by making him less than God the Father.

John 5:23 teaches that all people should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. “Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father”! “No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also” (1 John 2:23).