

The Persons of The Trinity

Eric Michael Teitelman

Pastor • Teacher • Worship Leader



House of David
MINISTRIES

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Yeshua:

In the Old Testament, there are plural names and pronouns for God. For example, the names *Elohim* and *Adonai* or plural. Some scholars claim this plurality relates to “a plurality of majesty.” However, in Genesis, we read: “*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness*” (*Genesis 1:26, NKJV*).ⁱ Notice the plural pronouns. Others are found in Genesis 3:22 and 11:7. In Isaiah, we read: “*I heard the voice of the Lord [Adonai], saying: Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?*” (*Isaiah 6:8*). This verse acknowledges the oneness and unity of God, but also incorporates God’s plurality, inferring plurality in unity.ⁱⁱ

In the Old Testament, we see multiple references to the “Angel of the Lord.” For example, in Genesis, we read: “*The Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham!*” (*Genesis 22:11*). Notice the use of the Tetragrammaton (*Malach YHVH*—מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה). While there is a distinction between the Angel of *Yehovah* and *Yehovah* Himself, they appear to be one. Again, these appearances of God as an angel or a man are called theophanies. When Abraham was instructed to sacrifice his son Isaac, the Angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, even swearing by His name, *Yehovah*, saying, “*By Myself I swear*” (בְּשִׁבְעֵי נַאֲם־יְהוָה).ⁱⁱⁱ

Jacob wrestled with an angel whom he claimed was God. Jacob prevailed and demanded a blessing, declaring, “*For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved*” (*Genesis 32:30*). Later, the Angel of the Lord appeared again several times to Joseph in dreams.^{iv} The Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the Burning Bush. Once again, the terms “angel” and “Yehovah” are used interchangeably in the Hebrew text.^v

These are just a few examples. Again, I believe that some of these manifestations are of the Holy Spirit, while others are pre-incarnate appearances of Christ (Christophanies). Regardless, all these appearances are emanations of God, and we can distinguish varying aspects of the Godhead in each visitation of the Lord.

Jesus was aware of and declared His unique relationship as the Son of God to the Father and the Holy Spirit. He spoke of the Father as “He,” of the Holy Spirit as “He,” and of Himself as “I.” He referred to the Holy Spirit as “another comforter,” inferring a separate identity. He said the Holy Spirit would come when He went away, but also said, “*Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*” (*Matthew 28:20*).^{vi} How can Jesus be away from us but also with us at the same time? Because God is a plurality in unity.^{vii}

At the baptism of Jesus, He ascended from the waters, the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove, and the Father declared from heaven: *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (Matthew 3:17). All three were manifest simultaneously. Yet, the Father speaks of the Son as another identity in whom He was well pleased. And the Holy Spirit had a separate identity from the Father and Son, in the form of a dove.

Jesus had already testified of Himself, saying: *"And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself"* (Luke 24:27). On Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection, the power of the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples. They preached the gospel with authority to thousands of Jews who had ascended to Jerusalem for the Festival of Shavuot. The Holy Spirit also comforted, taught, and guided the disciples.

Jesus said: *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever... But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you"* (John 14:16 & 26). Notice the words of Jesus: *"the Father will send the Holy Spirit in His name,"* inferring, again, that the Holy Spirit has His unique identity apart from the Father and the Son.

The disciples did not back down from declaring that Jesus was God; they also said that the Holy Spirit was God. Still, they understood that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are *one* God.^{viii} The baptismal order given by Jesus at the great commission reveals the Threeness and Oneness of God: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 28:19). As the word "name" is not repeated, we recognize the unity of the three persons of the Godhead. One name, one God, but three separate identities. As we read: *"And the LORD shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be "The LORD is one," And His name one"* (Zechariah 14:9).

The apostolic benediction in Corinthians proclaims: *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all"* (2 Corinthians 13:14). And in the book of Jude, we read: *"But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life"* (Jude 1:20-21). Interestingly, in Mathew 28, the Father is mentioned first; in 2 Corinthians, Jesus is first; and in Jude, the Holy Spirit is first.

Contrary to what some incorrectly teach, these three passages affirm that the Son and Holy Spirit are not secondary to the Father.^{ix} The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equal participants in our redemption. The relationship between these three has to do with their self-revelation in the context of our salvation. The Father sent the Holy Spirit to *"convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"* (John 16:8). And He sent His only begotten son that we might live through Him. We read: *"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"* (John 3:18). Forgiveness of sins and therefore, all judgment has been given to Christ; *"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son"* (John 5:22).^x

While Christ was born in the flesh to die on the cross, this does not suggest the Father existed alone without the Son and then begot Him at a point in time. The Son has eternally existed with the Father. John said: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God"* (John 1:1-2). And Jesus prayed: *"And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was"* (John 17:5).

Jesus's statement: *"Before the world was,"* implies that He was with the Father before the creation. And the term "only begotten" means that the Father did not create Jesus, somehow making him inferior or less equal to Himself. The Greek word *monogenes* means "single of its kind." Jesus is the exact image of the Father; hence Jesus said: *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father"* (John 4:9).

So, here lies the mystery of the Godhead: three separate identities (not individuals); one God, not three.^{xi} And while the trinity is beyond our comprehension, it is an unmistakable tenant of scripture, both Old and New Testaments. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are co-equal and co-eternal. These three are *one* in nature, will, and purpose, but not the same, as each has His unique identity.^{xii}

One of the greatest mysteries of Christ is His virgin birth. We read:

"While he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.' So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 'BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD, AND BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,' which is translated, 'God with us.' Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS" (Matthew 1:20-25).^{xiii}

Scholars have intensely debated this verse, originating from Isaiah 7:14, with some arguing the Hebrew word *Alma* (עַלְמָה) is merely a reference to a young maiden, not a virgin. They cite the Hebrew word *Betula* (בְּתוּלָה), used in other books of the Old Testament. But Jewish scholars have frequently translated both words as "maiden," not making any distinction between the two.

In a biblical sense, a young maiden can only be a Virgin; as per the Law of Moses, sexual relations were a requisite for marriage.^{xiv} We read in Proverbs: *"The way of an eagle in the air, The way of a serpent on a rock, The way of a ship in the midst of the sea, And the way of a man with a virgin (Alma)"* (Proverbs 30:19). What way does a man have with a young maiden, a virgin? To marry her, of course.

In Matthew 1:16, Joseph's genealogy concludes with using a feminine pronoun, of which Mary is the antecedent: *"And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ"* (Matthew 1:16). The phrase "of whom," in Greek, *ex hes*, is singular and feminine, making the birth of Jesus from Mary only, even though the genealogy is that of Joseph's. Hence, the Apostle John declares: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14).

The doctrine of the virgin birth is fundamental to the entire foundation of Christian theology, and denial of this also rejects His deity. If Jesus were born of a natural father, He would have inherited Adam's sinful nature, and His death on the cross would have been neither vicarious nor substitutional. Jesus would have died only for His sins and not others, and surely not the sins of the world. Paul said, *"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons"* (Galatians 4:4-5).

Jesus would have been nothing more than a finite zealous religious leader without the virgin birth. And if Jesus had a human father, He could not have been the "only begotten" of the Father, the unique, infinite Son of God. If we believe these things to be true, we should expect the entrance of the Messiah into this world to be miraculous. Why else would Isaiah declare: *"The Lord Himself will give you a sign,"* a miracle? A Messiah with only human parents could not be called the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.^{xv} Only a divine and infinite Savior could atone and propitiate for our sins— *"He became [our] Savior"* (Isaiah 63.8).

Lastly, Jesus could not be called the King of Kings and Lord of Lords if he were not divine. God always referred to Israel that He was to be their King.^{xvi} The rabbis teach that while God is our King, the Messiah is also our king, serving as God's representative on earth. But in studying Israel's history, we cannot find one king, not even King David, who would be deemed perfectly enough to represent a holy and righteous God. The Lord does select and anoint individual men to govern His people. But no mortal man could ever fully substitute for God, especially one with a fallen and sinful nature inherited from his father. Hence, we read:

"Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:11-16).

It is incomprehensible to the human mind that a child could be conceived without a father. And yet, in Genesis, God promised Eve that her seed, implying the Messiah, would bruise the serpent's head.^{xvii} From that moment in scripture, the seed, as a blessing to the world, is communicated to Abraham, the progenitor.^{xviii} We read: *"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (Genesis 22:18)*. Paul understands this promise of being the Christ by saying: *"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one, 'AND TO YOUR SEED,' who is Christ" (Galatians 3:16)*.

But then, the promise of the seed reverts to the woman. An angel of the Lord appeared to Mary, saying: *"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:31-33)*.^{xix}

Jewish scholars argue that Jesus could not be the Messiah because he must be of the lineage and seed of King David. But if we read the promise given to David, it speaks of his son, Solomon, who would reign after him and build the Temple, and the throne of an eternal kingdom that God would establish forever. We read: *"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Samuel 7:12-13)*.

The prophet Isaiah declared: *"There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him" (Isaiah 11:1-2)*. The Rod of Jesse is an allegory for governmental authority. As we read, *"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6)*.

And the branch growing out of his roots is the promised seed from which the Messiah would come. If this promise was first given to Eve, then communicated through Abraham to King David, and back to Mary, then the promise is spiritual, not physical. Hence, we read: *"The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him."* Indeed, Mary's conception was immaculate, as the angel of the Lord revealed to Joseph: *"For that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:20)*. Yes, Jesus, the son of David, was prophesied in the Old Testament, and he was born in the flesh by an immaculate conception and virgin birth to a mother under the Law of Moses.^{xx}

The virgin birth proves that Jesus is divine. Again, we read: *"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel... And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."* (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6). The name "Immanuel" translates as "God with us," and the Messiah's other titles, especially "Mighty God" (*El Gibor*—אֵל גִּבּוֹר), can only be attached to God Himself.

Jeremiah refers to the Messiah as “the Lord our Righteousness.”^{xxi} King David speaks of Him as Lord.^{xxii} And in the New Testament, Jesus is called God and Lord. Thomas cried out: “*My Lord and my God!*” (John 20:28); “*And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life*” (1 John 5:20).^{xxiii}

While we have been focusing on the miraculous and divine nature of Christ, let us not forget His humanity. More than seventy times in the Bible, Jesus is called a man or the son of man. Jesus is Christ the Messiah and Jesus of Nazareth; fully God and man, but one person, not two. And His human nature was devoid of sin and in perfect submission to His divine nature and will. We read: “*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus*” (1 Timothy 2:5). The Westminster Confession gives us the following description of Jesus’s dual nature:

“The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man’s nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that the two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead, and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.”^{xxiv}

Jesus existed in the form of God and was equal to Him in saying: “*I and My Father are one*” (John 10:30); “*He who has seen Me has seen the Father*” (John 14:9); “*O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was*” (John 17:5).^{xxv} But Jesus also took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.^{xxvi} The Greek *homoïoma* means “likeness,” but His likeness was not just human. Traced through two genealogies, Jesus was born of natural birth to an earthly mother in a manger in Bethlehem. He grew up as an ordinary child in subjection to his parents. Jesus grew into a man who was tempted in every way we are. He had human emotions, and he wept and shed tears. Jesus hungered, thirsted, fatigued, suffered, shed blood, died, and was buried.

Even after the resurrection, with a glorified body, Jesus invited Thomas to touch His hands and feel His wounds— “*Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have*” (Luke 24:39). And in His return, Jesus retains His humanity, as written: “*He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God*” (Revelation 19:13); “*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God*” (Revelation 21:3).

While born into a finite creation, Jesus also has pre-existence and is called the Ancient of Days, as He proclaimed: “*Before Abraham was, I AM*” (John 8:58).^{xxvii} Jesus had to increase in wisdom

and stature, but is the same yesterday, today, and forever.^{xxviii} Jesus said: *"I do nothing of myself" (John 8:28)*. Still, we also read, *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3)*. Jesus said, *"I thirst" (John 19:28)*. But also said, *"Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14)*.

Jesus was sentenced to death by Pontius Pilot but is called the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.^{xxix} He was whipped, and His back was scarred with stripes, yet it is by His stripes that we are healed.^{xxx} Another man had to carry His cross. Yet, He is *"upholding all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3)*. Jesus said, *"Now My soul is troubled" (John 12:27)*, but He is the Prince of Peace.^{xxxi} He cried out on the cross, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46)*, but told His disciples, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5)*. And Jesus died on the cross. Yet, He proclaimed: *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25-26)*.^{xxxii}

These seeming dichotomies are some of the more apparent contrasts between Jesus's divinity and His humanity. Some question why Jesus was tempted if He was without sin. The temptation He faced was for testing and demonstration for us of His perfect obedience and unquestionable proof that He, being the last Adam, is the spotless and unblemished Lamb of God.^{xxxiii} We read: *"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin?" (Hebrews 4:15)*.

Here again, we see the humanity of Christ in His ability to sympathize with our weakness because He also became weak like us. As we read: *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9)*. The Son of God became a son of man that we, the sons of men might become sons of God.

God Himself, in the person of His only Son, and with the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit, visited His creation to redeem out of it a people for His own possession. Therefore, worship is ascribed to Jesus, and *"let all the angels of God worship Him" (Hebrews 1:6)*, for He is alone is worthy.^{xxxiv} Very God of very God, Jesus is very God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. So, with the angels, let us forever sing:

*"You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals;
For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10)*.

Amen!

-
- ⁱ All Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Bible (NKJV) unless otherwise noted, Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982.
- ⁱⁱ Duffield, Guy P. and Van Cleave, Nathaniel M. Foundations of Pentecostal Theology. Foursquare Media. 1910.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Sefaria.
- ^{iv} Mathew 1:20, 24, 2:13, 19.
- ^v Exodus 3:2-7.
- ^{vi} John 6:20-27, 7:38-39, 15:26, 16:7.
- ^{vii} Mark 1:9-11. Luke 3:21-22. John 1:32-34.
- ^{viii} 1 Corinthians 8:6.
- ^{ix} 1 Corinthians 12:4-6. Ephesians 4:4-6, 5:18-20. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.
- ^x Mark 2:5. Luke 7:48. Acts 17:31. Revelation 22:12. Romans 2:16. Matthew 16:27, 25:31-33. 2 Corinthians 5:10.
- ^{xi} Mark 1:9-11. Luke 3:21-22. John 1:32-34.
- ^{xii} Ephesians 1:4-5. 1 John 4:7-8.
- ^{xiii} Luke 1:26-38.
- ^{xiv} Deuteronomy 22:28-29.
- ^{xv} 1 John 2:2.
- ^{xvi} 1 Samuel 8:6-7.
- ^{xvii} Genesis 3:15.
- ^{xviii} Genesis 22:15-18.
- ^{xix} Luke 2:27-35.
- ^{xx} Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7. Micah 5:2. Galatians 4:4.
- ^{xxi} Jeremiah 23:6.
- ^{xxii} Psalm 110:1-7.
- ^{xxiii} John 1:1. Romans 9:5. Titus 2:13. Hebrews 1:8, quoted from Psalm 45:6.
- ^{xxiv} Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. VIII, Sec. 2.
- ^{xxv} John 1:15, 14:7-11. Philippians 2:5-11. Hebrews 1:1-3.
- ^{xxvi} Philippians 2:7. Romans 8:3.
- ^{xxvii} John 1:1, 14-15, 17:5. Philippians 2:5-11. Hebrews 1:1-3.
- ^{xxviii} Luke 2:52. Hebrews 13:8.
- ^{xxix} Matthew 27:26. Revelation 17:14, 19:16.
- ^{xxx} Isaiah 53:5.
- ^{xxxi} Isaiah 9:6.
- ^{xxxii} John 4:14, 25-26, 5:20, 6:33-35, 40, 50-51, 53-54, 62, 8:12, 23-24, 56, 58, 9:35-39, 10:7-9.
- ^{xxxiii} Matthew 4:1-11, 26:36-46. Luke 4:1-13. Hebrews 2:18, 4:15.
- ^{xxxiv} Exodus 34:14. Matthew 2:2, 11, 14:33. Hebrews 1:6.