

# Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

April 2012

“Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:2, 3).

**Address Change Reminder:** Please take note of our new address on the back of this newsletter. Please do not send any further correspondence to our Florida address. We will be moving the print shop to Oklahoma within the next few months. Until then, Brother Jim Raymond can be reached at 407-421-6025 for literature requests.

## Answering Objections – Part 4

by Lynnford Beachy

In the last few months we have examined all of the Old Testament texts that are most commonly used to support the trinity and we have seen that the trinity is not taught in the Old Testament. Even most trinitarian theologians will admit this fact. Yet, many seem confident that the New Testament reveals that God is a trinity.

Beginning this month we will examine all of the New Testament evidence that is often used to prove that God is a trinity.

I agree with the *Encyclopædia Britannica* on this question, which says, “Neither the word Trinity nor the explicit doctrine appears in the New Testament, nor did Jesus and his followers intend to contradict the Shema in the Hebrew Scriptures: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord’ (Deuteronomy 6:4).” (*Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, article: Trinity, Online at, [www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/605512/Trinity](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/605512/Trinity).)

We will not examine verses that were covered in our series, “The Personality of God” (such as John 1:1; 10:17, 30; 14:16, etc.) If you think we missed any verses, please refer to this series as it is likely covered there. If not, please let us know. This series was printed in the June-December 2011 issues of *Present Truth*. It is also available as a booklet. We will not examine verses trinitarians use to establish that Jesus is God since we agree with God, the Father who said, to His Son, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee

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with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Hebrews 1:8, 9). Jesus is God by nature, as well as by the exalted position His Father gave to Him (Philippians 2:9; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28). I am human because my father is human. Jesus is God because His Father is God. We will examine verses that are used in an attempt to prove that Jesus is “the Most High God” or “the only true God.” He certainly could not be the Most High God while His Father is “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory” (Ephesians 1:17).

### **Matthew 1:23**

“Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

As noted above, Jesus is fully God by nature, and when He was here physically 2,000 years ago, or when His Spirit lives in our hearts, God is truly with us. Not only is the Son of God with us when He is in our hearts, but His Father is also with us in Christ, for “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19). If we have the Son of God in our hearts we cannot help but have “God with us.” Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23). Jesus is the only way to have God with us. Whether the word “God” in Matthew 1:23 refers to the Father or His Son is immaterial. It could refer to either of them without the slightest hint that God is a trinity.

### **Matthew 3:16, 17**

“And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water:

and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

The above reference is used in attempt to prove the trinity. The argument goes like this, “The Father speaks from heaven, the Son is on earth, and the Holy Spirit descends like a dove, therefore all three must be separate persons that together make one God.” There are elements in this text that could be interpreted in this way, but it is not necessary from the text.

There is generally no question about the Father’s position as the God of heaven, and this texts demonstrates this fact. God refers to His Son as “my beloved Son.” This does not require us to conclude that the Son is somehow part of a trinity, but rather that Jesus is God’s own Son. The declaration of the Father that Jesus is His Son should not be interpreted to mean that Jesus is “God the Son, the second person of the trinity.” God could easily have made this declaration if He wanted us to believe it, but instead He simply said, “This is my beloved Son.” This does not contradict any of the texts we have read in our studies on the personality of God that state that Jesus is literally “the only begotten Son of God” who was “given” life by His Father (John 3:18; 5:26, etc.).

The question arises from the fact that the Spirit of God descended from the Father in the form of a dove. This is the key element of the text that is interpreted to mean that God is a trinity. Yet, the Bible says it was “the Spirit of God” that descended rather than “God the Holy Spirit.” The Spirit is mentioned as the property of Someone, it is

God the Father's own Spirit that descended like a dove.

If you presupposed that the Spirit of God was really a separate and distinct person other than God the Father, then certainly one would expect that this verse refers to that third person taking the form of a dove. What if the Spirit of God descended in the forms of two doves, would you then conclude that there are two Spirits of God? If a visible manifestation of the Spirit of God means that the Holy Spirit is a distinct and separate individual from the Father, then what do we do when we read of 120 cloven tongues of fire in Acts chapter two? Here we read, "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them [120 in all - verse 1:15]" (Acts 2:3). If one visible manifestation of the Spirit of God is one distinct person, then 120 visible manifestations of the Spirit of God must be 120 distinct persons. If the logic is sound in one text, it must be in all cases. Yet, we know that the Holy Spirit is not 120 persons. God is not made up of 122 people. Instead, God is one person who has a Spirit, just as truly as every living being has a spirit. God is able to send His Spirit anywhere He likes and it can appear in any form He wants.

The 120 visible manifestations of the Spirit of God were not intended to prove that God's Spirit is 120 people, but rather it was given as a sign to those present that the Spirit of God was poured out upon those individuals. When Peter explained what happened he quoted God saying, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:..." Peter did not think that the cloven tongues represented 120 spirits, but rather one Spirit, the Spirit of God. God said, "I will pour out

of my Spirit." This does not sound like He was planning to send a separate individual to represent Him, but that He would share His own Spirit with others. Peter further explained, "Therefore [Jesus] being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33). If the 120 visible manifestations of the Spirit of God were designed to prove that the Holy Spirit is not God the Father's own personal Spirit but a distinct individual, then Peter failed to get the point. He maintained that the Holy Spirit is the Father's own Spirit that He gave to His Son who then shed it upon the disciples. Jesus said the Holy Spirit "proceedeth from the Father" (John 15:26).

When Jesus was baptized and the Spirit of God descended in the form of a dove the man who baptized him did not conclude that the Holy Spirit is a separate individual. John the Baptist said, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John 1:32-34).

Here John testified that the visible manifestation of the Spirit of God was intended to prove that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and that Jesus is the Son of God. If the events at Christ's baptism were designed to prove that God is a trinity, John failed to get the message. He still maintained that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and that Jesus is the Son of God. Inter-

estingly, John called the Holy Spirit “it” in this text.

The bottom line is that even those who witnessed the events at Christ’s baptism came away from the experience without the understanding that God is a trinity. They still understood that God is the Father and Jesus is the Son of God and the Holy Spirit is “the Spirit of God.” It is irresponsible for us to conclude that God is a trinity from Christ’s baptism. The events there fall far short of proving the trinity doctrine.

### **Matthew 28:19**

Jesus was talking to His disciples when He said, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:18-20). Did Jesus want His disciples to recite this formula at baptisms and teach people that God is a trinity?

Peter, who was a disciple of Jesus, was obviously present when Jesus gave this command. If we want to know what Jesus meant by this command, we can trust Peter to give us the proper understanding. Let us turn to the text of Scripture where this command of Jesus was obeyed for the first time. In Acts chapter two Peter said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Here Peter instructed these people to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, rather than in three separate names. But, supposing Peter temporarily forgot the command of Jesus, let us find more evidence.

In Acts chapter 10, Peter “commanded [Cornelius and his brethren] to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48). From these verses it is plain that Peter must have understood the command of Jesus differently than most Trinitarians understand it today. However, maybe Peter was alone in his understanding of this command.

When Peter and John came to Samaria they found a group of people who had been “baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16). Obviously Peter was not alone in his understanding of the command of Jesus.

What about Paul? Keep in mind that Paul said of the gospel he preached, “I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:12). How did Jesus teach Paul to baptize?

When Paul visited Ephesus he met certain brethren there who had only been baptized by John’s baptism. Paul instructed them about Christ, and “when they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:5).

There is no record in the Bible of anyone baptizing in three separate names of three individual persons. Now there are three possibilities that could explain this. 1) The disciples were in direct rebellion against Jesus and purposely disobeyed His commandment. 2) The disciples understood the command of Jesus differently than most Trinitarians understand it today. 3) Jesus never gave the command to baptize “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

The most reasonable of these possibilities is choice number two. The disciples obviously understood the command of Jesus differently than

most Trinitarians understand it today. The word baptize does not always mean, “to submerge in literal water.”

Let us look at it in another way. Jesus commissioned us to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (πνεῦμα - *pneuma*). Was Jesus, by making this commission, trying to teach the idea of a trinity? If so, He would have been contradicting other statements He made, and many statements made by other Bible writers. There is nothing in the verse that says there are three persons in the Godhead. There is nothing in the verse that says who is God. The word “God” is completely missing from the verse. We learn elsewhere in the Bible that the “one God” of the Bible is the Father. Paul wrote, “To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Corinthians 8:6). The Bible uses the phrase, “God the Father” thirteen times, but it never says, “God the Son,” or “God the Holy Spirit.”

Notice also that the verse says we are to baptize “in the *name* of...” Why is it singular if there are supposed to be three persons? The word name in the Bible often refers to a person’s character. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel because his character had changed. If we believe this verse to be referring to actual names of three individuals, as most Trinitarians suppose, then it would be impossible to fulfill the command. The text says to baptize “in the name of...” Simply reciting the statement, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” is not fulfilling the command. To baptize someone in the name of a person we must know the person’s

name. It would be possible for us to baptize in the literal name of the Father, for we know His name: Yahweh or Jehovah. It would also be possible for us to baptize in the literal name of the Son, for we know His name: Jesus or Yahshua in Hebrew. But it is not possible for us to baptize someone in the literal name of the Holy Spirit, for nobody knows that name, if it exists.

The Father anointed His Son with His own Spirit. God said to His Son, “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Hebrews 1:9) “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” (John 3:34) As plainly shown, the Father has given His Son His Spirit. What type of spirit did He give? Surely, it is a Holy Spirit. The Bible mentions several different types of spirit. We read in the Bible about “foul spirit,” “evil spirit,” “unclean spirit,” “dumb spirit,” “excellent spirit,” “humble spirit,” “wounded spirit,” “broken spirit,” “haughty spirit,” “faithful spirit,” and “good spirit.” All these spirits are distinguishable by the adjective that describes them. We know that God the Father has a spirit (Matthew 10:20), and can that spirit be anything else, or anything less, than Holy? The word “Holy” is an adjective in every case, whether in English or in Greek. “Holy Spirit” is not a name, but a description of the Spirit of God.

Jesus was not giving a specific formula of words for the preacher to recite at a baptism. We know this because,

1) There is no record in the Bible of anyone using that formula at a baptism.

2) All the recorded examples of people baptizing after this command



was given show that it was done in the name of Jesus. (See Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5.)

3) The word *name* is singular, indicating that it has reference to the character rather than to proper names of individuals.

4) It would not be possible to literally baptize in the proper name of the Holy Spirit, because we have not been given that name, if such a name exists.

Once we realize that Christ was commissioning His disciples to baptize into the character of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, it is easier for us to understand His words. Several times in the Bible the word baptize refers to something other than literally immersing in water. For example:

Long after Christ's literal baptism in water He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50) Here it is obvious that Jesus was not referring to being literally immersed in water, but rather to an experience He would encounter. This experience was to be so intense that it could be described by using the word baptize which literally means, "to immerse, submerge; to make overwhelmed" (*Strong's Greek Dictionary*).

Jesus used the word baptize in the same way in the following verses: He said to James and John who had asked for high positions in heaven, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for

whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matthew 20:22, 23).

In these verses Jesus used the word baptize to signify passing through an overwhelming experience. Paul used the word in this way when he wrote, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Galatians 3:27) Being baptized into Christ is more than just being immersed in water, but rather indicates a complete dedication to Christ.

We could look at Christ's words in Matthew 28:19 in this way: "Go ye, therefore, and disciple all the nations, Immersing them into the *name* [character] of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19 *Rotherham Version*) This command is closely connected with the command to teach. Christ wants His disciples to understand the truth about God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit of God.

Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and *teach all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Right before and immediately following His command to baptize, Jesus told us to teach all nations. What are we to teach them? Jesus said, "all things whatsoever I have commanded you." We are to teach people the same things that Jesus taught when He was here. Did Jesus ever teach that God is a trinity? Who is God, according to Jesus? Jesus said His Father is "the Lord of heaven and earth" (Luke 10:21), "greater than all" (John 10:29), and "the only true God" (John 17:3).

When talking with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus told her, "Ye wor-

ship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:22-24). Jesus identified God as His Father, and referred to Him using the singular pronoun, Him, and the singular Greek word, *θεος* - *Theos*—God). According to Jesus God is His Father.

He also said, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:29). Here Jesus spoke of God as someone other than Himself, as the one who sent Him into the world. Unquestionably, Jesus was referring to His Father.

Jesus said to His accusers, "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham" (John 8:40). He continued, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me" (John 8:42). He also stated, "If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God" (John 8:54). Jesus recognized that the God of the Jews is His Father. He never offered any correction to the Jews on this point, but rather re-enforced their understanding by every one of His statements about God.

Jesus admonished, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). Again, Jesus speaks of God as someone other than Himself. In His final prayer with His disciples, Jesus said to His Father, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus

Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). Jesus made it abundantly clear that there is only one God, who is His Father. Jesus did not just call Him, "God," not even "true God," but "**the only true God.**" This leaves no room for anyone else being the true God. Nor does this allow for Jesus Himself to be part of "the only true God." He speaks of Himself as separate and distinct from the only true God. Notice also that His language completely leaves out any necessity for knowing a third being. There are only two Persons that it is necessary to know, God, the Father, and His only begotten Son.

After His resurrection, His understanding about who God is did not change. He said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).

Consistently, throughout His life, Jesus taught that God is His Father, and nobody else. Forty days after His resurrection Jesus made a statement that many take to mean something opposite of what He taught His whole life. Jesus told His disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Some people take these words as evidence that Jesus was teaching that God is not one Person, but three. Yet, this would make Jesus' teaching in His last words on earth, something contrary to what He taught His whole life. If we are to identify who God is in this verse,

by comparing it with other Scriptures, we would have to conclude that God is “the Father” in this verse.

If Jesus was trying to teach us that God is a trinity of three persons in Matthew 28:19, what are we to conclude from this? Did Jesus change His mind about who God is? Did He surprise His disciples with a new concept about God in His last conversation with them? If so, His disciples did not seem to get the message. Inseparably linked with Jesus’ command concerning baptism is His command to teach people “to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” We are to teach people the same thing that Jesus taught. Jesus taught, without exception, that God is His Father. To take Jesus’ words in Matthew 28:19 to mean something completely opposite of His teaching throughout His life is to disobey His command to teach people as He taught.

In Acts 2:38 we see the principles of the great commission demonstrated. On the day of Pentecost Peter proclaimed, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts 2:38) The Father calls or draws (John 6:44) us to Christ, we are literally baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and the Father gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit to guide us in our Christian lives.

Baptism represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. It only makes sense to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, for He is the one who died, not the Father or a third person called the Holy Spirit.

Some have enquired, “If Jesus did not want us to think that the Holy Spirit is a

separate person, why did He mention the Holy Spirit in this commission?” This is a good question. In Peter’s instruction he mentions repentance towards God, baptism in the name of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus mentioned all three because it is imperative that His disciples understand what He taught about God, the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. If Jesus left out the Holy Spirit in His commission, then people would likely have been left without the knowledge that Christ lives in us through His Spirit. People could be left without knowing that there is a Holy Spirit. This would be terrible! There were some disciples in the Bible who were left in this condition.

When Paul was in Ephesus he met some brethren and asked them, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost” (Acts 19:2). Paul taught them about the Holy Spirit, and “When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:5). It is interesting that even though Paul taught these disciples specifically about the Holy Spirit as the element they were missing, he still baptized them in the name of Jesus Christ rather than in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Jesus wants His church to benefit from the entire gospel, including the rich gift of His Spirit. It would be dangerous to leave people without the knowledge of the wonderful gift of God’s Spirit.

Matthew 28:19 certainly does not prove a trinity, nor does it prove that the Holy Spirit is a separate being from the Father and His Son. If we are to find proof of these doctrines in the Bible we must look elsewhere.



## **John 8:58**

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”

Many trinitarians use this as conclusive evidence that Christ is the Most High God because He used the term “I AM” in reference to Himself. Is this the case? The Bible says that Jesus is “the Son of the Highest” (Luke 1:32). The devils are even aware of this fact. One day a possessed man came up to Jesus and said, “Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?” (Mark 5:7). Jesus is the Son of the Most High God, not the Most High God Himself.

Let’s look at Exodus, the only place that the term “I AM” is used in the Old Testament. Moses saw a strange phenomenon as he beheld a bush burning but not being consumed. The Bible says, “And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed” (Exodus 3:2). Who appeared to Moses? “The angel of the LORD.” Who is that? As Moses drew near to the bush the angel of the LORD said, “Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Exodus 3:5). We read of a similar occurrence with Joshua when he was about to surround Jericho.

“And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord

unto his servant? And the captain of the LORD’s host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so” (Joshua 5:13-15).

Here the Captain of the LORD’s host appeared to Joshua and told him to loose the shoes from off his feet, because the ground where he was standing was holy. We know this was not an angel, because an angel would not accept worship. John began to worship an angel and the angel said, “See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10). We know that the Captain of the LORD’s host who appeared to Joshua was not God the Father, for “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18). Another reason this could not be the Father is that this person identified Himself as the “captain of the host of the LORD” rather than “the LORD” Himself. The only One left who this could possibly be is Jesus Christ.

Christ appeared to Joshua and told him to take the shoes off of his feet, for the ground whereon he stood was holy. Christ is often referred to as “the angel of the LORD.” The word “angel” means messenger, and does not always refer to the class of beings known as angels. Jesus is not a literal angel, but He is the foremost messenger for God. God told Moses, “Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in Him.” (Exodus

23:20, 21) We also read, “And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them.” (Exodus 14:19) Christ was the One who went before the children of Israel. Paul wrote about Israel that they “did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” (1 Corinthians 10:4)

So we see that the only time the term “I AM” is used in the Old Testament as a name, it refers to Christ. How then can one say that because He used the same term in the New Testament that He was claiming to be the Most High God?

Some have argued that the term “I AM” means “eternal existence” or “without beginning.” But this is not the proper definition of the term. The Hebrew word is **הָיָה** - *hayah* in the imperfect tense, which means:

1) to be, become, come to pass, exist, happen, fall out

1a) (Qal)

1a1a) to happen, fall out, occur, take place, come about, come to pass

1a1b) to come about, come to pass

1a2) to come into being, become

1a2a) to arise, appear, come

1a2b) to become

1a2b1) to become

1a2b2) to become like

1a2b3) to be instituted, be established

1a3) to be

1a3a) to exist, be in existence

1a3b) to abide, remain, continue (with word of place or time)

1a3c) to stand, lie, be in, be at, be situated (with word of locality)

1a3d) to accompany, be with

1b) (Niphal)

1b1) to occur, come to pass, be done, be brought about

1b2) to be done, be finished, be gone

(Brown-Driver-Brigg's Hebrew Lexicon).

The word *hayah* has several meanings one of which is “to come into being.” The word itself does not require an eternal existence in the past without beginning. However, it is used in the imperfect tense here, which can apply to past present and future. Some have concluded from this that “I AM” means “without beginning.” But, let us see how this word is used in the exact same tense elsewhere in the Bible.

The first time this word is used is Genesis 1:2, which says, “And the earth **was** [*hayah* in the perfect tense] without form, and void;...” Here *hayah* is used in the perfect tense referring to a completed action in the past. The earth was without form, but it no longer is without form. That condition is past. The next verse says, “And God said, **Let there be** [*hayah* in the imperfect tense] light: and there was light” (Genesis 1:3). Here *hayah* is used in the imperfect tense (just as in Exodus 3:14) to express a condition that is ongoing. The light began on day one, but it continues to this day. Here we find that *hayah* in the imperfect form does not indicate “without beginning.” In fact, to the contrary it indicates a beginning in this case.

*Hayah* in the imperfect tense is used of humans as well. God said, “And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye **shall be** [*hayah* in the imperfect form] my people” (Leviticus 26:12; See also Genesis 9:26; 41:40; Judges 11:9; Ruth 2:13; 2 Samuel 15:34.)

Jesus is the I AM of Exodus 3:14 and John 8:58, but that does not mean He did not receive life from His Father, as He himself testified, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26). Nor does His use of the term indicate that He is the Most High God. The Scriptures refer to Jesus as the "Son of the Most

High God," "the Son of the Highest" (Mark 5:7; Luke 1:32). The Father is the only being who is called, "the most High," "the Highest," "above all," etc.

Please do not let man-made theories keep you from acknowledging God the Father as the only most high God and Jesus Christ as His beloved Son.

**To be Continued...**

## **Obituary Notice**

It is with deep sadness and a heavy heart that I write these words. On March 10, 2012, Pastor Willis Smith of Cleveland, Ohio passed away. Pastor Smith was one of the most dedicated ministers with whom I have had the pleasure to work. His untiring labor for others has been an inspiration to my family and to me. He is greatly missed.

Only the glories of heaven will reveal all those who were changed or simply touched through the power of God in Pastor Willis. Every individual was special to him. I once witnessed him conduct an entire church service as though the room was packed with people, when in reality there was just one.

He determined to do what he believed was right regardless of the consequences, he lived his beliefs. At times men spoke evil against him, and yet I never knew him to retaliate.

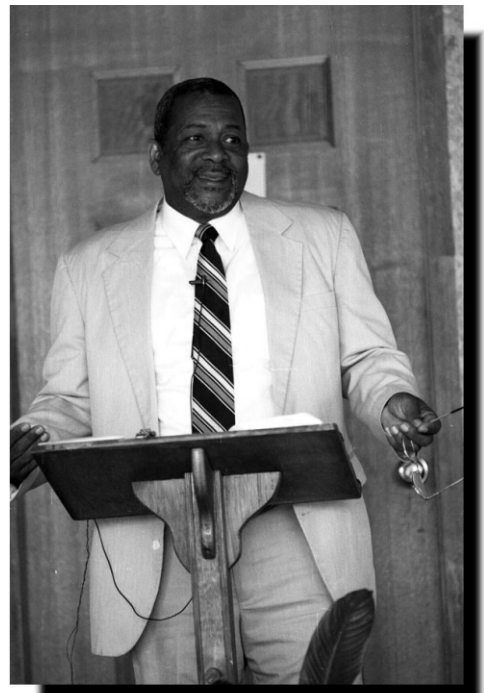
His radio programs touched many lives. I had the privilege of joining him in the studio during a couple of his broadcasts. It was an inspiration to see God at work through him.

A memorial service will be held for Willis at the Columbia Ballroom in Columbia Station, Ohio at 1 pm on May 26. There will be a fellowship meal in

the afternoon, followed by a time for fellowship, testimonies, sharing and reflecting. For more information call Brad Richards at 419-624-2399.

Please pray for Willis' family and church family who are left behind. His church family have requested prayer for God's will to be done, that they would not lose heart, and that they would be strengthened to carry on with the work God began through Pastor Smith.

*Editor*



**Pastor Willis Smith Preaching in AZ**

# The Two Covenants

Ellet J. Waggoner

“These are the two covenants” (Galatians 4:24). What are the two covenants? The two women, Hagar and Sarah; for we read that Hagar is Mount Sinai, “which gendereth to bondage.” That is, just as Hagar could not bring forth any other kind of children than slaves, so the law, even the law that God spoke from Sinai, can not beget free men. It can do nothing but hold them in bondage. “For by the law is the knowledge of sin.” The same is true of the covenant from Sinai, for it consisted merely of the promise of the people to keep that law, and had, therefore, no more power to make them free than the law itself had. Nay, rather, it gendered to bondage, since their making it was simply a promise to make themselves righteous by their own works, and man in himself is “without strength.”

“Then did not God himself lead them into bondage?” Not by any means; since he did not induce them to make that covenant at Sinai. Four hundred and thirty years before that time he had made a covenant with Abraham, which was sufficient for all purposes. That covenant was confirmed in Christ, and, therefore, was a covenant from above. (See John 8:23.) It promised righteousness as a free gift of God through faith, and it included all nations. All the miracles that God had wrought in delivering the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage were but demonstrations of his power to deliver them and us from the bondage of sin. Yes, the deliverance from Egypt was itself a demonstration not only of God’s power, but also of his desire to lead them from the bondage of sin—that bondage in which the coven-

ant from Sinai holds men—because Hagar, who is the covenant from Sinai, was an Egyptian.

The fact that the children of Israel, in their self-sufficiency rashly took the whole responsibility upon themselves, does not prove that God led them into making that covenant, but the contrary. He was leading them out of bondage, not into it, and the apostle plainly tells us that covenant from Sinai was nothing but bondage.

Note the statement which the apostle makes when speaking of the two women, Hagar and Sarah: “These are the two covenants.” So then the two covenants existed in every essential particular in the days of Abraham. Even so they do to-day; for the Scripture says now as well as then, “Cast out the bondwoman and her son.” We see then that the two covenants are not matters of time, but of condition. Let no one flatter himself that he can not be under the old covenant, because the time for that is passed. The time for that is passed only in the sense that “the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries” (1 Peter 4:3).

The difference between the two covenants is just the difference between a freewoman and a slave. Hagar’s children, no matter how many she might have had, would have been slaves, while those of Sarah would necessarily be free. So the covenant from Sinai holds all who adhere to it in bondage “under the law;” while the covenant from above gives freedom, not freedom from obedience to the law, but freedom from disobedience to it. The freedom is not found away from the law, but in the law. Christ redeems from the curse,

which is the transgression of the law. He redeems us from the curse, that the blessing may come on us; and the blessing is obedience to the law. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord" (Psalm 119:1). This blessedness is freedom. "I will walk at liberty; for I seek Thy precepts" (Verse 45).

The difference between the two covenants may be put briefly thus: In the covenant from Sinai we ourselves have to do with the law alone, while in the covenant from above, we have the law in Christ. In the first instance it is death to us, since the law is sharper than any two-edged sword, and we are not able to handle it without fatal results; but in the second instance we have the law "in the hand of a mediator" (Galatians 3:19). In the one case it is what we can do; in the other case it is what the Spirit of God can do. Bear in mind that there is not the slightest question in the whole epistle to the Galatians as to whether or not the law should be kept. The only question is, How shall it be done? Is it to be our own doing, so that the reward shall not be of grace but of debt? (Romans 4:4). Or is it to be God working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure? (Philippians 2:13).

Sarah answers to the covenant which is from above, because she is free. But the freedom which that covenant gives is the freedom of the Spirit, for Isaac was born of the Spirit. (See Galatians 4:29). "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17). "If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law" (Galatians 5:18). But this does not mean that the Spirit gives one license to break the law; for "the law is spiritual" (Romans 7:14). There is no liberty in sin, and "sin is the transgression of the law." So the liberty of the

covenant from above is that perfect liberty that belongs alone to those who are law-abiding. We become law-abiding only by having the law written in our hearts by the Spirit.

"Stand fast therefore." Stand where? "In the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Galatians 5:1). And what freedom is that? It is the freedom of Christ himself, whose delight was in the law of the Lord, because it was in His heart (Psalm 40:8). "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). We stand only by faith.

Let it not be imagined that there is any trace of bondage in this freedom. It is liberty of soul, liberty of thought, as well as liberty of action. It is not that we are simply given the ability to keep the law, but we are given the mind that finds delight in doing it. It is not that we comply with the law because we see no other way of escape from punishment; that would be galling bondage. It is from such bondage that God's covenant releases us. No; the promise of God, when accepted, puts the mind of the Spirit into us, so that we find the highest pleasure in obedience to all the precepts of God's word. The soul is as free as a bird soaring above the mountaintops. It is the glorious liberty of the children of God, who have the full range of "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of God's universe. It is the liberty of those who do not have to be watched, but who can be trusted anywhere, since their every step is but the movement of God's own holy law. Why be content with bondage, when such limitless freedom is yours? The prison doors are open; walk out into God's freedom. »

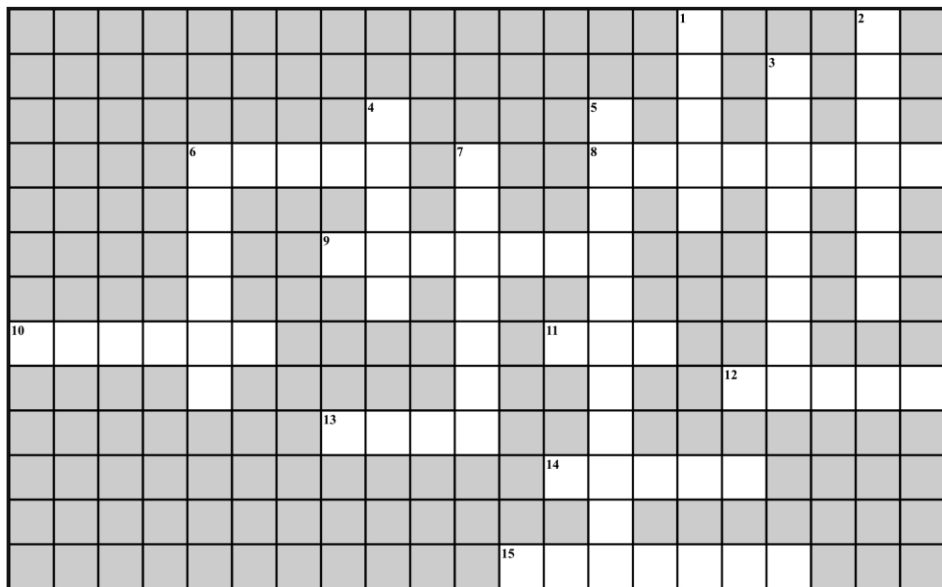
(This article was taken from the October 11, 1898 issue of *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*. Editor)



*Present Truth*  
**Something for the Young at Heart**

This month we are continuing a series of crossword Bible studies based on the book, *Bible Handbook*, by Stephen Haskell. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line. (The KJV is required.)

*The Second Coming as a Thief or a Marriage*



Answers will be printed on the back page of next month's issue.

- Jesus said, "\_\_\_\_ therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Matthew 24:42—**6 Across**
- "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye \_\_\_\_ not the Son of man cometh." Matthew 24:44—**4 Down**
- Daniel wrote, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the \_\_\_\_ of days, and they brought him near before him." Daniel 7:13—**9 Across**
- "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a \_\_\_\_, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his \_\_\_\_ that which shall not be destroyed." Daniel 7:14—**15 Across**
- Jesus said, "behold, I come \_\_\_\_; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12—**7 Down**
- "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a \_\_\_\_ in the night." 1 Thessalonians 5:2—**1 Down**
- "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden \_\_\_\_ cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." 1 Thessalonians 5:3—**5 Down**

➤ But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should \_\_\_\_ you as a thief." 1 Thessalonians 5:4—**3 Down**

➤ "Ye are all the children of \_\_\_\_, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." 1 Thessalonians 5:5—**14 Across**

**Note:** Jesus will come as a thief in the night to those who are not ready to meet Him, but for those who are walking with the Lord, they will not be surprised by His coming.

➤ Peter wrote, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the \_\_\_\_ shall melt with fervent heat,..." 2 Peter 3:10—**8 Across**

➤ "...the earth also and the works that are therein shall be \_\_\_\_ up." 2 Peter 3:10—**10 Across**

**Note:** This gives us evidence that the judgements of God will fall on the earth at this time.

➤ John saw this time in vision and wrote, "...the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without \_\_\_\_ into the cup of his indignation..." Revelation 14:10—**2 Down**

**Note:** Up until this time God's wrath has never been poured out in this way.

➤ "O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid... in wrath remember \_\_\_\_." Habakkuk 3:2—**12 Across**

➤ "For in the hand of the LORD there is a \_\_\_\_, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same:..." Psalms 75:8—**11 Across**

➤ "...but the dregs thereof, all the \_\_\_\_ of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them." Psalms 75:8—**6 Down**

**Note:** The word "dregs" means, "1. The sediment of liquors; lees; grounds; feculence; any foreign matter of liquors that subsides to the bottom of a vessel. 2. Waste or worthless matter; dross; sweepings; refuse. Hence, the most vile and despicable part of men; as the dregs of society" (*Webster's 1828 Dictionary*).

➤ God has done something very special for His people, "he hath prepared for them a \_\_\_\_." Hebrews 11:16—**13 Across**

**Note:** I pray that you will be ready to meet the Lord when He returns to bring His people home. ➤

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*Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle*

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