

Cornerstone

A Voice To The End-time Church

Trinity or Travesty?

by Jim Rector

No doctrine is more sacred to mainstream professing Christianity than the concept of that God exists as three separate, but co-equal beings--God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Everyone knows this belief by the term *Trinity*. It is unfortunate that almost no church organization makes the effort to really prove the tenets of its own faith. Is God really three persons or does the Bible reveal something entirely different?

One of the most popular Protestant hymns concludes with the words, “God in three persons, blessed Trinity.” I remember it so well being sung by the choir at the First Baptist Church in my home town in North Carolina.

The notion of a trinity--that God exists as three separate but co-equal persons--is perhaps one doctrine that is to be found across the board in modern-day professing Christianity, running the gamut from the Roman Catholic Church to virtually all Protestant denominations to even the Evangelical movement. Practically every major and most minor divisions of ostensible Christianity have accepted this particular teaching.

Does the concept of the Trinity come from the pages of the Bible? Can it withstand the scrutiny of Scripture? Or is it merely a tradition of men which has been incorporated into the professing Christian Church?

IS GOD A TRINITY?

We are introduced to God in the very beginning of the Bible. Genesis 1:1 simply states: **“In the beginning, GOD created the heave and the earth.”** What does this word rendered *God* really mean? What can it tell us about the nature of this Being described as creating the entire universe?

The Hebrew word is *Elohim* and is a uni-plural noun, which simply means that it is one unit composed of more than one entity. We have words like this in the English language, such as *herd* or *flock* or *family*. These are singular words, but indicate a plurality of members. Essentially, therefore, the *God* of Genesis 1:1 is not merely one individual. This is precisely why we read in Genesis 1:26 the following statement: **“And God (*Elohim*) said, ‘Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness.’”**

Of course! God is actually more than a single entity, but these verses do not tell us how many individuals are involved, nor do they express the relationship between or among the participants. There is, however, another book in the Bible that begins in the same manner as Genesis 1:1. Notice what is said:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

Here is clear evidence that at least one of the **Beings** known as God--the One who created all things--was the *Word*. But just who was the Word? Verse 14 makes it plain:

“And the Word was MADE FLESH and DWELT AMONG US, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Now we have two beings confirmed--one was the Word who became flesh and blood. He is called the only begotten of the Father. This would obviously be the One who became the Savior of the world. Remember that Christ clearly stated that He came down from heaven, and that it was the Father who sent Him (John 6:51, John 5:23). So we can be assured that two of the great Beings comprising the Godhead are God the Father and the Word who became a human being known as Jesus Christ (Yahshua ha Mashiach).

But what about the Holy Spirit? Is it also a member--a third person of a triune Godhead? Is it to be considered as co-equal with the Father and Son? Who or what is the Holy Spirit? Is it a separate entity with a mind and agenda of its own, or is it subservient to the Father?

We know that the Holy Spirit was involved from the very beginning. It is mentioned in Genesis 1:2 as **“moving upon the face of the waters.”** We know therefore that, in some fashion, it participated in the Creation itself. The Holy Spirit, however, did not do the actual creating. The Scriptures are evident that the Word (John 1:1) or the One who became the Messiah was the Creator of all things. Paul testifies to this fact by saying:

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who has delivered us fro the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; for by Him (Christ) were ALL THINGS CREATED that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist” (Col. 1:12-17).

Paul then adds the following information in his letter to the Ephesians:

“That the Gentiles should be...partakers of the promise in Christ by the gospel; whereof I was made a minister...that I should preach among the Gentiles...and make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who CREATED ALL THINGS BY JESUS CHRIST” (Eph. 3:7-9).

The first chapter of Hebrews is very explicit in revealing information about the nature of Christ before His human birth. We read, for instance:

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds” (Heb. 1:1-2).

A little further into this same letter, we read a rather startling statement. In reference to the Messiah, Paul quotes an Old Testament prophecy from the Psalms:

“But unto the Son He (God the Father) says, ‘Your throne, O GOD, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom” (Heb. 1:8).

Do you see how clear it is that the Christ was and is God, even as the Father was God? In fact, this particular prophecy plainly has the Father calling the Son **GOD!** This should be all the proof we require to establish the fact that Christ Jesus or the Being who became Christ Jesus was a part of the Godhead from the very beginning of Creation. It was He, in fact, that was responsible for the actual creation of all things. So the Father and Son have been together as a family, if you will, for eons of time. Remember that Jesus, when praying that final prayer with His disciples, said: **“And now, O Father, glorify You Me with Your own self, with the glory which I had with You BEFORE THE WORLD WAS” (John 17:5).** The question still remains, however, who or what is the Holy Spirit? How should it fit into a proper understanding of God?

WHAT IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

God is, in reality, a family. At the present time, there is a Father and a firstborn Son. Into that family of God will eventually be born many sons and daughters--born of the Spirit! This is why Paul told the Romans:

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the SONS OF GOD...the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are THE CHILDREN OF GOD, and if children, then HEIRS of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:14-17).

In fact, Paul consistently refers to Christians as children of God, as does the apostle John in his letters. We will soon come to see precisely what part the Holy Spirit plays in that special relationship, but first let's understand what the Holy Spirit really is. There is so much confusion on this matter and needlessly so.

Just before Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, He gathered His disciples together and told them something that would ultimately change their lives forever. He proclaimed:

“And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry you in the city of Jerusalem until you be endued with POWER FROM ON HIGH” (Luke 24:49).

This is a direct reference to the Holy Spirit that would be poured out on the day of Pentecost, and notice that it is described in terms not of a person, but of power, power from on high, power from God Himself! There are several key passages of Scripture that complete the picture and clearly demonstrate what the Holy Spirit really is. Acts 1:8 makes the promise we just read in Luke very plain. Notice how it reads: **“But you (disciples) shall receive POWER after that the HOLY SPIRIT is come upon you.”**

It certainly seems that the Holy Spirit has something to do with power--spiritual power. The prophet Micah made the same basic point when he wrote: **“But truly I am full of POWER by the SPIRIT OF THE LORD, and of judgment and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin” (Micah 3:8).**

How does this power work? First of all, notice that it comes from God--it is called the Spirit of the Lord or the Spirit of God. Apparently the Father is able to control this Spirit and send it wherever He chooses. We see clear evidence of its working in Luke 1:35 when Gabriel spoke to Mary prior to the conception of Jesus:

“He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David...And the angel answered and said unto her, the HOLY SPIRIT shall come upon you, and the POWER OF THE HIGHEST shall overshadow you: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:32, 35).

Here once again the Holy Spirit is referred to as the power of God. It was to come upon Mary, and we know from Matthew 1:18 that she was indeed conceived of child by the Holy Spirit. Yet Christ always prayed to the one known as the Father. Who then was the Father of our Savior? Was it the Holy Spirit--the so-called third person of the Trinity, or was it God the Father Himself? This may sound like a silly question, but the answer is very telling. God the Father is the Supreme Being in the universe. He is the One who is the Father of Jesus Christ, and also the spiritual Father of all true believers. The Holy Spirit is therefore the power and essence of God. It was by this invisible power that He was able to achieve the remarkable miracle of the virgin birth. Mary became pregnant, not from any human sexual contact, but through the divine intervention of Almighty God by the Holy Spirit. In fact, this is the precise source of all miracles, including even the creation of the very universe itself. Reading in Psalms 104:30, we note the following description:

“You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. You send forth YOUR SPIRIT, THEY ARE CREATED: and you renew the face of the earth.”

This is exactly why we see the Holy Spirit is included in the opening verses of Genesis , where it is said that it **“moved upon the face of the waters.”** Indeed it was by this special spiritual power that God created the entire universe.

The Spirit of God belongs to God. It is His to utilize as He sees fit. It is decidedly not a person. Some have become confused over the gender of the Spirit, because in the King James Version there are certain passages where the pronoun *he* is used, thus giving the impression that the Holy Spirit is an actual being. In such instances it is merely a matter of grammatical agreement. The noun happened to be masculine, therefore the masculine pronoun is required. This should not, however, be allowed to confuse the issue.

The way the Holy Spirit is portrayed in the Scriptures makes it certain that a third member of a triune Godhead is not being described. On the day of Pentecost in the year of Christ's ascension, a remarkable event occurred. It was, in fact, the fulfillment of the promise we read in Luke 24:49. Notice what is said:

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a MIGHTY RUSHING WIND, and it filled the house where they were sitting...and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues (languages) as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

Does this description really sound like the Holy Spirit is a person? Hardly! It is obviously a great power from God. In this case, it miraculously enabled the disciples gathered there in Jerusalem to speak in the languages of all the various people present at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit cannot be a person, for on that very same day Peter declared: **“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will POUR OUT My Spirit upon all flesh” (Acts. 2:17).** You simply do not *pour out* a person! But you might indeed pour out a supply of spiritual power. And that is precisely what the Scriptures state occurred.

The Word indicates that the Holy Spirit is the very power of God--of His mind, His righteous character, His sinless nature. In fact God Himself is called a Spirit by Christ when He said: **“God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24).** Since God is a Spirit, and the Scriptures expressly state that He alone is holy (Rev. 15:4), then it only stands to reason that when the Bible speaks of the Holy Spirit, in the truest sense it is a direct reference to God Himself--although usually descriptive of His power. It is this very part of the Father which is described as *begetting* His children on the earth. In other words, God the Father actually imparts a measure of Himself to each of those human beings that He chooses and converts. This, in fact, is the very things that gives a man or woman the power to know God, to believe God, to trust in God, to understand His Word, to obey Him and please Him. Without this special power of the Holy Spirit placed into the minds of human beings, we would merely remain carnal and go to our graves in the same manner as any animal. In other words, man, without the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, is utterly incapable of anything beyond the mere temporary, limited capacity of this physical life. Eternal life is not possible through anything that man can achieve.\

The Holy Spirit is evidently not a person, but the very power of God and His Son. When we are baptized and have hands laid on, God sends or grants us the power of that Spirit, and unites it

with our own minds. This is the capacity we need for Christ to live in us. Remember that Paul tells us in Galatians 2:20: **“I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST LIVES IN ME.”** What a marvelous truth! The Messiah Himself is able to actually live His perfect life in and through truly converted believers--by the power of the Holy Spirit! People in this condition are described by Paul as having the **MIND OF CHRIST (Phil. 2:5, I Cor. 2:16)**. Yes the Holy Spirit imparts the spiritual mind of the Father and Son to a human being. This is precisely why Paul exhorted Timothy in the following manner:

“Wherefore I put you in remembrance that you stir up the gift of God, which is in you by the putting on of my hands. For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of POWER, and of LOVE, and of a SOUND MIND” (II Tim. 1:6-7).

Once again Paul comments on the Holy Spirit in a similar manner by saying: **“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT” (Rom. 15:13).**

The Holy Spirit is also the power by which God works miracles through human beings. In the same book of Romans, he states:

“For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders by the POWER OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD” (Rom. 15:18-19).

The many miracles recorded in Scripture were accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit. God was responsible for them, but through the agency of the Holy Spirit working within an individual. Healings, prophetic revelations (Acts 21:11), casting out demons (Matt. 12:28), and many others were performed by human beings through the Holy Spirit. It is therefore the **POWER OF GOD**, not some third member of a trinity!

The Bible describes the Spirit in very unique and interesting terms in John 7. In this instance, Christ had gone up to the Feast of Tabernacles, and, on the last great day of the festival, He spoke these words:

“He that believes on Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow RIVERS OF LIVING WATERS (but this spoke He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for as yet the Holy Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified)” (John 7:38-39).

A river of living water! Very descriptive language for a person, isn't it? Obviously the Holy Spirit is the power of God, which is able to fill a human mind and actually flow outward from that person like a river or a fountain overflowing in Godly works. This is precisely why Paul told the Ephesians: **“Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT” (Eph. 5:18).**

In fact, Paul himself is described as being filled with the Holy Spirit in Acts 9:17, as is John the Baptist in Luke 1:15, and the disciples (in Jerusalem - Acts 2:4, 4:31; in Samaria - Acts 8:17), among many other examples. Anything that is *poured out* is certainly capable of *filling up*! So the analogies hold true throughout the Scriptures.

Paul states that it is possible to *quench the Spirit* (I Thess. 5:19). If the Spirit were a person, as so many believe, such a description would be totally inappropriate. It is, however, completely compatible with the concept of spiritual power.

If we were to cite every passage which clearly demonstrates the true nature and purpose of the Holy Spirit, it would literally require volumes. Take a good concordance and look up all the many references to *spirit*, and you will quickly grasp the Biblical truth on this subject. Check out such passages as I Peter 1:11, Matthew 3:16, Romans 1:7-8, Romans 8:11, Ephesians 1:13, Philippians 1:19, etc.

It is also interesting to note that if indeed the Holy Spirit is a person--one of the three co-equal members of a triune Godhead--then the apostle Paul was surely remiss, because, although he was always careful to address the Father and Son in the introductions of his many letters, he never once accorded the Holy Spirit such respect. If you doubt this, just read the opening lines to virtually any of Paul's writings.

God's Spirit is called *the Spirit of truth* (John 14:17) in that it is the power lead a human being into the understanding of spiritual things otherwise impossible to discern by merely physical means. It is also called the *Comforter* (John 14:16), and what better descriptive name could possibly be given, for it is truly through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that God is able to comfort and encourage His children.

Speaking of children, how is it that God is called the *Father* when, in fact, the Scriptures inform us that we are begotten and ultimately will be born of the Spirit? Indeed Christ explicitly told Nicodemus, **“that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6)**. Jesus Himself is said to have been begotten of the Holy Spirit, and yet He never refers to the Spirit as His Father! Obviously a conflict exists, and the generally accepted Trinity concept simply will not satisfy.

Throughout the New Testament, Christians are referred to as the *children of God*. Christ Himself is called the *firstborn of many brethren*. Many other children will indeed be born into the family of God at the return of Jesus Christ. The only plausible explanation in this matter is that the Holy Spirit is a power rather than a person. It is not possible for the Holy Spirit, as a separate entity, to literally beget children, who then become the offspring of the Father. That is a confusing, convoluted way of looking at this situation. Rather it is far more logical and Scripturally correct that God the Father utilizes the power of the Holy Spirit in the process of begettal and ultimately the birth of His children. In this manner, Christians can rightly be said to born of the Spirit, but still considered children of God the Father.

In fact, the Bible makes a strong case for both the Father and the Son being the great holy spirits of the universe. Christ clearly stated that **“God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24)**. Furthermore, Scriptures too numerous to mention refer to both God the Father and Jesus Christ as being holy. From these facts we could easily conclude that the ultimate Holy Spirit in all of creation is God Himself! Certainly when we understand that the Holy Spirit is the very essence of the Father--His mind, power and character--we can grasp the truth of this conclusion.

ORIGIN OF THE TRINITY

The Scriptures do not reveal any sort of triune Godhead. Rather, God is shown to be a family with a Father and a firstborn Son, but with the potential and promise of many children to come. The question, therefore, remains: How did this concept of God in three persons originate? Where did it come from, and precisely how did it get into professing Christianity?

The obvious place to begin is outside the Bible itself. It is really a simple process to take the Trinitarian concept back to the 4th century AD. Virtually any good encyclopedia or Bible handbook will provide this information. But notice carefully what the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* has to offer on this subject:

“It is difficult, in the second half of the 20th century, to offer a clear, objective, and straightforward account of the revelation, doctrinal evolution, and theological elaboration of the mystery of the Trinity. Trinitarian discussion, Roman Catholic as well as other, presents a somewhat unsteady silhouette...One should not speak of Trinitarianism in the New Testament without serious qualification...When one does speak of an unqualified Trinitarianism, one has moved from the period of Christian origins to, say, the LAST QUADRANT OF THE FOURTH CENTURY. It was only then that what might be called the definitive Trinitarian dogma--*One God in Three Persons*--became thoroughly assimilated into Christian life and thought...It was the product of three centuries of doctrinal development. But current preoccupation and current emphasis is far less with the subsequent articulations of Christian dogma than with the primitive sources, chiefly the Biblical. It is this contemporary return to these sources that is primarily responsible for the unsteady silhouette.”

I wonder if we really grasp what this authoritative Roman Catholic source is admitting? First of all, there is the frank confession that the early Church did not believe in or teach any such concept as the Trinity. That notion was the result of nearly 300 years of so-called *doctrinal development*! It did not become an accepted part of professing Christianity until the last quarter of the 4th century AD. But notice also the latter portion of the quotation. Here the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* states that when one goes back to the *primitive sources* or the Bible itself, it is then that the theory becomes

UNSTEADY!! I should say so! We have already demonstrated the veracity of that statement. Indeed, the Scriptures nowhere advocate a triune Godhead.

The Roman Catholic Church permitted the doctrine of the Trinity to be introduced into nominal Christianity by advocating its admission at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. Although revised at later councils, it has since been accepted as a part of professing Christian doctrine and was subsequently adopted by the Protestant churches as well.

It is a most interesting and informative fact of history that the Roman Catholic Church has been solely responsible for most of the basic doctrines which today are accepted by Protestant churches. It is unfortunate that many of those sacrosanct teachings are in direct opposition to the Scriptures! Such theories as the immortality of the soul, the wrong concepts of heaven and hell, celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day and Hallowe'en, Sunday worship, and many, many others, including the Trinity itself, have erroneously been adopted from rank paganism and introduced into the mainstream of so-called Christian thought and dogma.

The history of the Trinity pre-dates the era of Christianity by hundreds and perhaps thousands of years. Virtually every ancient pagan culture worshiped a triune god, including the Babylonians, Indians, Assyrians, Japanese and Siberians. This practice was especially prevalent among the Egyptians, where numerous cities had their respective triad deities. For instance, at Thebes, Amun, Mut and Khons were revered; at Memphis, Ptah, Sekhmet and Nefertem formed the trinity; at Elephantine, Khnum, Anukis and Satet comprised the godhead; and at Edfu, Horus, Hathor and Harsomtut were worshiped. By far the most popular of all the Egyptian trinities was the trio of Osiris, Isis and Horus. Major shrines were built in honor of these characters in every part of the empire (*The Gods and Symbols of Ancient Egypt*, p. 124). In fact, the concept of the trinity was universal. Studies have been conducted into the religious cultures of almost every ancient civilization only to discover the same form of worship repeated over and over again.

Father/mother/child Trinitarian concepts abound in the literature of ancient pagan religious practices. Although it cannot be established with absolutely authority, it is quite likely that this notion even pre-dates the time of the Flood. We can surely trace its origins back as far as Nimrod, his mother/wife Semiramis, and their son Tammuz. Numerous monuments in ancient Babylon attest to the veneration of this triune deity. Nimrod was, of course, a great-grandson of Noah through Cush. He was the founder of Babylon and was the builder of the infamous *tower of Babel* (Genesis 9-10). Nimrod and his wife were the progenitors of pagan religion in the post-Flood world. Once the people were scattered by God, they carried the worship of the divine trinity with them. This explains why almost every ancient culture has a similar deity in its pantheon.

The mother/child motif runs the gamut from Isis and Horus in Egypt, to Ishi and Iswara in India, to Devaki and Krishna in the eastern religions. Ralph Woodrow, writing in his book *Babylon Mystery Religion*, states: "**In Asia, the mother was known as Cybele and the child as Deoios. But regardless of her name...she was the wife of Baal, the virgin queen of heaven, who bore fruit although she never conceived**" (p. 8).

The worship of the triune god found its highest expression in Rome with the veneration of Jupiter, Diana and their child. This form was spread throughout the Empire. It was during this period that Christ was born and the New Testament Church founded. After the early formative period of Christianity, unconverted pagans were welcomed into the organized church, particularly at Rome, and in many cases permitted to retain their false religious customs. Once again, under the article *Christmas*, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* admits the following:

“Most scholars today accept the hypothesis that...the birth of Christ was assigned the date of the winter solstice (December 25 in the Julian calendar, January 6 in the Egyptian), because on this day, as the sun began its return to northern skies, the pagan devotees of Mithra celebrated *dies natalis Solis Invicti* (birthday of the Invincible Sun).”

Furthermore, the notion of the Trinity is not just pagan in nature, it is Satanic! God is an open family, not a closed triangle. Remember that Satan the devil, once known as Lucifer (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28), was at one time a great cherub, until the day that he became great in his own eyes. The Scriptures demonstrate that he actually rebelled and attempted to forcefully take the throne of God in heaven. Though he failed, this has been his obsession ever since.

In certain respects, it may be possible that Satan has successfully palmed himself off as the Holy Spirit, in order to be perceived as a part of the recognized Godhead. He always wanted to be like the Most High (Isa. 14:13-14) and dwell in heaven. He is also described as being the *light bringer*. It is very interesting that the Holy Spirit is the true *light bringer*, as it is designed to lead us into all truth (John 16:13). So Satan just may have disguised himself as the Holy Spirit in a manner that is totally unscriptural, by claiming to be a part of a closed godhead, indeed the third of the three co-equal members. Perhaps this is why there is so much confusion and misunderstanding concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit.

THE DESTINY OF MAN

God's plan of salvation is sorely misunderstood by most professing Christians today. The world's religions have substituted error for truth and mixed the two together into a dangerously deceptive form of worship totally at odds with the Word of God. The future of the human race is, in reality, a glorious one! God's agenda includes all people, but each in His own time and order. His plan is based on a type of the harvest seasons, with a smaller early spring gathering, followed by a much larger fall harvest. God's divine family is not closed, but open, and will continue to grow. The doctrine of the Trinity denies this truth and hides the true essence of what God is doing.

The Holy Spirit is the invisible power of God. It is through this special spiritual power that Christ is able to live within a converted believer. When God calls an individual, He begins drawing that person toward His Son. He starts revealing more and more of Himself. At the same time, He begins leading the person being called to see his own human nature, his sins, his unworthiness, his

desperate spiritual condition. The individual gains more and more understanding of the real truth of the Scriptures, especially concerning what God has done on his behalf through Jesus Christ. When that person comes to the point that he submits to God in heartfelt repentance, belief and willingness to obey, then he should be baptized as an outward sign of the inward change and conviction that transpired between him and God. This is followed by the laying on of hands for the receiving of the Holy Spirit--a measure of the actual spiritual power and mind of God Himself. From that point on, the person is considered to have been *begotten*, but not yet actually *born* of the Spirit. The rest of his natural life, then, comprises a period of continual spiritual growth and development. The Bible calls it *growing up to the fullness of Christ*. The purpose for this growth is that a Christian might be prepared for service, both now and forever. Salvation, therefore, is a process--indeed a lifelong process of being conformed to the perfect image of Christ, and then showing Him forth to the world.

Are you being called by the one true God of heaven and earth? If so, then you may be led to respond in some positive fashion to the information contained in this article. Please feel free to do so at any time. The address is located on the last page. We will make available to you, at absolutely no cost or obligation, both taped and written material that can help you in your spiritual growth and maturity. If you should have questions, please let us know and we will do our best to help you.

You can be a part of God's family. Paul says, "**Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts**" (Heb. 3:7-8). God gives human beings a choice, but each of us has to make that decision for ourselves. Now may be your calling and your chance to join, not just some religious organization, but the true spiritual Church of God.

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