

**Breaking Down the Trinity
&
Breaking Up False Teachings**

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Breaking Down the Trinity & Breaking Up False Teachings

1. Why Is the Trinity an Essential Doctrine?

The LORD God Demands Exclusive Worship

1.1 Exodus 20:1-6 (NIV)

¹ And God spoke all these words:

² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me,

⁶ but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

The LORD God Forbade Intermarriage with Pagans

1.2 Deuteronomy 7:1-4 (NIV)

¹ When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations--the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you--

² and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.

³ Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons,

⁴ for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you.

"Other Gods" Expose False Prophets

1.3 Deuteronomy 13:1-5 (NIV)

¹ If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder,

² and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them,"

³ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul.

⁴ It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him.

⁵ That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery; he has tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.

Other Gods Are "False Gods"

1.4 Jeremiah 13:24-25 (NIV)

²⁴ "I will scatter you like chaff driven by the desert wind.

²⁵ This is your lot, the portion I have decreed for you," declares the LORD, "because you have forgotten me and trusted in false gods.

Which "Christ," "Jesus" & "Spirit" Is True?

1.5 Matthew 24:23-25 (NIV)

²³ At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it.

²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible.

²⁵ See, I have told you ahead of time.

1.6 1 John 4:1-3 (KJV)

¹ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

² Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

³ And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

"Eternal Life" Is at Stake

1.7 John 17:3 (NIV)

³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

1.8 John 8:23-24 (NIV)

²³ But he [Jesus] continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins."

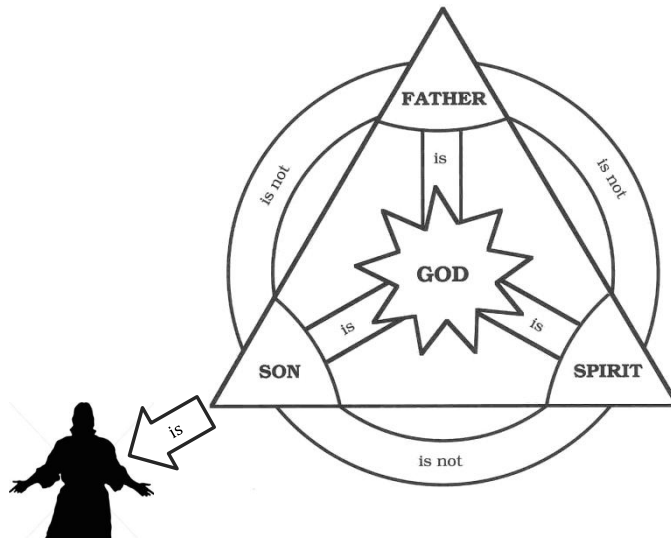
1.9 John 14:6 (NIV)

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

2. What Is the Trinity?

A Basic Definition

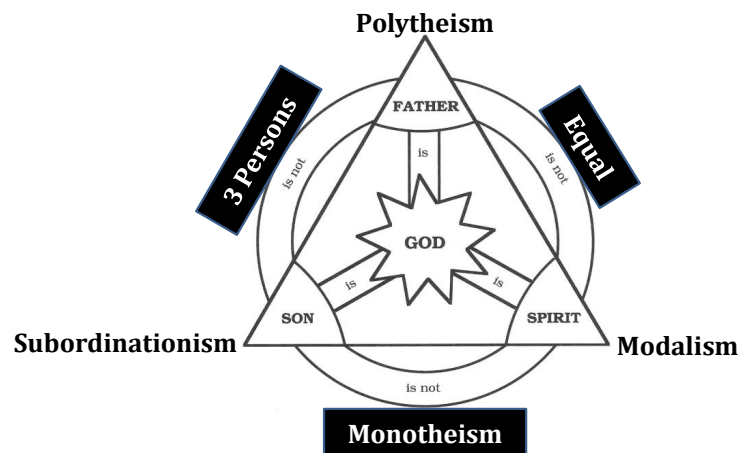
- 2.1 Within the *one Being*, that is God, there exists eternally *three coequal and coeternal persons*, namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



What the Trinity Is Not

- 2.2 The Trinity is not *polytheism* (many gods) or *tritheism* (three gods), *modalism* (only one person at a time), or *subordinationism* (the inferiority of the Son and the Spirit to the Father by divine nature).

3 Truths & 3 Heresies



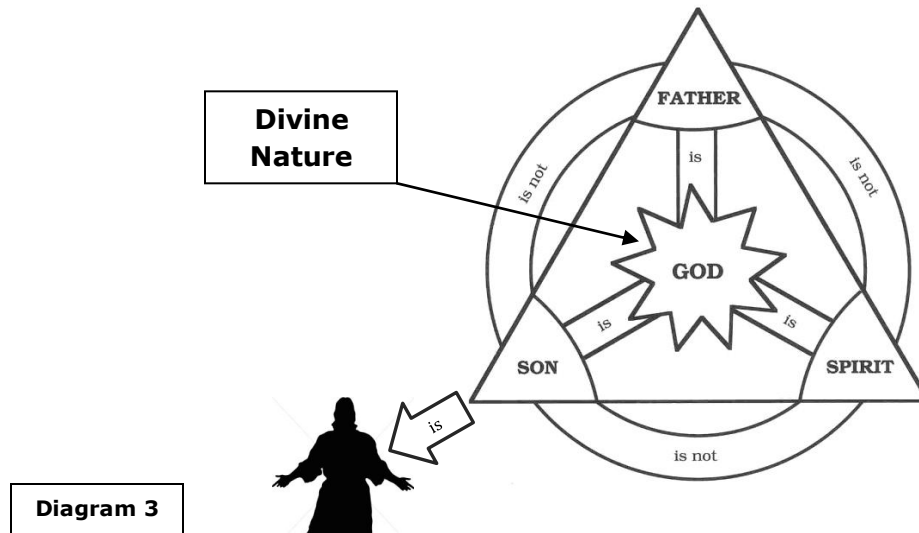
3. What Is Divine Nature?

Defined

3.1 Galatians 4:8 (NIV)

⁸ Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.

- Nature (Gr. *physis*) is “the natural character or characteristics of an entity.” Divine nature, therefore, refers to the natural characteristics of true deity.



Non-Exclusive Attributes of Divine Nature (Communicable)

3.2 2 Peter 1:3-7 (NIV)

³ His [God’s] divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

⁴ Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature [(*physis*)] and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

⁵ For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge;

⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;

⁷ and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love.

- See also **Galatians 5:22-23** and **Colossians 3:8-14**.

3.3 1 John 4:8 (NIV)

⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Exclusive Attributes of Divine Nature (Incommunicable)

There Is Only One True God

3.4 **Isaiah 43:10-12 (NIV)**

¹⁰ "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.

¹¹ I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.

¹² I have revealed and saved and proclaimed-- I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God."

- See also **Deuteronomy 4:35** and **Isaiah 44:6-8**
- "I am" (Heb. *ani hu*; Gr. *egō eimi* in the Septuagint).

The Personal Name of God Is "LORD"

3.5 **Exodus 3:13-15 (NIV)**

¹³ Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob--has sent me to you.'
This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation."

- "I AM" (Heb. *haya*; Gr. *egō eimi* in the Septuagint).
- "LORD" (Heb. *yhwh*; the Septuagint reproduced the Hebrew *yhwh*). YHWH is referred to as the Tetragrammaton, which means "four letters."
- Both "I AM" (*haya*) and "LORD" (*yhwh*) are derived from the Hebrew root "to be" (*hyh*).

Only God Creates

3.6 **Isaiah 44:24 (NIV)**

²⁴ "This is what the LORD says-- your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself,

- See also **Genesis 1:1** where "in the beginning" is *absolute* and "heavens and the earth" indicate *totality*.

Excursus 1—Only God Is Omnipresent Spirit

As the infinite Creator of the universe (including matter, time and space), God necessarily transcends matter, time and space.

Therefore, God is *immaterial* spirit.

John 4:24 (NIV)

²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

- See also **Isaiah 31:3**.

spirit – "regarded as separate from matter" (*Webster's New World College Dictionary*).

God is everywhere-present.

1 Kings 8:27 (NIV)

²⁷ "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built!

- See also **Psalm 139:7-8**.

God is invisible.

1 Timothy 1:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

- See also **John 1:18**.

It would be wrong to associate the word "person" *as it relates to divine nature* with a visible, tangible human person.

Only God Knows the Hearts of All Men

3.7 **1 Kings 8:37-39 (NIV)**

³⁷ "When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when an enemy besieges them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come,

³⁸ and when a prayer or plea is made by any of your people Israel--each one aware of the afflictions of his own heart, and spreading out his hands toward this temple--

³⁹ then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, since you know his heart (for you [LORD, God of Israel] alone know the hearts of all men),

- See also **Psalm 147:5** and **Isaiah 46:10**.

Only God Is Absolutely Eternal

3.8 Psalms 90:2 (NIV)

² Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

- Note the contrast between the mountains being “born” (Gr. *ginomai* in the Septuagint) or “coming into being/existence” and the eternal existence of the Creator.

- See also **Genesis 21:33**.

Only God Can Forgive Sins

3.9 Psalms 51:1-4 (NIV)

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.

² Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

- See also **Leviticus 16** and **Luke 5:21**.

Exclusive Attributes of Divine Nature:

1. Only 1 “God”
2. Only 1 “LORD”
3. Only 1 Creator
4. Only Omnipresent One
5. Only Eternal One
6. Only Omniscient One
7. Only Forgiver of Sins

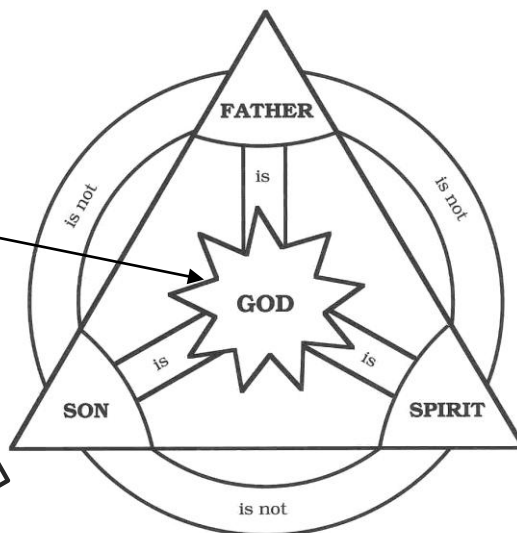


Diagram 4

4. Glimpses of the Trinity

Creation

4.1 **Genesis 1:26-27 (NIV)**

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

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

- See also **Genesis 3:22; 11:7** and **Isaiah 6:8**.
- "God" (Heb. *elōhim*) is a *plural* translated as a *singular* when referring to the LORD God of the Bible and is always followed by a *singular* verb (exceptions noted below).
- The plural pronouns "us" and "our" require a *plural* verb in Hebrew.

Jesus' Baptism

4.2 **Matthew 3:16-17 (NIV)**

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

- *Theophanies* are visible and/or auditory manifestations of God—note here the Father's "voice [only] from heaven."

The Resurrection

God the Father

4.3 **Galatians 1:1 (NIV)**

¹ Paul, an apostle--sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead--

God the Holy Spirit

4.4 **Romans 8:11 (NIV)**

¹¹ And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.

- See also **1 Peter 3:18** and **1 Timothy 3:16**.

God the Son

4.5 John 2:18-22 (NIV)

¹⁸ Then the Jews demanded of him, "What miraculous sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days."

²⁰ The Jews replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?"

²¹ But the temple he had spoken of was his body.

²² After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.

- See also **John 10:17-18**.

Resurrected by ...



God the Father, God the Spirit & God the Son

The Great Commission

4.3 Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

- Note that "name" (Gr. *onoma*) is *singular* in the context of a *plurality* of persons.
- See also **1 Peter 1:2** and **2 Corinthians 13:14** (though not for the Great Commission).

5. Jesus Is God the Son by Divine Nature

The LORD God in the OT & NT

OT

“God” (Heb. *elōhim*)

“LORD” (Heb. *yhwh*)

NT

“God” (Gr. *theos*)

“Lord” (Gr. *kurios*)

1. OT – If the context does not refer to a particular Person in the Godhead, it refers to the Being, the LORD God.
2. NT – When the NT quotes the OT, “LORD” (Heb. *yhwh*) is always translated “Lord” (Gr. *kurios*).
3. NT writers usually refer to the Father as “God” and the Son as “Lord.”
4. “god(s)” and “lord(s)” in the OT & NT also refer to *false beings and/or creatures with authority* (see context).

Diagram 5

Jesus Is “God”

5.1 Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

- Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ (see Mt. 1:23 for “ ‘The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’ ”—which means, “ ‘God with us’ ” [quoting Isaiah 7:14]).
- The LORD is “mighty God” (Heb. *el gibbor*) in **Isaiah 10:21** and **Jeremiah 32:17-18** (KJV, NKJV, NASB). Moreover, *El* in Isaiah is always a name of God.
- “Everlasting Father” is likely Hebrew idiom for “the possessor or author of eternity” (i.e. Christ is an eternal Being)—Christ is NOT the Father.

5.2 Psalms 45:6-7 (NIV)

⁶ Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.

⁷ You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy.

- This Psalm has both “near and far” implications—the *near* is implied by the succeeding line of Davidic king(s) and the *far* is implied by the final establishment of the eternal throne and kingdom of Jesus Christ. This accords with the Davidic covenant (see 2 Sam. 7:11-16).

Hebrews 1:8-9 (NIV)

⁸ But about the Son he [the Father] says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.

⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy" [quoting Psalm 45:6-7].

- Incredibly, the Father here addresses the Son as "God" (Gr. *theos*; Heb. *elōhim*)—NOT as a mere *mighty ruler*, but as deity (see verse 3).
- "therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions" is a reference to the Father addressing the Son according to His human nature (see 2:7, 9, 11 and 14; see also Jn. 20:17 for " 'I am returning to ... my God and your God' ").

5.3 John 1:1 (NIV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- See verses 14-18, 23, 29 and 35-36 to establish that "the Word" (v. 1) is Jesus.
- "with" (*pros*) typically expresses the presence of one person with another in close, intimate relationship (see 2 Cor. 5:8 for Paul's preference "to be ... at home with the Lord").
- **Person and Nature**—The first occurrence of "God" refers to *the Father*; the second occurrence of "God" refers to the Word's *divine nature*. In other words, "the Word was with God [the Father] and the Word was God [by divine nature]."
- The Joseph Smith Translation (JST) corrupts John's declaration of the Word's deity with *absolutely no support* in the NT manuscript record.
- The New World Translation (NWT) of the JWs reads: "and the Word was a god" thereby making Jesus *a lesser god* and *separate being* than and from the Father, respectively.
- See also **John 1:18** (NIV, NASB, HCSB, NET, ESV) and **20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1** and **1 John 5:20**.

Jesus Is "LORD" (Jehovah)

5.4 Isaiah 40:3 (NIV)

³ A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God."

John 1:23 (NIV)

²³ John [the Baptist] replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord'" [quoting Isaiah 40:3].

- See **John 1:15-18, 29** and **35-36** to establish that the Baptist is preparing the way for Jesus Christ (Jehovah). Moreover, John explicitly refers to Jesus as "God" in **John 1:1** and **20:28**.
- See also **Mark 1:1-11** and **Luke 3:1-22** for similar accounts of the Baptist's prophetic mission.

5.5 **Joel 2:32 (NIV)**

³² And everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the survivors whom the LORD calls.

Romans 10:9-13 (NIV)

⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

¹¹ As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him,

¹³ for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" [quoting Joel 2:32].

- See also **Isaiah 45:22-24** cross-referenced with **Philippians 2:9-11**.
- The apostle Paul also refers to Jesus as "God" in **Romans 9:5** and **Titus 2:13**.
- The apostle Paul refers to the Father as the "one God" and Jesus Christ as the "one Lord" (1 Cor. 8:6; see also Rev. 19:16 for "LORD OF LORDS").

5.6 **Psalms 102:24-25 (NIV)**

²⁴ So I said: "Do not take me away, O my God, in the midst of my days; your years go on through all generations.

²⁵ In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.

- Note that the Psalmist addresses God as "LORD" (Heb. *yhwh*) 7 times in **Psalms 102**.

Hebrews 1:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ He [the Father] also says [about the Son], "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands" [quoting Psalm 102:25].

- Incredibly the Father here addresses the Son as "Lord" (Gr. *kurios*).

Jesus Is "I am" the Eternal LORD God

5.7 John 8:53-59 (NIV)

⁵³ Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

⁵⁴ Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.

⁵⁵ Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word.

⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

⁵⁷ "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"

⁵⁸ "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

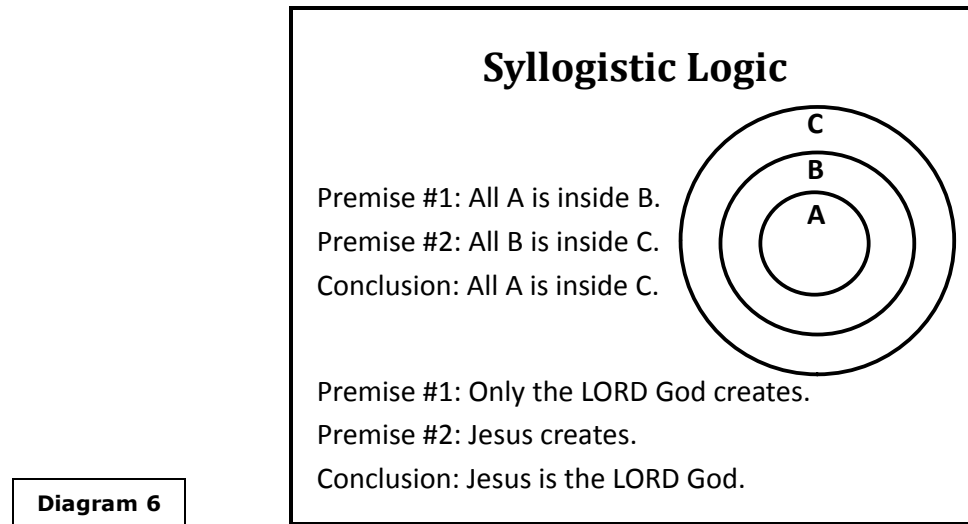
⁵⁹ At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

- Jesus answers "who" he is (v. 53) in the context of His age and time (see vv. 57-58).
- "I am" (Gr. *egō eimi*) was understood by the Jews to be a self-claim to deity in association with **Exodus 3:14** and **Isaiah 43:10** in the Septuagint (see **sections 3.4 and 3.5**).
- Note the stark contrast Jesus makes between Abraham being "born" or *coming into existence* (Gr. *ginomai*) and His *eternal existence* as God—NOT "I was" (i.e. expressing mere preexistence), but "I am."
- Note the unbelieving Jews' attempt to stone Jesus *for blasphemy* (see Lev. 24:16).

See also **John 5:16-18** and **10:30-33**.

- The New World Translation (NWT) of the JWs reads: "I have been" (v. 58) thereby obscuring the connection with the "I am" statements of the LORD God in **Exodus 3:14** and **Isaiah 43:10**.

Jesus Is the Creator of All Things



5.8 John 1:1-5 (NIV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

- See verses 14-18, 23, 29 and 35-36 to establish that “the Word” (v. 1) is Jesus.
- “In the beginning” (v. 1) is associated with the Creation account in **Genesis 1:1**. Note also that “He was with God in the beginning” (v. 2) is associated with **Genesis 1:26-27** (see [section 4.1](#)).
- JW's resist the association of “the beginning” in **John 1:1** with the beginning in **Genesis 1:1**. This is because **Genesis 1:1** is interpreted to be the absolute beginning of time and Jesus, being a created angelic being according to JW doctrine, could not have existed before time.

5.9 Hebrews 1:1-2 (NIV)

¹ In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

- “the universe” (Gr. *ho aiōnas*) is literally “the ages.”
- JW's argue that because the Father created “through” (Gr. *dia*) the Son (see also Jn. 1:3), Jesus is denied absolute deity. (See **Hebrews 2:10** for a response.)

5.10 **Colossians 1:15-16 (NIV)**

¹⁵ He [the Son] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

- LDS doctrine teaches that *all spirits* (including those of Jesus and Lucifer) were procreated by heavenly Father and Mother in “the preexistence.” Most other interpreters, however, understand “thrones or powers or rulers or authorities” (v. 16) to refer to *a totality of hierarchical spiritual beings created by Jesus*.
- The New World Translation (NWT) of the JWs reads: “all [other] things” (v. 16) implying that *after the Father created Jesus* (pre-Genesis 1:1 as Michael the archangel) Jesus created *all other things*.

Jesus Is Absolutely Eternal

5.11 **John 1:1 (NIV)**

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

- “was” (*ēn*) is the imperfect tense of *eimi* (“to be”) which conveys here continuous existence with no idea of origin for either the Word or God (see **John 1:1** in [section 5.3](#)).
- See also **John 8:53-59** in [section 5.7](#).

5.12 **Colossians 1:17 (NIV)**

⁷ He [Jesus] is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

- Being that Jesus created “all things” (v. 16), He cannot Himself be a thing (i.e. create Himself). Hence, Jesus is eternally “before all things” and without beginning.
- The New World Translation (NWT) of the JWs reads: “all [other] things” (see **Colossians 1:15-16** in [section 5.10](#)).

5.13 **Hebrews 7:3 (NIV)**

³ Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he [Melchizedek] remains a priest forever.

- Melchizedek is a theological *type* (i.e. a prophetic foreshadow or copy) of Christ, who is the *antitype*. What was *figuratively true* of Melchizedek—namely, his being “without beginning of days,” is *literally true* of the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Is the Omniscient (All-Knowing) One

5.14 Acts 1:23-26 (NIV)

²³ So they [the eleven apostles] proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.

²⁴ Then they prayed, "Lord [Gr. *kurios*], you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen [Gr. *eklegō*]

²⁵ to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."

²⁶ Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

- Peter refers to Jesus as "Lord [Gr. *kurios*] Jesus" in verse 21. (See also **Acts 7:59-60** and **1 Corinthians 8:6**.)
- Jesus chose (Gr. *eklegō*) the twelve apostles (see **Acts 1:1-2** and **Luke 6:13**).
- Conclusion: The "Lord" addressed here is the Lord Jesus.
- Compare with **1 Kings 8:37-39** in **section 3.7**.
- The New World Translation (NWT) of the Jehovah's Witnesses translates "Lord" (Gr. *kurios*) in verse 23 as "Jehovah" while maintaining "Lord Jesus" in verse 21 thereby obscuring Jesus' identification as LORD (i.e. Jesus is NOT the one to Whom the apostles were praying).

Jesus Is the Forgiver of Sins

5.15 Luke 5:20-25 (NIV)

²⁰ When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

²¹ The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

²² Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts?"

²³ Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

²⁴ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." He said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

²⁵ Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God.

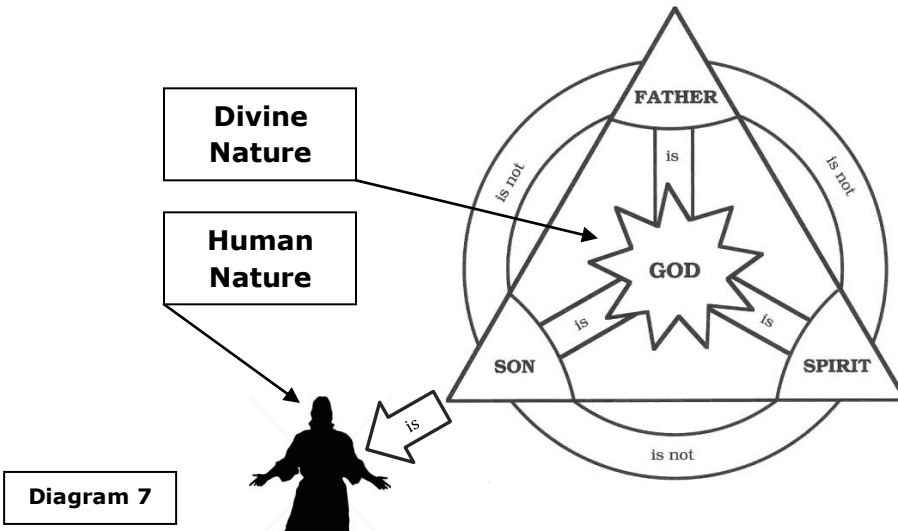
- Jesus never corrected His audience when they believed in Him as "God" or thought He was claiming to be "God" (see **John 20:28-29** and **10:30-39**). To be sure, He confirmed it (see **John 5:16-24** and **8:48-59** in **section 5.7**).
- It was one thing for the Levitical priests in the OT and the apostles in the NT to communicate the forgiveness of sins (see **Leviticus 4:20** and **John 20:21-23**)—it was quite another to claim to give that forgiveness directly!

- See also **Colossians 3:13** (cf. v. 17 and **1 Corinthians 8:6**).
- The New World Translation (NWT) of the Jehovah’s Witnesses translates “Lord” (Gr. *kurios*) in **Colossians 3:13** as “Jehovah” while maintaining “Lord Jesus” in verse 17 thereby obscuring Jesus’ identification as the Forgiver of sins.
- Compare with **Psalms 51:1-4** in **section 3.9**. (See also **Exodus 34:5-7** and **Isaiah 43:25**.)

Excursus 2–The Deity of Jesus in Revelation

1. **Who is “coming” and “coming soon”?**
 - Answer: Jesus (see Rev. 1:7; 22:20).
2. **What are the divine titles of Jesus, who is “coming soon”?**
 - Answer: “the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (see Rev. 22:12-13; 1:17-18 and 2:8).
 - The alpha “A” and omega “Ω” are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, respectively, and are an expression of totality.
3. **Who else is referred to as “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End”?**
 - Answer: the Father (see Rev. 1:8; cf. 1:4-5; and 21:5-6; cf. 19:4).
 - The Father is referred to as “God” over 120 times in John’s Gospel—John is the author of Revelation as well (see 1:1, 4 and 9; cf. 19:13 and Jn. 1:1).
4. **Who only is referred to as “the first and the last”?**
 - Answer: the LORD God, that is, the divine Being (see Isa. 44:6 and 48:12).
 - See **Diagram 5** on page 11.
5. **Who is the “KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS”?**
 - Answer: Jesus “the Word of God” (see Rev. 19:13-16; cf. Jn. 1:1) and the Father (see 1 Tim. 6:15-16).
 - Compare with **1 Corinthians 8:6** and **Deuteronomy 10:17** (LXX) for “Lord of lords.”

6. The Dual Natures of Jesus & the Incarnation



The Holy Spirit Brought About the Conception of Jesus in the Womb of Mary

6.1 Matthew 1:18-23 (NIV)

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."

²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

²³ "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us [see **Isaiah 7:14**]."

- **The Dual Natures of Jesus:** It is conceivable that God could have created Jesus as a human being (without the benefit of any human parent) and sent Him from heaven to earth, but we might then question *His humanity*. Conversely it is conceivable God could have Jesus come into the world with two human parents, but we might then question *His deity*.

God ordained a combination of divine and human influence in the birth of Jesus to preserve *His dual natures*.

- **The Holiness of Jesus:** Because the Holy Spirit brought about the conception of Jesus (and not a human father), He did not inherit the sin nature of man thereby preserving *His holiness* (see **Romans 5:12**; cf. **Luke 1:35**).
- The controversial and historic doctrine of the LDS Church is that Jesus was NOT begotten by the Holy Ghost but, rather, by the Father (and in a very literal sense).

Brigham Young, second Prophet and President, forthrightly declared: "When the time came that His first-born, the Saviour, should come into the world and take a tabernacle the Father came Himself and favoured that spirit with a tabernacle instead of letting any other man do it" (February 8, 1857, *Journal of Discourses* 4:218). Brigham Young later explained: "The birth of the Saviour was as natural as are the births of our children; it was the result of natural action. He partook of flesh and blood – was begotten of his Father, as we were of our fathers" (July 8, 1860, *Journal of Discourses* 8:115).

The Son Became Flesh in the Incarnation

6.2 John 1:1 (NIV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 (NIV)

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- See verses 14-18, 23, 29 and 35-36 to establish that "the Word" (v. 1) is Jesus.
- The Incarnation is the addition of humanity, NOT the subtraction of deity. "The Word became flesh" (v. 14) means neither that the Word *changed into* nor *appeared as* flesh.
- See also **1 John 4:1-3** and **2 John 7**.

The Son Became Flesh to Die and Destroy

6.3 Hebrews 2:11 (NIV)

¹¹ Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.

Hebrews 2:14-15 (NIV)

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil--

¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

- In verse 11 Jesus exercises the divine prerogative that is always reserved for the LORD God in the OT (see **Exodus 31:13**; **Leviticus 20:8** and **Ezekiel 20:12**).

- God the Son took on a human nature to conquer sin and death for us through His atoning sacrifice on the cross and resurrection from the dead (see **Isaiah 53:5-6**; **Romans 4:25**; **2 Corinthians 4:14** and **Ephesians 2:4-6**).

6.4 **Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)**

⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,

⁷but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

⁸And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!

- **The Divinity of Jesus:** Due to the difficulty of translating the Greek of verse 6 to reflect Paul's beliefs in English, the following paraphrase is offered: "Christ did not desire to possess equality with God for His own advantage precisely because it was *always* His" (modified from Gordon D. Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament – Philippians*, 1995, pp. 207-208).
- **The Humanity of Jesus:** Due to the difficulty of translating the Greek of verses 7 and 8 to reflect Paul's beliefs in English, the following paraphrase is offered: "In becoming fully human Christ neither ceased to be divine nor did he share man's sinful nature [cf. Ro. 8:3]" (modified from Gordon D. Fee, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament – Philippians*, 1995, pp. 213).

Excursus 3–The Kenosis Doctrine

Philippians 2:7 (NIV)

⁷but made himself nothing [Gr. *ekenōsen*], taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

1. *kenōō* in the Greek means "to empty."
2. Because divine nature can neither change nor cease to exist, Christ's emptying is to be understood *metaphorically*. That is, the Son *poured Himself out* in the Incarnation in obedience to the Father to become *powerless* (see 1 Cor. 1:17).
3. In becoming fully human Jesus *voluntarily set aside the use* of some of His divine prerogatives. Moreover, He experienced many of the limitations of man thus increasing dependence upon His Father (see Jn. 5:19, 30; 14:10).
4. The Incarnation made possible the Crucifixion, which made possible the Resurrection (see especially vv. 8-11)!

7. Breaking Down False Teachings of God & Jesus

3 Truths & 3 Heresies

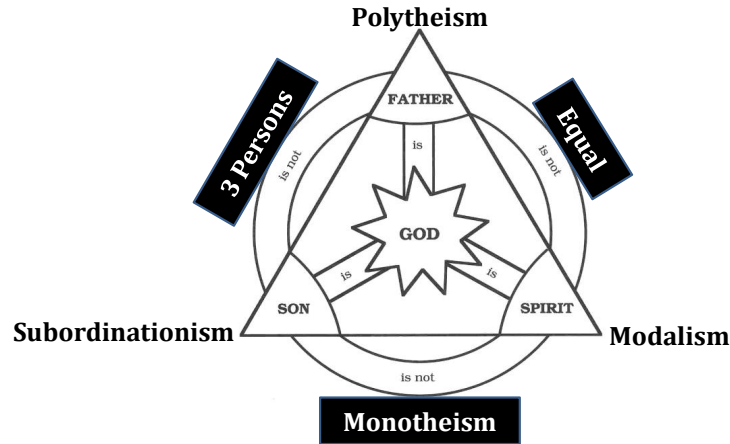


Diagram 8

Polytheism and God Is a Man

7.1 Genesis 1:26-27 (NIV)

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

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

LDS Interpretation

The plural pronouns "us" and "our" (v. 26) indicate that there is a plurality of Creator gods. Moreover, man is created in God's image; therefore, God is an exalted man.

Biblical Interpretation

1. Monotheism: see [section 3.4 and 4.1](#).
2. The "image" of God:
 - Image (Heb. *selem*) functions to *express*, NOT to *depict*.
 - In the Ancient Near East only the king is in *the image of God*—the emphasis is on *authoritative*, NOT *physical* representation.
 - As God is the sovereign Creator King so man is given rule or dominion over God's earthly creation— in this way man is created in God's image.

7.2 **Psalms 82:1 (NIV)**

¹ God presides in the great assembly; he gives judgment among the "gods":

Psalms 82:6 (NIV)

⁶ "I said, 'You are "gods"; you are all sons of the Most High.'

LDS Interpretation

There is a plurality of gods.

Biblical Interpretation

1. Monotheism: see [section 3.4](#).
2. "gods" (Heb. *elohim*) can refer to false "gods" (**Exodus 20:3**), angels or "heavenly beings" (**Psalms 8:5**; cf. **Hebrews 2:7**) or Israel's "judges" (**Exodus 22:9**).
3. In Canaanite mythology the gods were known as "the sons of the Most High." The LORD God here dethrones and condemns the gods of the pagan nations for their wickedness (see vv. 1-5) and at the same time condemns idolatry.
 - This likely served as a *poetic warning* to the Israelites.

7.3 **1 Corinthians 8:5-6 (NIV)**

⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"),

⁶ yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

LDS Interpretation

There is a plurality of gods.

Biblical Interpretation

1. Monotheism: see [section 3.4](#).
2. Paul here is referring to false "so-called gods" (v. 5) for the following reasons:
 - History informs us that Corinth was infested with false gods and idol-worshipping practices of Greek and Roman mythology.
 - Verse 1 indicates that the context is "food sacrificed to idols" (see also v. 4).
 - Paul mentions the "idols" of the pagan-worshipping Corinthians no fewer than seven times in chapter 8 of 1 Corinthians.

7.4 Hebrews 1:3 (NIV)

³The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

LDS Interpretation

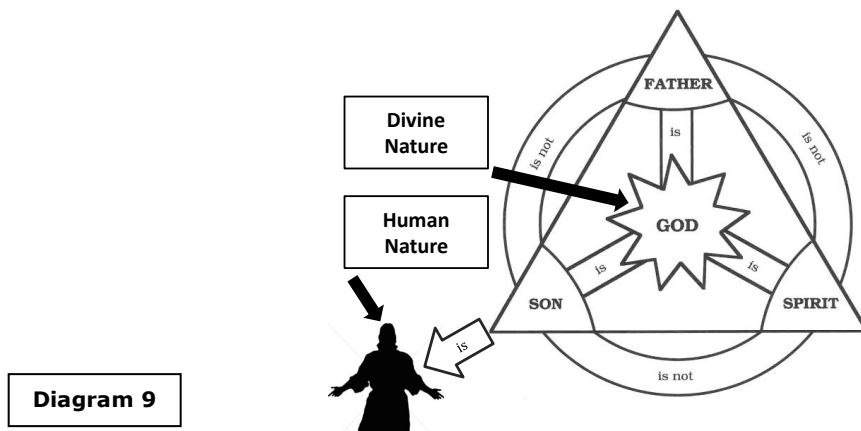
God is a man.

Biblical Interpretation

1. God is Spirit: see **Excursus 1 on page 7**.
2. "God is not a man" (**Numbers 23:19; Job 9:2, 32; and Hosea 11:9**).
 - **Question:** Jesus is God and Jesus is a man. Is it not, therefore, a contradiction to say that "God is not a man"?

Answer: Jesus is "the God-man" precisely because He possesses a divine nature (infinite) AND a human nature (finite).

However, if God is a man then God and man are of *the same* essential nature. This is NOT the God of the Bible, but it IS the God and gods of LDS theology.



3. Jesus is "the exact representation" or "express image" (KJV) of God in that He is the embodiment or "the very stamp" of the Father's divine nature.
 - See **John 1:18, 14:9** and **Colossians 2:9**.
 - The "image" of God is also explained NOT in terms of *physical* appearance, but of *spiritual* fruit (see **Colossians 3:5-15** and **Galatians 5:21**).
4. "[T]he right hand" of God is NOT to be interpreted *literally*, but *figuratively*. It is a position of special honor, favor and power (see **1 Kings 2:19; Jeremiah 22:4; and Exodus 15:6**, respectively).

Excursus 4—God Has a Body and Was Seen in the OT?

Anthropomorphisms

Even though God *by divine nature* does not have a physical body, Scripture uses various parts of the human body to describe God's activities in a metaphorical way—this is referred to as **anthropomorphic** language.

- The LORD God set His "face" against those who violated His commands (Lev. 17:10; Ezek. 14:18).
- That the LORD God was seen "face to face" is Hebrew idiom for "up close and personal" (Gen. 32:30; Ex. 33:11).
- The LORD God has "eyes" to see (Gen. 6:8); "ears" to hear (2 Sam. 22:7); an "arm" to save (Isa. 59:1); and a "mouth" to breathe (Ps. 33:6).

Theophanies and Christophanies

Not only has no one "ever seen God" (Jn. 1:18; 6:46; 1 Jn. 4:12 and 1 Ti. 6:16), but "no one may see [God] and live" (Ex. 33:20). Nevertheless, in the OT the LORD God was seen (at times in human form) by Abraham (see Gen. 18:2, 6, 22) and Moses (see Ex. 33:18-23) and appeared as "the angel of the LORD" to Hagar (Gen 16:7-14) and Jacob (Gen. 32:22-30; cf. Hos. 12:4-5). Moreover, they lived! How might this be explained?

- At no time was the fullness of God's *unveiled* essence and glory revealed else they would surely have died (see Ex. 33:18-23). The non-human form of the LORD God was typically manifested as a cloud (see Ex. 16:10; 40:34). These are referred to as **theophanies**.
- Human-form theophanies were typically associated with "the angel of the LORD." These are thought to be temporary appearances of God the Son (pre-incarnate) and thus are understood to be **Christophanies**. The reasoning is as follows:
 - ✓ The angel of the LORD is spoken of as being "God" (Gen. 16:13); bore the name of the "LORD God" (Hos. 12:4-5); spoke as God (see Ex. 3:2-6); and exercised divine prerogatives (see Gen. 16:10).
 - ✓ "The angel of the LORD" no longer appears after the Incarnation. ("[T]he angel of the Lord" in Mt. 1:24 is "an angel" in v. 20.)
 - ✓ The incarnate Son is the ultimate expression of the Father (see Jn. 14:19; Heb. 1:3).

Subordinationism and the Son Is a Creature

7.5 John 14:28 (NIV)

²⁸ "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I."

John 20:17 (NIV)

¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

1 Corinthians 11:3 (NIV)

³ Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

1 Corinthians 15:28 (NIV)

²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

JW Interpretation

Jesus is inferior to the Father by divine nature (i.e. ontological inferiority).

Biblical Interpretation

1. The Son is ontologically equal to the Father by divine nature. (See section 5.)
2. All of the above passages may be interpreted in the light of the Incarnation and Jesus' *functional* and *positional* subordination only to the Father. (See section 6.)
 - It is significant to note that Jesus never said, "The Father *is better* than I." This WOULD imply an ontological inferiority of the Son.

Jesus Is Equal to the Father	Jesus Is Less Than the Father
In name	In function (the One sent)
In nature	In position (lower)
As God	As man (limitations)

Modified from *When Cultists Ask* by Geisler and Rhodes, 1997, p. 184.

Table 1

7.6 Colossians 1:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Hebrews 1:6 (NIV)

⁶ And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him."

LDS and JW Interpretation

The Son was created as a spirit being prior to the Incarnation. LDS doctrine holds that Jesus was literally "born" as a spirit child of Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother in the preexistence; JW doctrine holds that Jesus was first created as Michael the Archangel.

Biblical Interpretation

1. Jesus is eternally God by divine nature. (See **section 5**.)
2. "firstborn" or "firstbegotten" (Heb. 1:6 KJV) translates the Greek word *prōtotokos*. While it is often used in the literal sense of the first to come from the womb, it can also take on the metaphorical sense of *the special status* of the first son born.

For example, David was the last-born son to Jesse (see **1 Samuel 17:12-14**), yet because of his preeminent status he was the LORD God's "firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth" (**Psalm 89:27**).

3. It is significant that in the first chapter of Colossians and Hebrews, the Son is identified as the Creator of "all things" and "the universe," respectively. The Son is therefore the preeminent One "over all creation," NOT the first one created of the Father.

Modalism and Jesus Is the Father

Oneness Logic

1. There is only one God.
2. Jesus Christ is God and man.
3. Therefore, Jesus is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Jesus is the Father in His divine nature and the Son in His human nature. There is no eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ!

Diagram 10

7.7 **Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)**

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Oneness Interpretation

The LORD God is one Person: Jesus here is the “Everlasting Father.”

Biblical Interpretation

1. The Son IS NOT the Father. Consider the following data (source: Gregory A. Boyd, *Oneness Pentecostals & the Trinity*, 1992, pp. 68-69):

- Over 200 times in the NT Jesus is referred to as “the Son”—never is He called the Father;
- Over 50 times in the NT the Father and the Son are juxtaposed in the same verse (see **1 John 1:3; 2:1** and **2 John 3**);
- 179 times in the Gospels Jesus refers to “the Father,” “my Father” and “your Father” as distinct from Himself;
- 49 times in John’s Gospel Jesus refers to Himself as being sent by the Father, but never to Himself as the Father who sent the Son;
- The Father’s “voice from heaven” testifies to the Son at Jesus’ baptism (see **Matthew 3:17** and **Luke 3:22**) and transfiguration (**Matthew 17:5** and **Luke 9:25**).



2. See **section 5.1** concerning **Isaiah 9:6**.

- Some OT scholars understand “Father” metaphorically given the LORD God’s concern for the helpless (see **Psalms 68:5-6**) and His people (see **Psalms 103:13**). Similar ideas are used in reference to the Davidic King (see **Psalms 72:4**).

7.8 **John 10:30 (NIV)**
³⁰"I and the Father are one."

Oneness Interpretation

Jesus is the Father manifest in the flesh.

Biblical Interpretation

1. See number 1 in **section 7.7** above.
2. Jesus here uses the first-person plural "are" (Gr. *esmen*) to refer to Himself and the Father—He does not say, "I and the Father *am* one."
 - Note the response of the Jews in verses 31-33!
3. Jesus here uses "one" (Gr. *hen*) in the neuter gender, NOT *heis* in the masculine, thereby suggesting unity of essence or nature rather than personal identity.
4. Jesus distinguishes Himself from the Father in the verses immediately preceding and succeeding **John 10:30** (see vv. 25-29, 36 and 38).

7.9 **John 14:6-9 (NIV)**

⁶ Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

⁷ If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

⁸ Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

⁹ Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Oneness Interpretation

Jesus is the Father manifest in the flesh.

Biblical Interpretation

1. See **number 1 in section 7.7** above.
2. See **Hebrews 1:3** in **section 7.4**.
 - See also **Colossians 2:9**.
3. One can look to no other place or person besides Jesus Christ to see and know the Father. The "words" and "work" of the Son are of the Father who lives in Him (**John 14:10**; see also 5:19 and 30).

Excursus 5–The Eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ

Perhaps the strongest argument apart from Scripture for *the eternal relationship* of the Father and the Son is *love* as we express and experience it ourselves (i.e. one person for another person). Being that “God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8) it stands to reason that there is a plurality of coeternal Persons in the Godhead—namely, the Father and “His one and only Son” (Jn. 3:16; 3:35 and 5:20).

NT evidence for the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ includes, but is not limited to, the following passages.

John 1:1 (NIV)

¹ In the beginning was the Word [the Son], and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word was God [by nature].

- See section 5.3 and 5.11.

John 1:15 (NIV)

¹⁵ John [the Baptist] testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'"

- The One who was “before” the Baptist is identified as “the Lamb of God,” Jesus Christ. Interestingly, the Baptist was born *before* Jesus.

John 6:61-62 (NIV)

⁶¹ Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you?"

⁶² What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he [the Son of Man] was before!"

- The Son returned to “the right hand of God” (Mk. 16:19) in His human nature where the pre-incarnate *Son* existed (and eternally exists) in His divine nature. Ponder that!

John 16:28 (NIV)

²⁸ "I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

- God is identified by Jesus as “the Father” both *before* and after the Incarnation. This presupposes the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ.
- See also **Colossians 1:13-15** and **Hebrews 1:2**, which strongly imply that Jesus Christ was “the Son” of God at the time of creation.