COGMA
Church of God Mission Academy

STUDY GUIDE
39
10 OF 10

One God in Jesus Christ

STUDY GUIDE 10 OF 10:

One God Fully Revealed in Jesus

An overview of God's fullness revealed and known in Jesus.



Equipping and empowering for effective service
2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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Important Points

- COGMA does not claim to be infallible or the authority.
- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

COGMA therefore strongly advises that you prayerfully study the content of each Study Guide with the heart of a Berean (**Acts 17:10–12**).

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PREFACE

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This is the final Study Guide in the module One God in Jesus Christ. Throughout the previous Study Guides, Scripture has progressively established who the one true God is, how He revealed Himself through the genuine human life of Jesus Christ, and how He now dwells within His born-again people by His Spirit.

The foundation is now clear. There is one God, and God is Spirit. The Father is the eternal Spirit, the Word was God and was made flesh, and the Son is the complete and genuine human life of Jesus Christ through whom the invisible God was revealed.

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and the Holy Ghost is that same one Spirit. The born-again believer therefore possesses Jesus Christ within by His Spirit.

This final Study Guide will bring these truths together and allow the whole testimony of Scripture to speak with one voice. We will begin by considering the united witness of the New Testament, where the Gospels reveal the invisible God in Jesus Christ, Acts proclaims salvation in His name, and the Epistles declare that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him and that *"the Lord is that Spirit."*

We will also examine two important plural expressions in Genesis: *"Let us make man in our image"* and *"the man is become as one of us."* These verses must be read in harmony with the direct declarations that the LORD is one, that there is none beside Him, and that He created alone and by Himself. Expressions requiring closer examination must never be allowed to overturn the clear and repeated testimony of Scripture.

Finally, we will gather together what the biblical language of Father, Son and Holy Ghost actually reveals. These Scriptural expressions are real and must be preserved, but Scripture itself must define them. They do not divide the one God into three distinct divine persons, but reveal the one eternal God, His full revelation through the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ, and His indwelling life within His people by His Spirit.

The purpose of this final Study Guide is therefore not simply to answer an opposing doctrine. Its purpose is to bring together the positive and saving truth towards which the whole module has been leading, with Jesus Christ remaining at the centre of the revelation.

There is one true God. That one God has been fully revealed in Jesus Christ. All the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him, and the born-again believer is complete in Him.

This Study Guide will therefore finish where Scripture itself continually directs us: not with an abstract theological formula, but with Jesus Christ, the full revelation of the one true God and the One in whom eternal life is found.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the one God, His revelation in Jesus and Christ within believers belong to one saving truth?

Personal Reflection

Have you treated God's oneness, His revelation in Jesus and Christ's indwelling as unrelated truths?

Action Step

Identify one connection you need to accept more fully and explain how it changes your trust in the same Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION: WHEN THE WHOLE TESTIMONY IS BROUGHT TOGETHER

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Throughout this module, we have examined the identity of God from many different directions. We have considered the one true God, the Word made flesh, the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ, the Father dwelling within the Son, the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ, and the principal Scriptures commonly used to support the doctrine of three distinct divine persons.

We now come to the final question:

When the whole testimony of Scripture is brought together, what does it reveal concerning God?

The answer must come from Scripture itself. We must not begin with a preconceived doctrine and then force every verse of Scripture to fit it. The clear and repeated statements of the Word of God must establish the foundation, while more difficult expressions must be understood in harmony with that foundation.

The One-God Foundation Remains Unchanged

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 8:4**:

> *"As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one."*

Paul does not leave the identity of God uncertain. He says plainly, *"there is none other God but one."*

The New Testament does not move away from the revelation that God is one. Neither does the revelation of Jesus Christ introduce another God beside the Father. Instead, the New Testament shows how the one invisible God made Himself known through Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:9-10**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

These words bring two truths together. There is one God, and all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is therefore not a partial revelation of God. Nothing belonging to Deity is absent from Him, for the one God was fully revealed through His genuine human life.

God Was in Christ

Paul expressed the same truth in **2 Corinthians 5:19**:

> *"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."*

Paul says plainly, *"God was in Christ."* The Gospel is therefore not the story of separate divine beings cooperating with one another. It is the saving work of the one God revealed and accomplished through Jesus Christ.

The humanity of Jesus Christ was genuine. He truly lived as man, prayed, obeyed, suffered, shed His blood and died. Yet within that genuine humanity dwelt the Father, the eternal Spirit, the one true God Himself.

These truths must remain together.

The Same Lord Now Dwells Within His People

The New Testament then carries the revelation further. The Jesus Christ who was revealed outwardly in genuine human life now dwells inwardly within His born-again people by His Spirit.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 3:17**:

> *"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

Paul does not present the Spirit as another divine person separate from the Lord. He says plainly, *"the Lord is that Spirit."*

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and the Holy Ghost is that same one Spirit. The New Covenant reality is therefore not Christ absent while another divine person takes His place. It is Jesus Christ dwelling within His people by His Spirit.

The Whole Testimony Must Speak Together

This final Study Guide will bring these truths together before examining two remaining plural expressions in Genesis: *"Let us make man in our image"* and *"the man is become as one of us."*

Those expressions must be interpreted within the same Scriptural foundation. The LORD declares that He created alone and by Himself, and Scripture declares that there is none beside Him. An unexplained plural expression cannot overturn those direct declarations.

We will then bring together the biblical language of Father, Son and Holy Ghost and ask what Scripture itself reveals through those expressions. The conclusion must rest upon the united testimony of the Word of God:

There is one true God. The Father is the eternal Spirit. That one God was fully revealed in the genuine human life of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost is that same one Spirit of God and of Christ.

We begin, therefore, by allowing the New Testament to speak as a whole.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must the whole testimony be considered when reading verses about God and Jesus?

Personal Reflection

Have you allowed one difficult expression to outweigh repeated direct declarations about God?

Action Step

Choose an example and compare it with the Bible's clear one-God testimony. State what must change in your interpretation.

THE NEW TESTAMENT'S UNITED TESTIMONY

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We have examined many individual portions of Scripture throughout this module. When those Scriptures are brought together and the New Testament is allowed to speak as a whole, one consistent testimony emerges. The language changes according to the part of God's saving work being described, but the identity of God does not change.

The New Testament reveals one true God making Himself known in Jesus Christ and dwelling within His people by His Spirit. The Gospels reveal the invisible God through the genuine humanity of the Son, Acts proclaims salvation in the name of Jesus Christ, and the Epistles explain that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him and that the same Lord now dwells within His people by His Spirit.

The Gospels Reveal God in Jesus Christ

The four Gospels present Jesus Christ in genuine human life. He was born, grew, hungered, thirsted, prayed, obeyed, suffered and died. His humanity was complete and real. At the same time, the Gospels reveal that the invisible God was made known through that genuine human life.

John wrote in **John 1:14**:

> *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."*

John had already declared that *"the Word was God."* He now says that the Word *"was made flesh."* The one God who is Spirit was therefore revealed through genuine humanity in Jesus Christ.

John then wrote in **John 1:18**:

> *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."*

God in His eternal Spirit nature is invisible. The Son *"hath declared him."* Jesus Christ did not reveal another visible divine person standing beside Himself. Through His genuine human life, the invisible God was made known.

Jesus explained this directly to Philip. Jesus said in **John 14:9-10**:

> *"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."*

Jesus said *"he that hath seen me hath seen the Father,"* and then explained why: *"the Father that dwelleth in me."* The Father, the eternal Spirit, dwelt within the genuine human life of the Son.

The Gospels therefore preserve both truths without confusion. Jesus Christ was genuinely man, and the one true God was fully revealed through Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the Gospels reveal the one God through the human life of Jesus?

Personal Reflection

When you read the Gospels, do you think of Jesus mainly as speaking about a distant God?

Action Step

Read **John 14:9–10** *and explain how knowing the Father through Jesus should govern your worship.*

Acts Proclaims Jesus Christ

When we move into the book of Acts, the apostolic preaching remains centred upon Jesus Christ. The apostles do not introduce a doctrine that the one God eternally exists as three distinct, coequal and coeternal divine persons. They proclaim the crucified and risen Jesus as Lord and Christ and preach salvation in His name.

Peter said in **Acts 2:36**:

> *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."*

The words *"that same Jesus"* keep the genuine humanity of the Son before us. The One who had been crucified was raised and exalted. The distinction between God and Jesus in these Scriptures belongs to the genuine humanity, obedience, mediation and exaltation of the Son. It does not require two divine persons within God.

Peter later declared in **Acts 4:10-12**:

> *"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

The apostolic message directs us to *"the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth."* Peter then declares that *"there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* The saving proclamation in Acts remains centred upon Jesus Christ.

Acts also brings the language of God, the Holy Ghost and the blood of Christ together in a remarkable way. Paul said in **Acts 20:28**:

> *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."*

The eternal Spirit does not possess physical blood. Blood belonged to the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ. Yet Paul speaks of *"the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."* The saving work of Jesus Christ cannot therefore be separated from the one God revealed in Him.

The Epistles Explain the Fulness of God in Christ

The Epistles make this revelation even more explicit. Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:19**:

> *"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;"*

Paul then wrote in **Colossians 2:9-10**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

Paul says *"all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."* Nothing belonging to Deity was absent from Jesus Christ. The one true God was fully revealed in Him without division or deficiency.

Paul then immediately declares *"ye are complete in him."* These statements belong together. All the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Jesus Christ, and the born-again believer is complete in Him. Scripture therefore directs our confidence fully to Jesus Christ.

Paul gives another concise statement in **2 Corinthians 5:19**:

> *"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."*

Paul says *"God was in Christ."* The one God was not standing outside Jesus Christ while another divine person independently accomplished redemption. God Himself was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself through the genuine humanity of the man Christ Jesus.

The Spirit of God Is the Spirit of Christ

The New Testament then explains how Jesus Christ now dwells within His people. Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9-10**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."*

Notice Paul's movement. He speaks of *"the Spirit of God,"* then *"the Spirit of Christ,"* and then *"Christ be in you."* Paul is not describing several divine Spirits or several divine persons dwelling within the believer. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and Christ dwells within His people by that one Spirit.

Paul states the identification directly in **2 Corinthians 3:17**:

> *"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

The statement is plain: *"the Lord is that Spirit."* The Holy Ghost is therefore not another divine person who comes in addition to Jesus Christ. The risen Lord Himself is present within His people by His Spirit.

Paul expressed this inward reality personally in **Galatians 2:20**:

> *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."*

Paul did not say that Christ remained absent while someone else took His place. He said *"Christ liveth in me."*

He expressed the same truth in **Colossians 1:27**:

> *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"*

The New Covenant mystery is *"Christ in you."* The Jesus Christ who was revealed outwardly in genuine human life now dwells inwardly within the born-again believer by His Spirit.

One God Above, Through and in His People

Paul gathers these truths together in **Ephesians 4:4-6**:

> *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

Paul's language is emphatic. There is *"one Spirit," "One Lord,"* and *"One God and Father of all."* The one God is then described as *"above all, and through all, and in you all."*

This is not a description of three separate divine sources. It is the united New Testament testimony concerning the one God, His revelation in Jesus Christ and His indwelling life within His people.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost language must therefore remain within this one-God foundation. The Father is the eternal Spirit, the Son is the complete and genuine human life of Jesus Christ

through whom that one God was made known, and the Holy Ghost is that same one Spirit of God and of Christ active and dwelling within His people.

The New Testament Does Not Contradict Itself

The same New Testament that speaks distinctly of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost also declares that there is one God and one Spirit. Those statements must not be placed against one another as though Scripture were contradicting itself.

The distinctions in Scripture are real and must be preserved. The Son prayed to the Father, obeyed the Father, suffered, died, was raised and was exalted. Those statements belong to His genuine human life and mediating work. They do not require us to create a second eternal divine person beside the Father.

In the same way, Scripture can speak of the Holy Ghost acting, teaching, bearing witness and dwelling within believers while still declaring that there is *"one Spirit."* Paul identifies that Spirit as both *"the Spirit of God"* and *"the Spirit of Christ,"* and then says *"the Lord is that Spirit."*

The biblical expressions must therefore be allowed to retain their proper distinctions without being made into separate divine persons. The same Bible that distinguishes God and Jesus Christ in the language of mediation also says *"God was in Christ."* The same Bible that speaks of the Holy Ghost also says *"the Lord is that Spirit."* The same Bible that speaks of the Father and the Son records Jesus saying *"the Father that dwelleth in me."*

These statements are not competing explanations. They are different parts of the same revelation. The Father is the eternal Spirit, the Son is the genuine human life through whom the Father was revealed and through whom redemption was accomplished, and the Holy Ghost is the one Spirit of God and of Christ dwelling within His people.

When Scripture is allowed to define its own language, the New Testament remains consistent. Its distinctions preserve the genuine humanity and saving work of Jesus Christ, while its direct declarations preserve the absolute oneness of God.

One United New Testament Testimony

The New Testament therefore speaks with one consistent voice. In the Gospels, the invisible God is revealed through the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ. In Acts, the apostles proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and the saving name. In the Epistles, all the fulness of the Godhead is declared to dwell bodily in Him.

The Spirit of God is identified as the Spirit of Christ, the Lord is that Spirit, and the born-again believer possesses the fulfilled New Covenant reality: *"Christ in you."* These truths do not compete with one another. They belong together.

There is one God. That one God was fully revealed in Jesus Christ. He accomplished reconciliation through the genuine humanity of the man Christ Jesus, and Jesus Christ now dwells within His born-again people by His Spirit.

The New Testament does not move us away from the one-God foundation. It brings that revelation into its fulness in Jesus Christ.

With that united testimony established, we can now turn to one of the principal Old Testament expressions sometimes used to suggest plurality within God: *"Let us make man in our image."*

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the apostles continue the Gospels' testimony of the one God revealed in Jesus?

Personal Reflection

Have you separated the witness of Acts from what the Gospels teach about Jesus?

Action Step

Compare **Acts 4:12** *with* **Colossians 2:9**. *Identify what this shared testimony should strengthen in your faith.*

GENESIS 1:26 - "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE"

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We now come to one of the most frequently quoted plural expressions in the Old Testament. Because God says *"Let us make man in our image,"* the words *"us"* and *"our"* are often treated as evidence that several divine persons were speaking together.

The plural language is real and must not be avoided. However, it must be interpreted within everything else Scripture says concerning the Creator. Genesis cannot be made to contradict the direct declarations that there is one God, that there is none beside Him, and that He created alone and by Himself.

The Creation Account Returns to the Singular

Moses wrote in **Genesis 1:26-28**:

> *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."*

Verse 26 contains the plural expressions *"Let us make"* and *"our image."* But when the actual act of creation is described in verse 27, the language returns to the singular: *"God created man in his own image."*

The record does not say that they created man in their image. It says *"God created man in his own image."* Whatever the plural language means, the inspired account attributes the act of creation to one God.

The LORD Created Alone

Isaiah gives us a direct declaration concerning the Creator.

God said in **Isaiah 44:24**:

> *"Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;"*

The language could hardly be clearer. God says *"I am the LORD that maketh all things."* He stretched forth the heavens *"alone"* and spread abroad the earth *"by myself."*

Genesis 1:26 therefore cannot mean that several distinct divine persons joined together as separate Creators. The LORD Himself says that He created alone and by Himself.

God also declared in **Isaiah 45:5-6**:

> *"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else."*

There is no God beside Him. Therefore, the *"us"* of **Genesis 1:26** cannot introduce other divine beings standing beside the LORD.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must 'Let us make man' be read with the LORD's statement that He created alone?

Personal Reflection

Have you made 'Let us make man' the foundation of your belief about God's number?

Action Step

Read **Genesis 1:26–27** *with* **Isaiah 44:24**. *Explain how God's singular work should guide your interpretation.*

God Works According to His Own Counsel

Scripture also does not present creation as the result of a council of several divine persons advising one another.

Isaiah wrote in **Isaiah 40:13-14**:

> *"Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?"*

God required no divine counsellor. Paul expressed the same truth in **Ephesians 1:11**:

> *"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"*

God works *"after the counsel of his own will."* The plural language of Genesis must therefore remain within the eternal purpose and counsel of the one God rather than being turned into a conversation between several divine persons.

"Male and Female Created He Them"

There is another important feature in **Genesis 1:27**. Moses says *"male and female created he them."* Yet when Genesis later describes the formation of Eve, she is brought forth from Adam.

Moses wrote in **Genesis 2:21-23**:

> *"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."*

Before Eve stood visibly beside Adam, she was already contained within the man from whom God would bring her forth. Genesis 1 can therefore speak of *"male and female created he them"* before Genesis 2 records Eve being visibly brought forth.

What was already contained within God's purpose was later manifested in time. This principle is important when considering the words *"Let us make man in our image."*

The account does not require several divine persons. It can be understood within the eternal purpose of the one God, a purpose in which Christ and His people were already known before their manifestation in time.

Christ Is the Image of the Invisible God

Genesis says that man was made in God's image. The New Testament directs our attention to Jesus Christ when explaining the perfect revelation of that image.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:15**:

> *"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:"*

Jesus Christ is *"the image of the invisible God."* God Himself is invisible Spirit, while Jesus Christ is the genuine human revelation through whom that invisible God was made known.

This gives the language of Genesis a Jesus-centred direction. The purpose of God concerning His image reaches its perfect revelation in Jesus Christ.

Paul also wrote in **Romans 8:29**:

> *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."*

God's saving purpose is not simply that humanity should bear an outward resemblance to Him. Born-again believers are brought into Christ, and His life is expressed through them. They are conformed *"to the image of his Son."*

The image is perfectly revealed in Jesus Christ, and God's redemptive purpose brings His people into that life.

Eve Was Hidden in Adam; the Church Was Hidden in God

There is something important in the way Genesis describes the creation of Adam and Eve. **Genesis 1:27** says *"male and female created he them,"* although Eve had not yet been visibly brought forth from Adam.

Moses later explained in **Genesis 2:21-23**:

> *"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."*

Eve was already within Adam before she was visibly revealed. What was hidden within the man was later brought forth and presented to him as his wife.

Paul tells us that this relationship pointed to something greater. Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:30-32**:

> *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

Paul tells us plainly what the mystery concerns: *"Christ and the church."* The natural relationship between Adam and Eve therefore pointed forward to the greater spiritual reality of Christ and His Church.

Eve was hidden in Adam before she was brought forth. In the same way, the Church was hidden in God before she was manifested in human history.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 1:4-5**:

> *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,"*

Before the foundation of the world, God's people were already *"chosen us in him."* The Church was therefore not an afterthought. She was already within the eternal purpose of God before she was visibly brought forth.

This gives us an important key to the words *"Let us make man in our image."* The *"us"* does not identify three divine persons. It points to the one God speaking from within His eternal purpose, in which His Church was already contained.

Just as Eve was hidden in Adam before she came forth, the Church was hidden in God before she came forth. What was present within the purpose of God was later brought into visible manifestation.

That Church was brought forth in the Gospel Day on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus Christ had completed the saving work through which His people could be born again, and at Pentecost the Church was revealed as the Spirit-filled body of Christ.

The natural pattern had reached its spiritual reality. Eve came forth from Adam and became his wife, while the Church came forth from God through the saving work of Jesus Christ and became the wife and body of Christ.

Therefore, when God said *"Let us make man in our image,"* the plural language does not reveal several divine persons. It reaches into the eternal purpose of the one God, the purpose in which Christ and His Church were already present, though the Church had not yet been visibly brought forth.

The Father of Spirits and Jerusalem Above

The natural relationship between father, mother and children helps us understand why Scripture connects Genesis with the heavenly origin of spiritual life. God is the Father of spirits. His Church is pictured as Jerusalem above, the spiritual mother of those who are His people.

The writer to the Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 12:9**:

> *"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"*

Zechariah wrote in **Zechariah 12:1**:

> *"The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him."*

God gives and forms the spirit of man. The physical father belongs to earthly life, while Scripture declares that the LORD Himself is the Father of spirits. This explains why human life must be understood in relation to both the earthly and the spiritual.

Paul then wrote in **Galatians 4:26**:

> *"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."*

Jerusalem above is the spiritual picture of the Church, the people who possess Christ through the new birth. This maternal figure belongs to the Scriptural teaching about Christ and His Church, rather than introducing another divine person within God.

The New Jerusalem Came From God

John wrote in **Revelation 21:2**:

> *"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*

John describes the New Jerusalem as coming *"from God"*. The Greek preposition APO (ἀπό) conveys source or origin. The Church has its origin in God's eternal purpose and receives His life by the Spirit; this does not make the Church divine in essence. Just as Eve came forth from Adam and yet was distinct from him, the Church belongs to Christ and remains His redeemed people.

Jesus spoke of the kingdom in **Matthew 25:34**:

> *"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:"*

The kingdom was prepared from the foundation of the world. The Church was therefore not an afterthought, but was present in God's purpose before she was manifested in the Gospel Day. This strengthens the original illustration of Eve hidden in Adam and the Church hidden in God.

Eve From Adam's Side, the Church From Christ's Side

The Scriptural picture reaches beyond Eve being hidden in Adam. Adam entered a deep sleep and Eve was taken from his side. This is used as a type pointing forward to the death of Jesus Christ and the bringing forth of His Church through His completed sacrifice.

John wrote in **John 19:34**:

> *"But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."*

The blood points to redemption, and the water is used as a picture of cleansing. Christ gave Himself for His Church; the spiritual reality is not produced by literal water or by an outward ordinance. His sacrifice is the ground upon which the redeemed people are brought into His life.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:25-27**:

> *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."*

Just as Eve was brought forth from Adam and presented to him, so Christ loved the Church, gave Himself for her and presents her as His own. These figures show the one God's purpose in Christ and the people who share His indwelling life. The *"us"* of **Genesis 1:26** is therefore understood in this teaching as God and His Church within His eternal purpose, not as three divine persons consulting one another.

The "Us" Does Not Create Three Divine Persons

We must therefore be careful not to make the pronouns *"us"* and *"our"* say more than Scripture says. **Genesis 1:26** does not say that God consists of three divine persons, that three coequal persons were speaking together, that three divine persons jointly created humanity, or that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are being identified as an eternal council.

Those statements are not found in the Genesis account. What Scripture does state directly is that God created man in *"his own image,"* that the LORD made all things *"alone,"* and that He spread abroad the earth *"by myself."*

The clear statements must therefore govern the expression requiring closer examination. The plural wording belongs within the eternal purpose of the one God. That purpose reaches its

fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God, and in the born-again people who are brought into His life.

Genesis 1:26 does not divide the Creator. It directs us towards a purpose greater than the natural creation itself, a purpose centred in Jesus Christ.

The next plural expression appears after humanity's fall, when the LORD God says *"the man is become as one of us."* That verse must be examined by the same Scriptural principle.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does God's eternal purpose in Christ help explain the image language of **Genesis 1:26***?*

Personal Reflection

Has the illustration of Eve and the Church made you overlook that God created alone?

Action Step

Consider the purpose of the biblical type without treating it as a second Creator. Explain what you should now affirm about God and His purpose in Christ.

GENESIS 3:22 - "THE MAN IS BECOME AS ONE OF US"

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A second plural expression appears after the fall of humanity. Because the LORD God says *"the man is become as one of us,"* these words are sometimes treated as further evidence that God consists of more than one divine person.

However, **Genesis 3:22** must first be understood within its own immediate context. The subject of the chapter is not the internal nature of God. It is humanity's disobedience, the knowledge of good and evil, and the consequences that followed the fall.

Moses wrote in **Genesis 3:22**:

> *"And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:"*

The most important words for understanding the statement are *"to know good and evil."* The verse itself tells us what the statement concerns.

The Speaker Is the LORD God

Genesis identifies the speaker plainly: *"And the LORD God said."* Throughout Genesis chapters 2 and 3, the same LORD God gives the command, speaks to Adam and Eve, pronounces judgment and sends humanity from the garden.

The plural words *"one of us"* are real and must be acknowledged, but the verse does not say that the *"us"* means three coequal and coeternal divine persons. That definition is not contained in the verse.

We must therefore not begin with the plural pronoun and build a doctrine of God upon it. We must first ask what Genesis itself is describing.

God's Own Counsel: Another Possible Explanation

Genesis 3:22 is a difficult verse, and it admits more than one way to understand *"one of us"* while holding firmly to the Scriptural declaration that God is one. One possibility is that God speaks in the language of His own sovereign counsel, sometimes described as a plural of majesty. This is offered as a possible explanation, not as a proven definition of the Hebrew grammar.

The speaker remains *"the LORD God"*. Scripture has already declared that He acts after the counsel of His own will and requires no adviser. On this understanding, the plural expression does not describe several divine persons in discussion; it expresses God's own authority and knowledge.

The other explanation considers the immediate context of Adam and Eve's disobedience. By choosing to determine good and evil apart from God's command, man acted as though he could take to himself an authority belonging to God. Both explanations seek to preserve the same Scriptural truth: **Genesis 3:22** does not establish three coequal divine persons.

We should not pretend that this difficult expression has been explained beyond all question. Its interpretation must remain consistent with the clear declarations that the LORD created alone and that there is no God beside Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the knowledge of good and evil place 'one of us' within the account of humanity's fall?

Personal Reflection

Have you read 'one of us' without considering the fall and the knowledge of good and evil?

Action Step

Revisit **Genesis 3:22** *in its narrative setting and explain what assumptions about divine persons you need to test.*

The Context Is the Knowledge of Good and Evil

Before the fall, God had given Adam a clear command. Moses wrote in **Genesis 2:16-17**:

> *"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*

God had clearly defined the boundary. Adam knew what God had said, so the issue was not a lack of information. The issue was whether humanity would remain subject to the Word and authority of God.

The serpent then challenged that Word. Moses wrote in **Genesis 3:4-5**:

> *"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."*

The serpent contradicted God directly. God had said *"thou shalt surely die,"* while the serpent said *"Ye shall not surely die."* The serpent then promised that their eyes would be opened and that they would be *"as gods, knowing good and evil."*

The temptation therefore involved rejecting God's Word and reaching beyond the place God had established for humanity.

Humanity Chose Independence From God

Adam and Eve accepted another word in place of God's Word. They acted outside the boundary God had given them and attempted to possess for themselves what God had forbidden.

Their sin was therefore an act of disobedience against the authority of their Creator. God alone has perfect knowledge and authority concerning good and evil. Humanity was not created to establish an independent moral authority apart from Him.

The tree placed before Adam and Eve therefore involved a real question of trust and obedience. Would humanity accept God's judgment concerning what was good and trust His Word concerning what was evil, or would they reach beyond His command and determine their course independently of Him?

They chose independence.

Afterwards God said *"Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil."* The statement must be understood in the light of what had just taken place.

Man Came to Know Evil Through Experience

The serpent promised elevation, but what humanity actually received was a terrible experiential knowledge of evil.

Moses wrote in **Genesis 3:7**:

> *"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."*

Their eyes were indeed opened, but the result was not divine glory. It was shame. They became conscious of their nakedness, hid from God and experienced fear.

Before their disobedience, Adam and Eve knew the goodness of life in fellowship with God. After disobedience, they knew evil because they had personally entered into sin. The knowledge was therefore gained through experience.

They did not become God, receive Deity or become additional divine beings. The serpent had promised elevation, but their attempt to rise resulted in a fall.

This is the immediate context of the words *"the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil."* The statement describes what had happened to fallen humanity. It is not a definition of several divine persons within God.

The Result Was Death, Not Deity

The remainder of Genesis 3 confirms the seriousness of what had taken place. Moses wrote in **Genesis 3:23-24**:

> *"Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."*

Humanity did not rise into divine equality. Man was driven from the garden, access to the tree of life was restricted, and the result of sin was separation and death.

This stands in direct contrast with the life God later gives in Jesus Christ. John wrote in **1 John 5:11-12**:

> *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."*

Genesis shows humanity reaching beyond God's command and entering death. The Gospel shows God giving life: *"this life is in his Son."*

True life is not found in independence from God or in humanity attempting to become as gods. Eternal life is found in Jesus Christ.

Genesis 3:22 Does Not Define Three Divine Persons

Nothing in **Genesis 3:22** says that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are three divine persons speaking together. It does not say that three coequal divine persons comprise one God or that three eternal divine persons share the knowledge of good and evil.

Those ideas are not stated in this verse. The chapter consistently identifies *"the LORD God"* as the One speaking, commanding, judging and acting. The immediate subject is humanity's sinful acquisition of the knowledge of good and evil.

Therefore, **Genesis 3:22** must not be removed from its context and made into a definition of God.

Genesis 1:26 and Genesis 3:22 Have Different Settings

The fact that **Genesis 1:26** and **Genesis 3:22** both contain plural language does not mean that every detail must function identically in both accounts. Each account must first be understood within its own setting.

Genesis 1:26 concerns creation, the image of God and the eternal purpose in which the Church was hidden in God before being brought forth. **Genesis 3:22** concerns fallen humanity and the knowledge of good and evil acquired through disobedience.

What they have in common is that neither plural expression can be allowed to overturn the clear revelation that God is one.

The One God Remains One

Moses wrote in **Deuteronomy 6:4**:

> *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:"*

God also said in **Isaiah 45:5**:

> *"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:"*

Those direct declarations remain unchanged. The words *"one of us"* cannot establish several divine persons standing beside one another when God Himself says *"there is no God beside me."*

Genesis 3:22 therefore belongs to the account of humanity's fall. It shows that man crossed a God-given boundary, entered the knowledge of evil through personal disobedience and came under the consequence of death.

This account does not divide the one God. It shows the tragedy of humanity departing from His Word.

We have now examined the two principal plural expressions in Genesis: *"Let us make man in our image"* and *"the man is become as one of us."* We are now ready to bring together the interpretive principle that governs both verses: Plural language does not override clear singular declarations.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does **Genesis 3:22** *not establish several divine persons?*

Personal Reflection

Have you treated the plural words of **Genesis 3:22** *as proof of several Gods?*

Action Step

Compare them with God's repeated declarations that none is beside Him. State how this should correct your belief.

PLURAL LANGUAGE DOES NOT OVERRIDE CLEAR SINGULAR DECLARATIONS

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We have now examined the two principal plural expressions in Genesis: *"Let us make man in our image"* and *"the man is become as one of us."* Both verses contain real plural language, and that language must be preserved exactly as Scripture gives it. But neither verse can be interpreted apart from the direct and repeated declarations of Scripture concerning the identity of God.

The principle is straightforward: the difficult must be interpreted in harmony with the clear. An unexplained plural pronoun cannot be allowed to overturn a doctrine that Scripture states plainly and repeatedly.

Clear Statements Must Govern Difficult Expressions

Some verses make direct doctrinal declarations concerning God. Other verses contain expressions whose meaning must be understood from their context and from the wider testimony of Scripture.

When Moses writes *"The LORD our God is one LORD,"* he is making a direct statement concerning the identity of God. When God says *"there is none else"* and *"there is no God beside me,"* He is making direct declarations concerning Himself. When God says that He created *"alone"* and *"by myself,"* He is directly identifying Himself as the one Creator.

By contrast, the words *"us"* and *"our"* in Genesis require interpretation. Their presence is undeniable, but the pronouns themselves do not explain who is included in the plural expression. The clearer statements must therefore govern our understanding of the more difficult ones.

God Is One

Moses wrote in **Deuteronomy 6:4**:

> *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:"*

This is not an obscure verse requiring an elaborate explanation. It is a direct declaration: *"The LORD our God is one LORD."*

Whatever the plural language of Genesis means, it must agree with this foundation. The Bible does not establish one God through direct statements and then overturn that revelation through unexplained pronouns.

There Is None Else

God said in **Isaiah 45:5-6**:

> *"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else."*

God repeats the point several times: *"there is none else," "there is no God beside me,"* and *"there is none beside me."* These statements establish the absolute unity of God.

The plural language of Genesis therefore cannot be made to teach several divine persons existing beside the LORD as separate centres of Deity.

God Created Alone

God also said in **Isaiah 44:24**:

> *"Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;"*

This declaration is especially important when interpreting **Genesis 1:26**. God says *"I am the LORD that maketh all things."* He stretched forth the heavens *"alone"* and spread abroad the earth *"by myself."*

Therefore, the words *"Let us make man"* cannot establish several divine Creators working together. The one LORD says that He created alone. Genesis itself then confirms this by saying *"God created man in his own image."*

The actual work of creation is attributed to God in the singular.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do God's direct statements about His oneness guide the plural words in Genesis?

Personal Reflection

When you meet plural language in the Bible, do you first consider clear context or a familiar explanation?

Action Step

Identify a verse and explain how you will read it without contradicting God's own declarations.

The New Testament Continues the Same Testimony

The New Testament does not replace the Old Testament revelation of one God with a different doctrine.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 8:4**:

> *"As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one."*

Paul says *"there is none other God but one."* The apostolic testimony therefore continues the same one-God foundation established throughout the Old Testament.

Paul also wrote in **1 Timothy 2:5**:

> *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"*

Paul preserves both truths. There is *"one God,"* and there is *"one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."*

The genuine humanity and mediating work of Jesus Christ do not require a second divine person beside the one God. Paul expressly identifies the mediator as *"the man Christ Jesus."*

There Is One Spirit

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:4**:

> *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;"*

The statement is direct: *"one Spirit."* This must govern every reference to the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ and the Holy Ghost. Scripture does not reveal several divine Spirits.

Paul then wrote in **2 Corinthians 3:17**:

> *"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

The Lord is *"that Spirit."* The New Testament therefore continues to bring us back to the same one divine Spirit rather than introducing separate divine persons through different expressions.

The Difficult Must Fit the Clear

We can now state the interpretive principle plainly. Genesis says *"Let us make man,"* while Isaiah says *"I am the LORD that maketh all things."* Genesis says *"our image,"* and then says *"God created man in his own image."*

Genesis says *"one of us,"* while Deuteronomy says *"The LORD our God is one LORD."* These Scriptures must be allowed to stand together.

We do not interpret the direct statements concerning one God through the plural pronouns. We interpret the plural pronouns within the direct revelation that God is one. That is the proper order.

What the Plural Language Does Not Teach

The plural expressions in Genesis do not say that God consists of three divine persons, that three divine persons created humanity, that three coequal and coeternal persons share one divine essence, or that three divine centres of consciousness exist within the one God.

Those conclusions go beyond the wording of Genesis. The plural language is real, but plural language by itself is not a definition of the nature of God.

Doctrine concerning the identity of God must rest upon what Scripture actually establishes.

What the Clear Declarations Establish

The clear Scriptures establish that God is one, there is none beside Him, He created alone, He created by Himself, and there is one Spirit. Scripture also declares that God was in Christ, the Father dwelt in Jesus Christ, and the Lord is that Spirit.

These truths are explicit, repeated and consistent. The more difficult Scriptures must therefore remain within this foundation.

The Bible does not reveal three divine persons hidden behind the language of one God. It reveals one God who made Himself known in Jesus Christ and who now dwells within His people by His Spirit.

The plural language of Genesis does not overturn that revelation. It must be understood within it.

With that principle established, we are now ready to bring together the biblical language of Father, Son and Holy Ghost and state clearly what those expressions actually reveal.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must difficult plural expressions agree with the clear testimony of one God and one Spirit?

Personal Reflection

Have you allowed uncertainty over a difficult phrase to weaken your confidence that God is one Spirit?

Action Step

Read **Deuteronomy 6:4** *and* **Ephesians 4:4–6***. Explain the conviction you will hold while examining difficult expressions.*

WHAT THE FATHER, SON AND SPIRIT LANGUAGE ACTUALLY REVEALS

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We have now examined the principal verses in which the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are named together. We have also considered verses in which God and Jesus Christ are distinguished in the language of mediation, the witness language of 1 John 5, and the plural expressions found in Genesis.

When these Scriptures are brought together, one consistent revelation emerges. The biblical language of Father, Son and Holy Ghost does not divide the one God into three distinct divine persons. It reveals the one eternal God, His full revelation through the genuine human life of Jesus Christ, and His indwelling presence within His people by His Spirit.

The Father Is the Eternal Spirit

Jesus said in **John 4:24**:

> *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*

God is Spirit. Paul also described the one God in **1 Timothy 1:17**:

> *"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

The one God is eternal, immortal and invisible. These truths describe the One whom Jesus called the Father. The Father is the eternal Spirit, the one true God. Scripture does not present Him as one divine person standing beside other divine persons.

This gives us the proper foundation for understanding Father language throughout the New Testament. When Jesus speaks of the Father, He is speaking of the eternal Spirit who dwelt within Him and was revealed through His genuine human life.

The Word Was God and Was Made Flesh

John wrote in **John 1:1**:

> *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

John does not say that the Word was another God, nor does he say that the Word was a second eternal divine person beside God. He says plainly, *"the Word was God."*

John then wrote in **John 1:14**:

> *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."*

The Word that was God was made flesh. The one eternal God was therefore revealed through genuine human life in Jesus Christ.

This does not mean that the humanity of Jesus was unreal or that His human experiences were an appearance. Jesus Christ possessed complete and genuine humanity, including a real body, soul, mind, emotions and will. He grew, became weary, hungered, prayed, obeyed, suffered, shed His blood and died.

The Son must therefore never be reduced to the physical body alone. The Son is the complete and genuine human life of Jesus Christ through whom the one eternal God was revealed.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the Father as eternal Spirit and the Word made flesh explain God's revelation through Jesus?

Personal Reflection

Have you regarded the Father, Word and Holy Ghost as separate sources of Deity?

Action Step

Compare **John 1:1, 1***:14 and* **Romans 8:9***. Explain how the one-God revelation changes the way you know Jesus.*

God Was in Christ

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:19**:

> *"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."*

Paul's words are direct: *"God was in Christ."* The one God was not standing apart from Jesus Christ while another divine person carried out reconciliation. God Himself was in Christ, revealing Himself and accomplishing reconciliation through the genuine humanity of the man Christ Jesus.

This distinction is essential. The Father is the eternal Spirit, while the Son is the genuine human life through whom that eternal Spirit was revealed. The humanity was real, and the indwelling Deity was real. Neither truth should be weakened in order to preserve the other.

The Father Dwelt in Jesus Christ

Jesus explained this relationship Himself. Jesus said in **John 14:9-10**:

> *"Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."*

Jesus did not tell Philip that he needed to look beyond Him to see another visible divine person. He said *"he that hath seen me hath seen the Father,"* and then explained why: *"the Father that dwelleth in me."*

The invisible Father was made known through the visible human life of Jesus Christ because the Father, the eternal Spirit, dwelt within Him. To see Jesus was therefore to see the Father revealed through genuine humanity.

This also explains why Jesus could genuinely pray, obey, submit, suffer and fulfil the work of a mediator. Those experiences belonged to His genuine human life. They do not require us to divide the one God into separate divine persons.

All the Fulness of the Godhead Dwelt in Him

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:9-10**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

The word *"all"* is decisive. Paul says *"all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."* Nothing belonging to Deity was absent from Jesus Christ. The one true God was fully revealed in Him without division or deficiency. Paul's language must therefore be allowed to retain its full force: all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Jesus Christ.

Paul immediately adds *"ye are complete in him."* The believer's completeness is therefore directly connected with the fulness found in Jesus Christ.

The Holy Ghost Is the One Spirit of God and of Christ

Scripture is equally direct concerning the Spirit. Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:4-6**:

> *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

There is *"one Spirit," "One Lord,"* and *"One God and Father of all."* The Holy Ghost cannot therefore be another divine Spirit existing beside the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Christ. Scripture declares that there is one Spirit.

Paul makes the identity of that indwelling Spirit clear in **Romans 8:9-10**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."*

Paul moves directly from *"the Spirit of God"* to *"the Spirit of Christ"* and then to *"Christ be in you."* He is not describing three different indwelling divine persons. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and Christ dwells within the believer by that one Spirit.

Paul then states the identification even more directly in **2 Corinthians 3:17**:

> *"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

The words are unmistakable: *"the Lord is that Spirit."* The Holy Ghost is therefore not a third divine person who comes to the believer while Jesus Christ remains somewhere else. The risen Lord Himself dwells within His people by His Spirit.

The Born-Again Believer Receives Jesus Christ

This truth is not an abstract theological question. It reaches directly into the believer's experience of salvation.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:27**:

> *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"*

The New Covenant mystery is *"Christ in you."* The born-again believer does not first receive Jesus Christ and then wait for another divine person called the Holy Ghost to complete the experience. At the new birth, the believer receives Jesus Christ by His Spirit.

Paul had already shown in Romans 8 that a person who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. There is therefore no Scriptural room for a genuine believer who belongs to Christ but still lacks His Spirit. The believer possesses Christ within by His Spirit from the new birth.

That is why Paul can also say *"ye are complete in him."*

Complete means complete.

No second divine person, second Spirit or later spiritual experience is needed to supply something missing from Jesus Christ.

Father, Son and Holy Ghost Must Be Defined by Scripture

The expressions Father, Son and Holy Ghost are biblical and must remain part of our teaching. We must never remove Scriptural language simply because it has been used to support an inherited doctrine. Scripture itself must define its own words.

The Father is the eternal Spirit. The Son is the complete and genuine human life of Jesus Christ through whom that one eternal God was fully revealed. The Holy Ghost is that same one Spirit of God and of Christ dwelling within His people.

These Scriptural distinctions are real. The Father is not the Son in the sense that the eternal Spirit is not the genuine humanity through whom He was revealed. The Son prayed to the Father, obeyed the Father, suffered and died because His humanity was genuine.

At the same time, those distinctions do not divide Deity into separate divine persons. The Father dwelt in the Son, God was in Christ, all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Him, the Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and the Lord is that Spirit.

The distinctions belong within the revelation and saving work of the one God. Father language directs us to the eternal Spirit. Son language brings us to the genuine humanity in which that Spirit was revealed and through which redemption was accomplished. Holy Ghost language brings us to the same Spirit active in the New Covenant and dwelling within the born-again believer.

The expressions are not interchangeable in every sentence because Scripture uses them for different aspects of the revelation and saving work of God. Yet those differences never require more than one God or more than one divine Spirit.

The Scriptures Remain in Harmony

Throughout this module, we have examined the principal Scriptures commonly used to support the doctrine of three distinct divine persons. We have not ignored those Scriptures or removed their Scriptural distinctions.

Matthew 3 records Jesus in the Jordan, the visible sign descending like a dove and the voice from heaven. Yet the account does not define three coequal and coeternal divine persons. The water baptism had been completed, and the visible sign identified Jesus Christ as the One who would baptise in the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 28:19 names the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, but the verse does not say that these are three distinct divine persons within one God. **2 Corinthians 13:14** speaks of the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost, but it is a blessing concerning the believer's experience of salvation, not a formal definition of God's internal composition.

First John 5 speaks of witnesses, record and testimony concerning Jesus Christ. The words *"these three are one"* stand within that witness context and do not define three divine persons sharing one divine essence.

Genesis 1:26 says *"Let us make man in our image,"* but Scripture also says that the LORD created *"alone"* and *"by myself."* The *"us"* belongs to God's eternal purpose in which His Church was hidden before being brought forth.

Genesis 3:22 says *"the man is become as one of us,"* but its immediate subject is humanity's sinful acquisition of the knowledge of good and evil. None of these Scriptures overturns the direct declarations that God is one.

The Whole Bible Speaks With One Voice

Moses wrote *"The LORD our God is one LORD."* Isaiah records God saying *"there is none else."* John says *"the Word was God."*

Paul says *"God was in Christ."* Jesus says *"the Father that dwelleth in me."* Paul declares *"all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."*

Paul identifies *"the Spirit of God"* as *"the Spirit of Christ,"* and then declares *"the Lord is that Spirit."* These statements do not compete with one another. They belong together within one revelation.

The Father is the eternal Spirit. The Son is the genuine human life through whom that Spirit was fully revealed. The Holy Ghost is the same one Spirit of God and of Christ.

The revelation is one because the God being revealed is one. Everything therefore returns us to Jesus Christ. He is the image of the invisible God, God was in Him, the Father dwelt in Him, all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him, and that same Jesus Christ now dwells within His born-again people by His Spirit.

There is one God, fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

The Trinitarian Definition Does Not Agree With the Scriptural Revelation

Having examined the principal Scriptures, we can state the comparison plainly. The doctrine that the one God eternally exists as three distinct, coequal and coeternal divine persons is not taught by Scripture and does not agree with the Scriptural revelation established throughout this module.

Scripture declares one God and one Spirit. It identifies the Father as the eternal Spirit, says that the Word was God and was made flesh, declares that God was in Christ and that the Father dwelt in Him, and states that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him. Scripture also identifies the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Christ and declares that the Lord is that Spirit.

The biblical expressions Father, Son and Holy Ghost must therefore be preserved and defined by Scripture itself. Their distinctions are real, but they do not divide the one God into three divine persons. The one true God has been fully revealed in Jesus Christ and now dwells within His born-again people by His Spirit.

Jesus Christ Is Our Life in the Gospel Day

The final witness of the one God revealed in Jesus Christ also concerns how His people know Him today. The same Christ who was once seen and heard in genuine human flesh is now known through His indwelling Spirit. This truth is central to the Gospel Day, because believers possess Christ Himself rather than waiting to receive another divine person or a later spiritual experience.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:14-16**:

> *"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."*

The love of Christ that constrains believers is not an external religious influence. It is the life and love of Jesus Christ within those who are born again. Paul says that those who live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died and rose again. He then explains that Christ is no longer known *"after the flesh"*, as He was during His earthly ministry.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 3:4**:

> *"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."*

Christ is our life now. The Greek expression PHANEROTHE is connected with being made known or manifested. In the Gospel Day, Christ is revealed as His truth is opened to believers and His own life, light and love are expressed through His people. Their life displays His glory because He lives within them.

This teaching does not direct believers to a future physical second coming of Jesus Christ. His promised return was fulfilled at Pentecost in A.D. 31, when He came as the Holy Spirit to dwell

within His people. The Scriptures concerning His appearing must be understood in harmony with that completed coming and the present revelation of His life.

The whole witness returns us to the Person of Jesus Christ. God was in Christ, the Father dwelt in Him, and the risen Lord is that Spirit who now lives in the believer. The Church is the visible expression of His indwelling life, not a people attempting to reproduce Christ's character by outward imitation.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Christ's coming at Pentecost relate to His life now being revealed through His people?

Personal Reflection

Have you imagined that Jesus remains absent from His people until a future physical coming?

Action Step

Read His promise 'I will come to you' alongside the Pentecost teaching. Explain how His present indwelling should change your trust.

CONCLUSION: ONE GOD FULLY REVEALED IN JESUS CHRIST

BACK TO CONTENTS

We began this Study Guide by asking what the whole testimony of Scripture reveals concerning God. We have considered the united witness of the New Testament, the plural expressions in Genesis, and the biblical language of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. When these Scriptures are allowed to stand together, the conclusion remains consistent from beginning to end.

There is one true God, and that one God has been fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

The One-God Foundation Remains Unchanged

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 8:4**:

> *"As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one."*

Nothing examined in this Study Guide overturns that declaration. The plural language of Genesis does not reveal several divine Creators, and the Scriptures that speak of Father, Son and Holy Ghost do not redefine the one God as three distinct divine persons.

Genesis 1:26 must remain in harmony with the declaration that the LORD created alone and by Himself. The *"us"* belongs within the eternal purpose of the one God, in which His Church was hidden before being brought forth, just as Eve was hidden in Adam before she was revealed. **Genesis 3:22** likewise belongs to the account of humanity's fall and the knowledge of good and evil, not to a definition of several divine persons.

The clear foundation remains: *"there is none other God but one."*

All the Fulness Dwells in Jesus Christ

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:9-10**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

This brings the whole Study Guide to its central truth. All the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Jesus Christ. Nothing belonging to Deity is absent from Him.

The Father is the eternal Spirit, while the Son is the complete and genuine human life through whom that one God was revealed. Jesus Christ truly lived as man, prayed, obeyed, suffered, shed His blood and died. Yet within that genuine humanity dwelt all the fulness of Deity.

That is why Jesus could say that the Father dwelt in Him and that the one who had seen Him had seen the Father. It is also why Paul could declare that *"God was in Christ."* Jesus Christ is not a partial revelation of God. The invisible God was fully made known through Him.

The Holy Ghost Is the One Spirit of God and of Christ

The same one-God revelation continues in the born-again believer. The God who was revealed in Jesus Christ now dwells within His people by His Spirit.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9-10**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."*

Paul moves from *"the Spirit of God"* to *"the Spirit of Christ"* and then to *"Christ be in you."* He is describing one indwelling Spirit and one indwelling reality.

Paul then wrote in **2 Corinthians 3:17**:

> *"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

The risen Lord is not absent while another divine person takes His place. Jesus Christ Himself dwells within His born-again people by His Spirit. This is the fulfilled New Covenant reality: Christ in you.

The Scriptural Revelation Is One

The Scriptural testimony can therefore be stated plainly. There is one God, and the Father is the eternal Spirit. The Word was God and was made flesh, and the Son is the complete and genuine human life of Jesus Christ through whom the one God was revealed.

God was in Christ, the Father dwelt in Him, and all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, the Lord is that Spirit, and Jesus Christ dwells within the born-again believer by His Spirit.

These truths belong together. They do not require us to divide the one God into three distinct divine persons. They reveal the one God making Himself known through Jesus Christ and dwelling within His people by His Spirit.

The greatest conclusion of this Study Guide is therefore not simply the rejection of an incorrect theological definition. It is the positive truth of whom we know: we know Jesus Christ.

In Him the invisible God has been revealed. In Him all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily. Through His genuine humanity redemption was accomplished, and by His Spirit He now lives within His born-again people.

Because all the fulness is in Him, the believer does not need to look beyond Jesus Christ for another divine person, another Spirit or another revelation to complete what has already been received. Paul says *"ye are complete in him."*

That is where this Study Guide must finish:

There is one true God. That one God is fully revealed in Jesus Christ, and the born-again believer is complete in Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the one God fully revealed in Christ and the believer's completeness in Him belong together?

Personal Reflection

Have you felt spiritually incomplete because of something beyond the Jesus Christ you received at the new birth?

Action Step

Reflect on **Colossians 2:9–10** *and explain how this truth should correct your expectations and govern your confidence.*

CONCLUSION OF THE MODULE - ONE GOD IN JESUS CHRIST

BACK TO CONTENTS

We began this module with one foundational question: Who is God, and how has He revealed Himself? Through these ten Study Guides, we have followed the testimony of Moses, the prophets, Jesus Christ and the apostles. We have examined the one true God, the Word made flesh, the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ, His obedience and exaltation, the Father dwelling within Him, the Holy Ghost, the principal Father-Son-Spirit verses, the witnesses of 1 John 5, and the plural expressions of Genesis.

After bringing that testimony together, the foundation remains unchanged. There is one true God. That God is Spirit, and He has revealed Himself fully through the genuine human life of Jesus Christ.

There Is One True God

Moses wrote in **Deuteronomy 6:4**:

> *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:"*

This declaration has remained the foundation throughout the entire module. God repeatedly declares that there is none else and no God beside Him, while the New Testament continues the same testimony by declaring that *"there is none other God but one."*

The coming of Jesus Christ does not overturn the oneness of God. Jesus Christ reveals who that one God is. Scripture does not require us to choose between the truth that God is one and the truth that Jesus Christ fully reveals Him. Those truths belong together because the one invisible God made Himself known through genuine humanity.

The One God Was Fully Revealed in Jesus Christ

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:9-10**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

This brings the entire module to its centre: all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Jesus Christ. The Father is the eternal Spirit, while the Son is the complete and genuine human life through whom that Spirit was revealed.

The Son was not an appearance of humanity. Jesus Christ truly possessed a human body, soul, mind, emotions and will. He grew, prayed, obeyed, suffered, shed His blood and died. His humanity was real, and the Deity dwelling within Him was equally real.

This is why Jesus could say that *"the Father that dwelleth in me"* did the works. It is why He could tell Philip that the one who had seen Him had seen the Father, and why Paul could declare that *"God was in Christ."* The invisible God was not another visible person standing beside Jesus Christ. He was revealed through Him.

The prayers, obedience, suffering and mediating work of Jesus therefore do not divide God into separate divine persons. They testify to the genuine humanity of the Son through whom the one eternal God accomplished His saving work.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the one Creator and His full revelation in Jesus agree throughout the module's testimony?

Personal Reflection

Have you ever allowed the reality of Jesus' human life to obscure that the LORD created alone?

Action Step

Compare the creation testimony with the Word made flesh. State how both should shape your worship of the one Creator.

The Holy Ghost Is the One Spirit of God and of Christ

The revelation does not end with God manifested in Jesus Christ. The New Testament shows that the same Lord now dwells within His born-again people by His Spirit.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9-10**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."*

Paul moves directly from *"the Spirit of God"* to *"the Spirit of Christ"* and then to *"Christ be in you."* These expressions do not identify different divine Spirits. They describe the same indwelling reality.

Paul makes the identification still clearer in **2 Corinthians 3:17**:

> *"Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."*

There is one Spirit. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and the Lord is that Spirit. The Holy Ghost is therefore not another divine person who comes to the believer in addition to Jesus Christ. The risen Lord Himself dwells within His people by His Spirit.

This is the New Covenant reality expressed in the words *"Christ in you."*

Complete in Jesus Christ

The Scriptural revelation established throughout this module can therefore be stated plainly. There is one God, and that God is Spirit. The Father is the eternal Spirit, the Word was God and was made flesh, and Jesus Christ possessed complete and genuine humanity.

God was in Christ, the Father dwelt in Him, and all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him. The Holy Ghost is the one Spirit of God and of Christ, the Lord is that Spirit, and Jesus Christ dwells within the born-again believer by His Spirit. These truths belong together as one consistent Scriptural revelation centred in Jesus Christ.

The final message of this module, however, is greater than identifying what Scripture does not teach. The purpose is to know the One whom Scripture reveals.

If all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Jesus Christ, then nothing belonging to Deity is absent from Him. If Jesus Christ dwells within the born-again believer by His Spirit, then the believer is complete in Him and does not require another Spirit or a later spiritual experience to complete what has already been received.

Paul says *"ye are complete in him."*

Our confidence therefore rests entirely in Jesus Christ. We do not need to look beyond Him to find another divine person who completes our knowledge of God. We do not need another Spirit beyond the Spirit of Christ, and we do not need another revelation beyond the One in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily.

To know Jesus Christ is to know the Father revealed. To receive Jesus Christ is to receive His Spirit. To have Jesus Christ dwelling within is to possess the life that comes from God.

The whole module therefore finishes where Scripture continually directs us: there is one true God, that one God has revealed Himself fully in Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ dwells within His born-again people by His Spirit, and the believer is complete in Him.

Know Him. Believe Him. Receive Him. Walk by His life within.

One God in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do Christ within and completeness in Him bring the testimony of one God to its saving purpose?

Personal Reflection

What truth from this module most needs to affect how you know and follow Jesus Christ?

Action Step

Name one assumption to correct and one area where the life of Christ within should govern your response, without treating it as an effort to obtain more of Him.

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

Explain how the Gospels, the Word made flesh, and the apostles' witness reveal the one God in Jesus Christ. Why must the full testimony be heard together?

2. Understanding

How should **Genesis 1:26** *be read with Isaiah's statement that the LORD created alone? Explain what the plural words state and what they do not define.*

3. Personal Reflection

Has the united testimony about the one God corrected an assumption you held about the plural words in Genesis or about Father, Son, and Spirit? Explain what changed and why.

4. Response to Truth

If someone uses 'one of us' in **Genesis 3:22** *to define several divine persons, how would you answer from the account of the fall and the knowledge of good and evil? Explain what this means for the way you decide what to believe about God.*

5. Action Step

What specific belief about the one God fully revealed in Jesus needs correcting or strengthening, and which Bible verses will you use to examine it?

6. Early Response

Have you examined that belief against the Bible yet? If so, what has changed in your trust in Jesus? If not, what has prevented you from beginning?

7. Ongoing Practice

What will help you continue to read plural expressions with their context and the Bible's clear statements about one God? Explain how you will use this care in future study.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

How do the Father dwelling in Jesus and the Spirit of God being the Spirit of Christ explain His coming to dwell in believers at Pentecost? Explain why the present revelation of His life in His people differs from expecting a future physical return.

9. Living the Truth

In a conversation about the 'us' of Genesis, how would you use its context and the New Testament witness to explain the one God revealed in Jesus? Use a verse that supports your answer.

10. Final Response

How do the one Creator, the Word made flesh, and the Spirit dwelling in believers give one united testimony about Jesus Christ? Explain what being complete in Him means to you and what response you are considering.