

WHAT MANNER OF GOD
Thoughts on the Identity of Christ
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After Jesus calmed a violent storm by speaking a few words, His disciples asked a very interesting question. "What manner of man is this?" And he was indeed a man, at least when He died. But He died. So another interesting question might be, "What manner of God is this?" He was indeed God, while He walked upon the earth and even now.

I want to examine, through a glass darkly, what this miraculous combination of God and man must have been. I want to examine the oneness of God versus the plural natures of God, insomuch as each was evidenced in the life of this "man." Before I do so, I need to explain some things.

The thoughts and conclusions put forth in this essay were not arrived at lightly and have come as a result of many thoughts and much prayer. I long ago came to the absolute belief that all scripture was inspired by a God who cannot and will not lie. Therefore it really bothered me to notice so many scriptures which seemed to contradict one another. Since there are literally hundreds to indicate one answer and hundreds leading to a different conclusion, the question begs to be asked. Is there one person called God or are there multiple persons that together make up God? Is there an inherent contradiction on this subject in the Bible?

I believe any conflict in my understanding of scriptures stems from my misunderstanding of some or all of those scriptures. The alternative is to either believe God lied in some of His holy Word or to believe He was not really responsible for some or all of the scriptures. Luckily we are given a remedy to confusion. A scripture in James tells us to ask of God when we lack understanding. Since I desired to know to whom or to what I would be wed for all eternity, I prayed many years for understanding on this subject.

One night after such a prayer, I had a dream. In that dream, God spoke to me and gave me a very simple answer. I will share that answer shortly. Before sharing my understanding regarding the nature of my Savior, I wish to clarify two more items.

The first of these is my reliance on the King James Version of the Bible for my understanding. King James hired many scholars of ancient languages to translate ancient texts into English. These came together in a multitude of counsel and had to agree together on the meaning and translation of each scripture before it was finalized. Moreover, that was hundreds of years closer in time to the actual use of those languages. To have someone who does not speak those languages expound to me how, "in the original Greek (or Hebrew)," the scriptures actually say something different than the scholars hired by the King believed, is faintly ludicrous. If I could read the scriptures as originally written, I would. But I cannot do so. So I use the KJV of the scriptures as the earliest I have available to me, of the scholarly translations of those original texts.

The second thing I wish to emphasize is my total unwillingness to argue. I am well aware what will follow will disturb many of both persuasions. I have no control over how others will receive what I write. If anyone has a better understanding of the nature of God, I am open to such, so long as it encompasses every word on the subject inspired by God in the scriptures. I am not interested in doctrinal statements devised by men. I have most likely already read them in my search for understanding. I do not pretend to have the final answer to the subject, but I might have a few new thoughts. I breathed upon it and cleaned the glass a bit and find I am still looking through a glass darkly. If I am allowed to share eternity with a holy God, and you are as well, we will surely get a more perfect understanding then.

This was the answer that came to me in my dream. "I already told you what I was. Look again where I said, 'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'" I immediately awoke and my response was, "Of course." This was the sequence of my thoughts. They feel right to me. I hope they also feel like truth to you as well.

This area of scripture in the **first chapter in John** clearly tells us God is the same as what we call His Word. The same Word that made everything was both part and parcel of God (was God) and could somehow be separated and be independent of God (with God). Apparently God has the ability to split Himself into parts.

This principle of the Word being separated from God temporarily is clearly described in **Isaiah 55:11**, where God's Word goes out from His mouth and does not return back to Him void. It accomplishes what God pleases and prospers in the thing for which He sent it. Follow that carefully. God sends His Word out from

Himself (separate from Him) to accomplish a specific purpose before it returns again to Him. If the Word is indeed God, then part of God is sent from God to accomplish a specific task, and it will return to God once that task is complete.

I have come to believe what is being described as the “Word” of God is perhaps best described as the power and authority which makes the one we worship to be God. It is why what He says always comes to pass. He is the author of creation and as such, He alone has the right and power to change it, hence His author (ity) over it. It is subject to Him alone. That incredible creative power and authority resides in Him and it is what makes Him God. Without that power and authority, He would not be much of a God. It is in Him, it is with Him, and it is Him. All power in Heaven and Earth resides in Him, embodied and described as His Word.

How curious then that Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, that all power in heaven and earth was given to Him. Unless He was, just like the scripture said, the Word of God, wrapped in flesh, and sent to the earth for a purpose. Why would He have been sent? Well, before the worlds were formed, it was ordained He would die as a sacrifice to end all other sacrifices for sin. He came to die. He also came to establish the Church, the bride of Christ, which will be an eternal companion for God.

What happens when those purposes are fulfilled? Will the Word, temporarily separated from God, return back to God having accomplished its purpose? **1 Corinthians 15:28** tells us, “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” Unless I have no comprehension at all of language, the Son referred to in this passage, after everything is under His subjection, will return the authority given to Him, back to God, who until then, will not be, all in all. Wow! That sounds like, until this happens, God is temporarily not all in all. He is not all powerful, but part of Him, His Word, the authority which Makes Him God, has been split off for a purpose and for a while.

Suppose I had the power to split myself into three or four separate men, so I could truly multitask? One would wash the dishes while another wrote, another cut the grass, and one napped. That sounds good to me; don’t interrupt my daydream. When all these parts of me came back together, would I then be one person, one identity, or four? While I was separated, would I have ceased to be one individual? Even though all four parts of me were doing separate predetermined tasks? I submit that I would still have one identity. If part of me died, could another part of me resuscitate or resurrect the body that had perished or stopped breathing? Probably! But when we all got back together in one body, I would still be one person with one identity, though I had split parts of myself off for different purposes, sending them away from me to do their appointed tasks before returning.

Do I have other reasons to believe God had the power and did divide Himself into different parts for different reasons? There are many in the scriptures, such as **Hebrews 6:13**, where God swore by Himself, since there was no one greater. The Father spoke to Jesus in the baptismal waters of Jordan. Jesus cried to God as He died. Together, the Word and God created the universe and made man in their image. Yet, John said in **John 1:3** that everything made was made by Jesus. That makes sense only if Jesus was the Word, the authority of God, not just some recently formed flesh.

The centurion in the **seventh chapter of Luke** touched on this understanding of the identity of Jesus. He told Jesus he too was a man of authority. He was used to having the men subject to his power, do as he commanded them, even after they left his presence. So he knew that Jesus could also just send his **Word**, His authority, and the man’s servant would be healed. The soldier recognized the power to change reality and creation could be sent out from Jesus in the form of words. After He calmed the storm and altered creation with His words, His disciples began to understand the embodied authority and power in the Word of God. Even the part of it, now separated from God for a while, now wrapped in flesh, now sleeping in their boat.

Was Jesus God? Yes He was, to the extent that all the power that made God who he was, lay resident within the flesh created for a sacrifice. We were not told in **Colossians 2:9** that all of God dwelt in Christ, but rather the fullness of the Godhead. In Jesus was the full measure of what made God who He was. I believe it is His power and authority that does that. And we were assured; all of it dwelt in the person, in the body of Christ.

Was the Holy Ghost also an aspect of God? I believe it to be another part of God, of the Word, of His power, separated out and sent for a different purpose than that of the portion of God named Jesus. In **John 14:17-20**, it is described as the Spirit of Truth, who the disciples already knew, since it lived with them (Jesus). And it would dwell within them in the future. Jesus promised He would come back to them in another form, as the Comforter. When that happened, they would know Jesus was in the Father, that they were in Him, and He was in them. They would have the authority of Jesus (the Word) that came from God, also living within them. A

piece of God, in each of them, separated out for a time until it brought them back to God. Paul said in **Romans 8:11** that if the same Spirit lived in us that raised Jesus from the dead, it would also raise us from the dead. Consider the numbers that have been filled with His Spirit. If every part of God separate from Him were considered a separate person of the Godhead, there would be millions, not three.

The apparent timeless nature of God also answers some apparent contradictions about His nature. We know that God must exist outside of time or that time must exist within God. Jesus claimed the impossible in **John 8:58**. He claimed to be existing before Abraham lived, at the same time as He was speaking with the disciples. Over forty Bible scholars left a grammatical impossibility in place in the scriptures, unless what He claimed was exactly true. The God contained within the flesh spanned time and could interact with anyone in the time stream He desired to, any time He wished. That hurts my head to imagine.

What possibilities come into play with a God that spans all the time of our existence and all eternity. He could appear and disappear at will by simply shifting from one moment and reappearing in another. More to the point of our discussion, He could be crucified in one form that was subject to the bounds of time. But once that body was glorified, it could span all of time as well, instantly appearing with God ages before to be the voice that spoke the universe into existence. Thus Adam could truly have been formed in God's image, were the now equally timeless body of Jesus Christ there. The Holy Ghost, appearing in that form after the death of Jesus, would also be timeless. Thus it could move on holy men of old to write the books of the Old Testament.

The timeless nature of God, with very little imagination, provides many answers to questions about multiple aspects of God seeming coexisting at the same time. Or at least, as we perceive time. And to reconcile scriptures, we must have an answer as to why Jesus would cry out to God, if they were the same entity. I submit that in that moment of our time, they were indeed separated.

Unquestionably, there have been multiple aspects of God, which have appeared at different points in our history, for different reasons. As God, the Father, or Jehovah, He is the law giver, the holy righteous one, the Judge. As Jesus Christ, he is the law refiner, the advocate, the ultimate sacrifice, and the worst sinner at the moment of His death, though none of the sin was His own. As the Holy Ghost, He was the law internalized, the comforter, the guide to lead us back to Himself for all eternity.

Yet, scripture leaves no question that there is but one God. An all knowing God in **Isaiah 44:8** declared, "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any." There are many scriptures along this line. God's basic command to Israel was, "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." They were to be distinguished from other people by their understanding of one God. And God never changes.

Perhaps the greatest proof of the real nature of Jesus lies in the scripture most often used to argue the existence of a Trinity. In **Matthew 28:18-19**, Jesus spoke to His disciples. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Yet, every disciple interpreted this the same way and baptized in the name of Jesus. Peter, the disciple given the keys to the kingdom of God, taught baptism in Jesus name as part of the combination to get in. He did so with all three classes of people alive; the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Gentiles. Perhaps the reason why lies in another apostle's account of the same incident before Jesus left the earth. In **Luke 24:44-47**, the same instructions are recorded as instructions that remission of sins would be accomplished in the name of Jesus. But this was after Jesus had opened their understanding of everything the scriptures had to say about Himself. Afterwards, they all interpreted **the** name of the father, **the** name of the son, and **the** name of the Holy Ghost to be Jesus, and baptized accordingly. In other words, with their enhanced understanding, they all understood these three to be the same God.

Let me close with this concept. In the creation of man, we were supposedly created in the image of God, both male and female.

We have long known we have at least three components ourselves. We have a physical body with which others can interact and by which others see us. We have a spirit, probably the residual breath of God left within us after we were breathed into by a Spirit. It is to guide us back to God. And we have a soul, comprised of our basic identity, our memories, thoughts, and our will. I possess all three of these components, but I am one individual. I have only one ultimate identity.

Suppose we were indeed created in God's image? Suppose the core identity, His will and mind and thoughts, are represented by that portion of Him we call the Father. The body would obviously be Jesus Christ. The Spirit would be analogous to our own. Yet, there would be only one God with one ultimate identity.

I believe these separate aspects of God were split away from Him for specific purposes in our timeline. Once set aside for their purposes, they also became eternal aspects of God and appear all through that same timeline. They were sent out for reasons, and when those purposes are completed, the power and authority vested by God in them will be returned back to God.

What will happen to those manifestations of God at that point, I do not know. I see through a glass darkly. But I am relieved to know the God I will love for all eternity will only be one God. I hope He will still be housed in the body of Jesus Christ. When His hand is in mine, I want to feel the scars that evidence His love for me.