

# Some Basics on the Trinity

Karl Kemp; April 2017

All quotations were taken from the NASB, 1995 edition. For more information see my papers: *Who Do We Worship? Oneness/Jesus Only Worship Songs; Who Do We Pray To?; The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son; More on the Trinity; Harlot of Babylon According to Irvin Baxter - Trinity and Oneness; Preeminent Role of God the Father in the Trinity; and Will We See God the Father after We Are Glorified?*

I have observed over the years that many (or most) Christians have a problem with learning a few verses that "prove" (at least they think they prove) a particular viewpoint and then closing their minds. This causes a serious problem if we are holding wrong viewpoints, viewpoints that don't line up with the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. Yes, we could be wrong!

1. The New Testament consistently speaks of the three distinct Persons of the Trinity who interact with one another, including speaking to one another and about one another, and loving one another with an infinite love. This relationship existed before creation began, and it will exist in the eternal state that follows the millennial kingdom. However, even though we don't know enough to fully understand the Trinity (it hasn't been fully revealed), we know that the three Persons are not totally independent of one another: We do not have three Gods! For one very important detail, GOD THE FATHER HAS A PREEMINENT ROLE IN THE TRINITY! I DON'T BELIEVE WE CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT THE TRINITY WITHOUT SEEING THE PREEMINENT ROLE OF GOD THE FATHER! BUT WE MUST ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE DEITY WITH THE FATHER IN A TOTALLY FULL SENSE! (See my paper *God the Father Has a Preeminent Role in the Trinity.*) For one thing, as the New Testament shows, we should typically pray to God the Father. (See my paper: *Who Do We Pray To?*) It seems clear to me that we should worship the Father first and foremost (cf., e.g., John 4:23-24). Each Person has His roles. For example, God the Father is the Creator, but He created through the Son, and it is clear that the Spirit is active in creation, in regenerating (new birth), in making holy, etc. It is quite possible that the omnipresence of the Trinity is accomplished through the Spirit. Apparently He doesn't have a body.

2. It is quite important to understand that the word "God" (Greek *theos*), which is used 1,267 times in the New Testament (NASB) ("God's" is used 27 times), is almost always used of God the Father. If this were not this way, it would be quite difficult to understand

the New Testament. However, it is extremely important that the word *theos* is used a few places in the New Testament for the Son of God (see John 1:1; 20:28; and Heb. 1:8): This strongly confirms His deity!

**3. JOHN 1:1: In the Beginning** [before any creating had taken place] **was the Word** [a title for the Son of God, who, according to John 1:14, "became flesh" through the virgin birth], **and the Word was with God** [The word "God" has the definite article here; it refers to God the Father, who is the one typically called "God" throughout the New Testament. The Word, the Son of God, was with God the Father before any creating took place. They always existed above the time system of our created world.], **and the Word was God** [Here the word "God," without the definite article, communicates the super-important fact that the Son of God is DEITY with the Father (and the Holy Spirit). It is clear that John wasn't equating the Word, the Son of God, with God the Father. Two Persons are mentioned here. For one thing, the Word was *with* God the Father. John 1:3 goes on to show that God the Father created through the Son (cf., e.g., Rev. 4:11; Col. 1:16).

**4. DEUTERONOMY 6:4. Hear, O Israel! The LORD** [Yahweh in Hebrew] **is our God, the LORD** [Yahweh] **is one!** (This verse is discussed in some detail in my *More on the Trinity*.) The interpretation of this verse is extremely important! This is the number one verse used by those who believe in a oneness view of God (that denies the Trinity and claims there is only one Person) to argue for that viewpoint. Also, many who believe in the Trinity wrongly (wrongly from my point of view) use this verse and the concept of oneness (it's true that we don't have three Gods) to dilute the clear teaching on the three Persons of the Trinity. Many who believe in the Trinity overstate the oneness of God and come up with ideas like God the Father cannot have a preeminent role in the Trinity, which is incompatible with their overstatement of the oneness of God. (See my *Preeminent Role of God the Father in the Trinity*.)

I DON'T BELIEVE DEUTERONOMY 6:4 SAYS ANYTHING ABOUT THE TRINITY, which wasn't clearly revealed in the Old Testament. "Yahweh" here refers to the One we call God the Father. The name "Yahweh" is typically used of God the Father in the Old Testament, even as the word "God" is typically used of Him in the New Testament, but it is very significant that Yahweh is used on occasion for the Son of God in the Old Testament, which strongly confirms His deity. However, the existence of the Son of God and His deity, or the Trinity, wasn't clear at all in the days of the Old Testament. We needed the appearance of the Son of God and the revelation contained in the New Testament to understand the Son of God and His deity, and the Trinity. (See my paper *The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son*.)

In Jesus' day the Jews did not believe in the deity of the Messiah or in the Trinity. DEUTERONOMY 6:4 WAS WRITTEN TO MAKE THE SUPER-IMPORTANT, SUPER-

CONTROVERSIAL POINT THAT YAHWEH, THE GOD OF CREATION, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISRAEL, AND MOSES, THE GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, WAS THE ONLY ONE OF ALL THE "GODS" THAT REALLY WAS GOD. (It is easy to understand that that viewpoint was hated by those who worshipped the other gods, even as the view that Jesus is the Son of God and that the only way to be saved and come to the Father is through Him is hated in our day.) Every other nation believed that there were many gods (polytheism).

A note in the margin of my NASB at Deut. 6:4 mentions Deut. 4:35 and 39. I believe these verses demonstrate the meaning intended in Deut. 6:4. I'll quote DEUTERONOMY 4:35, 39: **To you [Israel] it was shown that you might know that the LORD [Yahweh], He is God; THERE IS NO OTHER BESIDES HIM [my emphasis].** And Deut. 4:39, **Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; THERE IS NO OTHER [my emphasis].** A note in the NIV at Deut. 6:4 is helpful: For the last three words of this verse it has **the LORD alone** instead of **the LORD is one**.

5. In my paper *More on the Trinity* I list and discuss some other passages besides Deut. 6:4 that have been used to teach a oneness view of God: Isa. 9:6; John 10:30; 12:44-45; 14:7, 9-11 (I included a section there to list and discuss many verses from the Gospel of John that demonstrate that God the Father and the Son of God are distinct Persons.); Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 1 Cor. 12:13 with Matt. 28:19 (all referring to water baptism); 1 Cor. 8:4 with 8:5-6; and Col. 2:8-10. I won't discuss any of these passages here, but I believe that all of them fit quite well with the Trinity.

6. We will look at some verses in the New Testament where the word "God" is clearly reserved for God the Father. I BELIEVE THESE VERSES ARE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT! It is very significant that every one of these verses mention both God the Father and the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, two distinct Persons. These verses help confirm what I said re. Deut. 6:4, and they very strongly demonstrate the preeminent role of God the Father in the Trinity.

JOHN 17:3. **This is eternal life, that they may know You [Jesus was speaking/praying to the Father here], THE ONLY TRUE GOD [my emphasis], and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.** It must be understood, however, that the Bible, and especially the New Testament, makes it very clear that the Son of God (and the Holy Spirit) is fully deity with God the Father.

ROMANS 16:27. **to THE ONLY WISE GOD [my emphasis], through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.**

1 CORINTHIANS 8:4-6. **Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that THERE**

**IS NO GOD BUT ONE** [my emphasis, referring to God the Father]. **(5) For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords** [Those that really exist are part of Satan's kingdom.], **yet FOR US THERE IS BUT ONE GOD, THE FATHER** [my emphasis] **from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by [through] whom are all things, and we exist through Him.**

EPHESIANS 4:4-6. **There is one body** [the Body of Christ, the church] **and one Spirit** [the Holy Spirit], **just as you were called in one hope of your calling; (5) one Lord** [the Lord Jesus], **one faith, one baptism** [referring to water baptism], **(6) ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL WHO IS OVER ALL AND THROUGH ALL AND IN ALL** [my emphasis].

1 TIMOTHY 2:5. **FOR THERE IS ONE GOD** [my emphasis, referring to God the Father], **and one mediator also between God** [God the Father] **and men, the man** [the God-man] **Christ Jesus,**

1 TIMOTHY 6:13-16. **I charge you in the presence of God** [God the Father], **who gives life to all things, and of Jesus Christ, who confessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, (14) that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, (15) which He** [God the Father, the One with the preeminent role in the Trinity] **will bring about at the proper time - He who is the blessed and ONLY SOVEREIGN** [my emphasis, referring to God the Father], **the King of kings and Lord of lords** [These words can also be used of the Lord Jesus (Rev. 17:14; 19:16), which confirms His deity.], **(16) who** [referring to God the Father] **alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see.** [I believe we will see God the Father after we are glorified. See my paper on this topic.] **To Him** [God the Father] **be honor and ETERNAL DOMINION** [my emphasis]! **Amen.**

JUDE 1:24-25. **Now to Him** [God the Father] **who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, (25) to THE ONLY GOD** [my emphasis, referring to God the Father] **our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.**

7. FOUR MORE SIGNIFICANT PASSAGES THAT DEMONSTRATE THE PREEMINENT ROLE OF GOD THE FATHER IN THE TRINITY. The first one listed here is extra powerful.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:25-28. **For He** [the Lord Jesus] **must reign** [which refers to His end-time reign when the Father sends Him to save and to judge at the end of this age] **until He has put all His enemies under His feet** [[It must be understood that the

Father will also be very active in the saving and judging that will take place at the end of this age (see Psalm 110:1 with Heb. 10:13 for example, and see my paper *Will We See God the Father after We are Glorified? When is the Father Coming According to the Book of Revelation? Includes Detailed Studies of 1 John 2:26-3:3 and James 5:7-8* [This is all one paper]).]. **(26) The last enemy that will be abolished is death** [Revelation 20:13-14 show that death will not be totally overthrown until the end of the millennial kingdom.]. **(27) FOR HE** [God the Father, who has the preeminent authority] **HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET** [the feet of the Lord Jesus]. **But when He** [or "it"] **says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He** [God the Father] **is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him** [the Lord Jesus]. **(28) When all things are subjected to Him** [the Lord Jesus], **then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One** [God the Father] **who subjected all things to Him, so that God** [God the Father] **may be all in all.** The book of Revelation makes it clear that the Lord Jesus will continue to reign with God the Father in the eternal state (cf., e.g., Rev. 22:1), BUT THE FATHER WILL CLEARLY HAVE THE PREEMINENT ROLE IN THE TRINITY. IT CANNOT BE OTHERWISE! THIS IS ETERNAL REALITY! I am totally confident that the Lord Jesus (and the Holy Spirit) loves and strongly promotes the preeminent role of God the Father.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:3. **But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and GOD** [God the Father] **IS THE HEAD OF CHRIST** [my emphasis].

PHILIPPIANS 2:6. **who** [referring in context to the Son of God before He became the God-man through His incarnation], **although He existed in the form of God** [in that He always was deity with the Father (and the Holy Spirit)], **did not regard equality with God** [God the Father] **a thing to be grasped.** Instead of grasping for equality with God the Father, He was totally in agreement with the Father's preeminent role in the Trinity. I believe we can say that He, in humility and with infinite love, has always rejoiced and boasted in the preeminent role of the Father. As the next two verses show, instead of grasping for more, He greatly humbled Himself to obey the Father and do His will, even though the assignment was EXTREMELY HUMBLING AND DIFFICULT. But He knew that He was doing the Father's will and that He was saving us and overthrowing and removing the devil and all who follow him from God's kingdom forever. In that context the apostle Paul was exhorting Christians to be humble and obedient.

REVELATION CHAPTERS 4 AND 5. (Revelation chapters 1-10 are discussed verse-by-verse in a paper on my internet site [Google to Karl Kemp Teaching.]) I'll just quote REVELATION 4:2-4, 11 and 5:7. We can clearly see the two Persons, God the Father and the Son of God, in these verses, and the preeminent role of God the Father.] **Immediately I** [the apostle John] **was in the Spirit** [when he was caught up to heaven

as part of his receiving the super-important content of the book of Revelation]; **and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.** [[As we continue it is confirmed that God the Father is the One sitting on the throne. No surprise here! In chapter 5 the Son of God, the resurrected Lamb of God (Rev. 5:5-6), comes and takes the scroll from God the Father (Rev. 5:1-10). The scroll contains the plans of God the Father (the Person with the preeminent role in the Trinity) to save and to judge the world through the Lord Jesus and His all-important atoning death and resurrection, with a strong emphasis on the things that will take place at the end of this age. The scroll also contains some super-important revelation regarding the millennial kingdom (Revelation chapter 20) and the eternal state that follows the millennial kingdom (Revelation chapters 21-22).] **(3) And He** [God the Father] **who was sitting** [on the throne] **was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance** [radiating glory, for one thing (cf. Rev. 21:11)]; **and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.** **(4) Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns upon their heads.** [[The twenty-four elders are also mentioned in Rev. 4:10; 5:6, 8, 14; 7:11, 13; 11:16; 14:3; and 19:4. The twenty-four elders can undoubtedly be considered part of "the council of the holy ones/those who are around Him" mentioned in Psalm 89:7 (see 89:5-7). Also see Job 38:5-7 (the angelic beings were there when God was creating our world [Gen. 1:1ff.]); 1 Kings 22:19. Apparently Gen. 1:26 is an important cross-reference too: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in Our image, according to our likeness....' " Apparently God was speaking to those who were reigning with Him in Gen. 1:26. We were, of course, created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27 makes this clear), but so were the angels, who are also called sons of God in the Bible (Job 1:6; 2:8; 38:7; Gen. 6:2). The cherubim (cf. Gen. 3:24) were included among those reigning with God. The fact that others were reigning with God does not mean that they were active in creation. We know that God the Father created through His Son, who had not been revealed (at least not yet clearly revealed) in the days of Moses.

Genesis 1:26 is relevant to the topic of the Trinity in that "God" in this verse (and often) is the plural Hebrew noun *elohim*. Many believe the plural was used to reflect the Trinity. I totally believe in the Trinity, but God didn't clearly reveal the Trinity in the days of Moses (or at any time before the days of the new covenant). I agree with those who teach that *elohim* was a plural of majesty, which is common in Hebrew. If so, *elohim* was not used to indicate a plurality in God. It is clear that the people of Israel did not understand *elohim* to include the idea of more than one Person.]] ... **(Rev. 4:11)** **"Worthy are You** [These words are addressed to God the Father by the twenty-four elders], **OUR LORD AND OUR GOD** [my emphasis], **to receive glory and honor and power** [We cannot give "power" to God, but we can ascribe it to Him in worship.]; **for you created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created. ... (Rev. 5:7) And He** [the victorious and now resurrected Lamb of God] **came and took**

**the book [scroll] out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne [God the Father].**

**8. CONCLUSION.** If we agree that the Bible, especially the New Testament, teaches the Trinity and that God the Father has a preeminent role in the Trinity, it should affect the way we think about God the Father and speak about Him and pray and worship. (I should mention that once we understand the Trinity and the preeminent role of God the Father in the Trinity, based on the New Testament, we can find quite a bit of confirmation of these things in the Old Testament. See my paper, *The Name Yahweh and God the Father and God the Son: The Name Yahweh and a Listing of Some of the Large Number of Passages in the Hebrew Old Testament where We Can See God the Son along with God the Father* (originally written in 2009 and expanded in 2011).

For one thing, as I demonstrated in my paper *Who Do We Pray To?* (written in 2011), the New Testament strongly confirms that we should typically pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus. Also, the way we think about God and the way we speak about Him and worship Him should line up with His preeminent role in the Trinity. However it is obvious that many Christians who say they believe in the Trinity spend a lot more time focusing on the Lord Jesus Christ, including when they pray or speak about God and worship Him, very much including the words of many worship songs. I am not looking for trouble, but I have to believe that this is a rather serious problem that doesn't correspond with divine order. I believe it is appropriate (Biblical) to pray to and worship the Lord Jesus, but not in a way that seems to minimize the preeminent role of God the Father, or even deny the existence of God the Father.

The first paper I wrote dealing with the Trinity was *Who Do We Worship? Oneness/Jesus-only Worship Songs* (originally written in 2007 and slightly revised in 2009 and 2011). I recommend you read that paper. One point I document in that paper is that many worship songs being used by those who say they believe in the Trinity were written by oneness Christians. I am not attacking oneness Christians. I believe that many of them are true Christians (I'm not the Judge), but that their viewpoint is clearly wrong and a serious error. We shouldn't be surprised that their songs focus entirely on Jesus, since they believe He is the one Person who exists behind the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I give quite a few examples in that paper of songs that (from my point of view) give a distorted view of God. For one thing, quite often the words suggest that God the Father doesn't exist, as we come to worship Jesus on His throne, for example, and call Him "our God," or the equivalent. Some of these songs were written by those who say they believe in the Trinity. For more on this see my *Who Do We Worship?* (19 pages). For one thing, I quote quite a few songs that (from my point of view) effectively deny the existence of God the Father, whether this was intended by those writing the songs, or

not. What we Christians believe is typically strongly influenced by the songs we sing. For some Christians the words of the songs have more influence than the words of the Bible. And I believe many will agree that many Christians in our day do not have a good understanding of what the Bible teaches. This is dangerous!

## APPENDIX

Is the Lord Jesus called "God" in Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 2:1-2; Romans 9:5; John 1:18? I cannot be dogmatic, but I doubt that He is. (These four passages are discussed below.) However, I believe He is called "God" in Revelation 22:6 and included in "God" in Revelation 19:10 and 22:9 (See under Rev. 22:6-9 in my paper on Revelation chapters 20-22 that is on my internet site [Google to Karl Kemp Teaching]. I point out there that the deity of the Lord Jesus is emphasized in the book of Revelation. Revelation 19:10 is briefly discussed there too.)

**TITUS 2:13. looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,** I believe the translation of the *New American Bible* communicates what the apostle Paul intended: **as we await our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of the great God [God the Father] and of our Savior Christ Jesus.** Matthew 16:27 is an important cross-reference in that Jesus spoke of His coming "in the glory of His Father with His angels." As I have pointed out, the word "God" is almost always reserved for God the Father in the New Testament, and apparently this includes Titus 2:13. It is possible, of course, that Paul intended to use the word "God" of the Lord Jesus here, but I doubt it. As we have discussed, the word "God" is clearly used for Him a few places in the New Testament, which strongly confirms His deity.

The **blessed hope** refers to the eternal glorious existence we will inherit, starting with our resurrection and glorification at the end of this age (cf., e.g., Col. 1:5, 27; Rom. 8:17-19; Titus 3:5). **Hope** in a context like this does not infer doubt (like the word "hope" typically does in English), but it does refer to the future, and we must stay faithful as Christians (by grace) until the end of our race.

**2 PETER 2:1-2. Simon Peter, and bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind [The margin of the NASB has, "Or, value."] as ours, by [I would translate in, with the margin of the NASB.] the righteousness of our God [cf., e.g., Rom. 1:17; 3:21-22; and 1 John 3:7 (These verses are discussed in both of my holiness books.)] and Savior, Jesus Christ: (2) Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord;**

It is clear that God the Father and the Lord Jesus are both mentioned in verse 2. I believe Peter probably intended to include both of them at the end of verse 1 too, but

the majority believe these words at the end of verse 1 all apply to the Lord Jesus. The translation **of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ** indicates just one Person, the Lord Jesus, and the Greek favors this translation, but I doubt that this translation is what Peter intended. For one thing, the word "God" is almost always used of God the Father in the New Testament, but more importantly from my point of view, this translation doesn't fit well with what Peter goes on to say at the end of verse 2, where God is used of God the Father, and He and the Lord Jesus are both mentioned.

I'll give several other translations for the end of verse 1, translations that communicate the idea that Father and the Son are both mentioned: The KJV has "of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." The *American Standard Bible* has "or, our God and [the] Saviour Jesus Christ. The Weymouth translation has, "of our God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ." In a note the RSV and the NRSV have "Or, of our God and the Savior Jesus Christ." In a note the Jerusalem Bible has, "Or, of our God and of the savior Jesus Christ." The Emphasized Bible has "of our God and [or, "and our"] Saviour Jesus Christ."

And I'll quote what Henry Alford says in Vol. 4 of his *New Testament for English Readers* (Baker 1983 reprint): "Next, in the words, **of our God and [our] Saviour Jesus Christ**, I would interpret, as in Titus 2:13 [where see note] **our God** of the Father, and **[our] Saviour Jesus Christ** of the Son. Here, there is the additional consideration in favour of this view, that the Two are distinguished most plainly by the next verse."

ROMANS 9:5. **whose** [referring to the Israelites] **are the fathers** [starting with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob], **and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all** [cf. Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:20-23; and Col. 1:16-19], **God blessed forever. Amen.** This verse isn't easy to interpret, but I believe the translation given in a note in the NIV (or the equivalent) is what the apostle Paul intended: **...Christ, who is over all. God be forever blessed!** I prefer "Christ, the One who is over all." It is clear that the Lord Jesus can be called God (Isa. 9:6; John 1:1; 20:28; and Heb. 1:8), but, without being dogmatic, I believe "God" here in Rom. 9:5 refers to God the Father, which it almost always does in the New Testament.

There is a lot of disagreement on the punctuation in this verse. I'll quote a relevant sentence from Douglas Moo on the punctuation (under Rev. 9:5 in his *Epistle to the Romans* [Eerdmans, 1996], page 565): "The issue is one of punctuation and therefore of interpretation, for Greek manuscripts of the New Testament rarely contain punctuation marks and the marks that are found tend to be sporadic and irregular."

JOHN 1:18. I wrote a paper that includes a verse-by-verse study of John 1:1-18. (It is available on my internet site.) I'll quote what I said there under verse 18. I'll simplify the format that I have there for this paper.

**(18) No one has seen God at any time** [Compare Ex. 33:20; 1 Tim. 6:16; and 1 John 4:12. No man has seen God the Father at any time, not in any full, direct sense. After we are glorified we will see Him as He is (cf. 1 John 3:2) and face to face (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12; Rev. 22:4).]; **the only begotten** [(This double bracket goes on for five paragraphs.) The Greek behind "only begotten" is *monogenes*, the adjective that we discussed in some detail under verse 14. Here, as in verse 14, I believe a meaning like "unique" was intended. The interpretation of this verse is complicated by the fact that many ancient Greek manuscripts have the word for "Son" (*huios*) following *monogenes* instead of the word for "God" (*theos*). Quite a few translations have followed the Greek text that has the word for "Son," including the KJV ("the only begotten Son"); the NKJV ("the only begotten Son"); the RSV and NRSV ("the only Son"); the NEB ("God's only Son"); and the *Jerusalem Bible* ("the only Son"). If the original reading was *monogenes* followed by *huios* (and I favor this reading), I would translate "the unique Son" or the equivalent. The NIV has, "but God the One and only," but in the margin has, "Some manuscripts [have] *but the only (or only begotten) Son*."

The United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament* (Fourth revised edition, 1983) gives a B rating to the word for "God" (instead of the word for "Son") as the word that follows *monogenes*. That rating means that they believe "there is some degree of doubt" regarding the reading "God," but that it is the preferred reading. Bruce M. Metzger in *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, which is a companion volume for the *Greek New Testament* just mentioned, points out that "A majority of the Committee regarded the reading *monogenes huios*, which undoubtedly is easier than *monogenes theos*, to be the result of scribal assimilation to John 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9." All three of the verses just cited use *monogenes* with *huios*. That fact demonstrates that it would be quite reasonable (Biblical) for these two words to be used together here in John 1:18 too, and, as I mentioned, I favor that viewpoint.

I'll quote part of what David J. Ellis says here (*New Layman's Bible Commentary* [Zondervan, 1979], page 1302). "God is now seen in the incarnate Word, the only Son. There is a variant here, *viz.*, 'God only-begotten,' which is supported by a number of important manuscripts, and by some of the earliest patristic commentaries. It would be quite in accordance with what John elsewhere records concerning the deity of Christ (cf. [John 1:1-4;] 20:28; 1 John 5:20). [The words "the unique/only Son" fit the *deity* of Christ too, but His deity is more forcefully stated with the reading *theos*.] Yet acceptance of the usual reading [*huios*, instead of *theos*] seems preferable since this also accords well with John's writing (cf. 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). Christ dwells in the bosom of the Father, an expression denoting a relationship of love and perfect understanding."

I'll also quote part of what Frederick Louis Godet says here (*Commentary on the Gospel of John* [Zondervan, 1969 reprint of the 1893 edition], page 281). Godet's comments are dated. He wrote this commentary more than a hundred years ago, and we have a lot more information available today regarding the ancient New Testament manuscripts and the art of textual criticism. But I believe he was right to opt for the reading "Son" instead of "God." "As to internal reasons [By "internal reasons" Godet apparently speaks of "reasons" an ancient scribe could have had to change the reading *theos* (God) to the reading *huios* (Son) in an attempt to correct the manuscript he was working on.] stress may be laid upon its [*monogones theos*] unique and wholly strange character; for it is said to be more [probable (The book has "improbable" but Godet undoubtedly meant "probable.") that it should be replaced by the received reading [*monogenes huios*], which has a more simple and common character, than that the contrary could have taken place. [In textual criticism the harder reading is to be favored. This does not mean, however, that the harder reading always represents the original reading.] But it may be asked whether a reading [*monogenes theos*] which does not find its counterpart in any writing of the New Testament, and in any passage of John himself, does not become by reason of this fact very suspicious. To account for its [the reading *theos*] rejection it is enough that an explanation be given as to how it [the reading *theos*] may have originated and been introduced, and *Abbot* does this by reminding us how early readings like the following were originated: *the Logos-God*, which is found in the second century in Melito and Clement of Alexandria, and the epithet *theotokos, mother of God*, given to Mary. [There can be no doubting the fact that the early Christians felt a need to contend for the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. His deity is of crucial importance, and there was no shortage of those who fought against His deity from the beginning, including the non-Christian Jews. Such conflicts often lead to overreactions and overstatements (like some calling Mary the "mother of God"). We desperately need the balanced truth.] ... It would be difficult, on the other hand, to explain the dogmatic reason which could have substituted here the word *Son* for *God*. [That is, orthodox Christians would have been very reluctant to substitute the word *Son* for *God*, and especially in a day when the deity of Christ was being challenged.] ...."

It is possible that *God* (instead of *Son*) was the original reading (but I rather strongly favor the reading *Son*). If so I would understand this verse in the sense given by D. A. Carson and quite a few others (I had a footnote: *Gospel According to John* [Eerdmans, 1991], page 134. Bruce Metzger [*Textual Commentary*], in a footnote mentions four scholars who take this viewpoint. ....): "...the unique and beloved one (the term is *monogones*...), [himself] God, has made him known. That is probably the correct text [with the reading *God* instead of the *Son*].... What it means is that the beloved Son, the incarnate Word (John 1:14), himself God ["God" in the sense of deity, as in verse 1] while being *at the Father's side* - just as in v. 1 the Word was simultaneously God [God the Son] and with God [with God the Father]...."] **God who is in the bosom** ["*In the*

*bosom of* is a Hebrew idiom expressing the intimate relationship of child and parent, and of friend and friend (cf. [John] 13:23." (R. V. G. Tasker, *Gospel According to St. John* (Eerdmans, 1969), page 49.)) **of the Father, He has explained Him.** ["has made him known" NIV; "has revealed him" *New American Bible*. The Lord Jesus Christ was the perfect Person to reveal/make known God the Father (and the Trinity). He was/is deity with the Father; He became a man (the God-man), which permitted Him to dwell with men and communicate with mankind in our dimension; He was anointed by the Father with the Holy Spirit; He had the same attitudes, motives, and priorities as the Father, and He spoke the words that the Father wanted Him to speak and did the works the Father wanted Him to do (cf. e.g., John 5:19; 10:37, 38; 12:49; and 14:8-10).]]

May God the Father, the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit be glorified through this paper and the people of God be edified!

© Copyright by Karl Kemp

I believe the Bible, especially the New Testament, clearly teaches the Trinity, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each being Deity in a totally full sense. I believe the Bible makes it equally clear that God the Father always has had and always will have the preeminent role in the Trinity.

Trinity,preeminent role of God the Father,Deut. 6:4,John 1:1,full deity of Son,John 1:18,elohim,Gen. 1:26,twenty four elders