

Is the Trinity True or Not? Debate #1:
Are Trinitarians Polytheists?

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Is the Trinity True or Not?

By Larry Wessels

Bible Text: Luke 1:35; Matthew 3:16-17

Preached on: Tuesday, February 8, 2011

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Christian Answers

presents

Is the Trinity True or Not?

with

Mark McNeil Representing the Trinitarian Position

and

Steve McCalip Representing the Oneness Position

and

Dale Delony, Peaceway Productions as Moderator

Part One

Dale Delony. Hello and welcome to our program. Today, we have a very exciting program for you. We are going to have a debate on the doctrine of the Trinity and what we're going to do is have each of our positions, we'll call one position the oneness position versus the Trinitarian position, and each person will have opening and closing statements and we'll have a very semi-informal interaction in between. And with that, I would like to introduce the representative of the oneness position, we have Steve McCalip. Welcome to the program, Steven.

Steve McCalip. Thank you.

Dale. And Steve has a BA in political science and is a certified teacher from Houston, Texas, and he'll be representing the oneness position. Also we have representing the Trinitarian position, Mark McNeil, and Mark, welcome to the program.

Mark McNeil. It's good to be here.

Dale. And Mark has a three year theology degree from Texas Bible College and a BA and MA degree from Luther Rice, and is currently engaged in graduate studies at St. Thomas School of Theology and Mark will be representing the Trinity. And with those opening statements, gentlemen, we'll have Mark, you start with your opening statement and then Steve, you'll have yours and then we'll begin the debate. And again, I would have listeners and viewers get your Bibles, get out a notepad, write down verses. This is a very important issue. We're talking about the nature of God. The Bible talks about there are true, there's one true God and there's false gods, and it's very important that a person has a relationship with the true God. Of course, the Christian position is that there's only one way of salvation and that's through Jesus Christ but the nature of God is very important, it is an essential doctrine of salvation. One of these positions is right and one of these positions is wrong but they both cannot be right. And with that, Mark, begin your opening statement.

Mark. Thank you, Dale. I'd like to read a brief statement of my position and make a few comments along the way and the whole of this discussion will be expounding on this position and defending it against another position. But let me just read this statement. The Bible, that is, by the Bible I mean the 66 books that are in the Protestant canon of scripture teaches the doctrine of the Trinity. The proper definition of the Trinity, and this is the definition I'll be defending, is that the one true and living God has revealed that within his nature are three distinctions that are best described as personal. I want you to notice two things in that statement I just made, that is, number 1, Trinitarianism begins by affirming there is only one God but it goes on to affirm that that one God has made himself known as having three distinctions within his being, that is, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. And the rest of my statement is, in short, there are three persons in the one being of God that are revealed in scripture as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and these personal distinctions are eternal. And let me just make another point here, notice that I am saying there are three persons in the one being of God. I'm not saying there are three persons who are one person, I'm saying there are three persons who are the one being of God. So God is one as to being and three as to person, that means that within God eternally, within the one true God there are three internal distinctions. Not three separate gods but one God in whom are three personal distinctions so that you have Father, Son and Holy Spirit interacting eternally in personal ways.

Now let me make one other point and then I'll stop with my introductory statement. The doctrine of the Trinity that we are going to be defending is going to be a defense based upon the scriptures that the Bible teaches the Trinity. We are not wanting to explain all of the theoretical and philosophical problems that someone might want to present to us, that's another issue; we'll deal with them if we must but our issue that we want to prove is that the Bible teaches this doctrine. If the Bible teaches the doctrine and we accept the Bible as God's word, then it is our responsibility to submit to its truths whether we can fully grasp them or not. So my point is going to be to emphasize the word of God and what it says about this subject.

Dale. All right, thank you, Mark. And Steve, present your position.

Steve. Okay. The Bible commands us to contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints, and that's in the book of Jude. Also in Proverbs 28:4 it says that, "They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them," and that is why I am here, I am contending for the faith that was once delivered to the saints and that faith, I believe, is the fact that God is not three persons or that God is not a Trinity but God is one person and that person is the Lord Jesus Christ and him only.

Now as our moderator said, the identity of Jesus Christ is a heaven and hell issue and it's very important as to what your belief is on this position. The Bible says that there is one Lord in Ephesians 4:4, and it also says that there is one God in Ephesians 4:6, but I would like the audience to remember that the Bible also says that, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death." And a lot of times throughout this debate you're going to, it's going to sound like a lot of what my opponent says sounds good but just remember the scripture that there's a way that seemeth right but the end thereof are the ways of death.

God is a God that hides himself in the Bible and he says it throughout the scriptures. It says in Proverbs, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing but the honor of kings is to search out a matter." So it is the honor, it is your honor to search out this matter, it's the honor of a king because God is going to conceal it until you do. My opponent, I'm going to point out, is going to use a lot of smooth words and fair speeches, my speech, however, like Paul the apostle, is going to be plain and, as Paul said, rude, rude meaning plain, but the common man and a child will be able to understand my position a lot better than the Trinitarian position. The Bible told us to prove all things and what I am going to prove, like I stated before, is that Jesus Christ is the only person of God, that he is the Father, that Jesus Christ is the Son, and Jesus Christ is the Holy Spirit. Not distinct persons.

Now in Corinthians, Paul also stated the same thing. He said, "I have determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified," and that is my heartfelt belief that I am determined not to know anyone but Jesus Christ. And in Colossians 1:8 it says that Jesus Christ has the preeminence in all things. I'm sorry, Colossians 1:18, that Jesus Christ has the preeminence in all things. The preeminence, that means that not only is he preeminent over the world but he is preeminent within the Godhead as well. So let us remember that all the fullness in Colossians it says, dwells in Christ Jesus and all the fullness of the Godhead is in him.

Now I can say that Jesus Christ is all that we need and my opponent cannot but we will get into that later in the debate. Let me just state once again that I believe that Jesus Christ is the Father, Son and Holy Spirit but what I want you to also understand is that I am not denying that there is a Father, I am not denying that there is a Son or a Holy Spirit, I am denying that the fact that they are separate persons. And I also believe that the Father is personal, I believe that the Son is personal, and that the Holy Spirit is personal. So what you're going to hear my opponent say is that he's going to try to prove that they're each personal. I don't deny that. I understand that they're each personal, the issue is whether they are separate persons and that's what I'm going to be proving tonight. Thanks.

Dale. Okay, thank you for that, Steve. All right, now let's just begin the debate and have some interaction among yourselves and who will start?

Mark. Well, I'd like to comment, first, Dale, on a few things that Steve said. The first of these is that he mentioned that he's here to contend the faith. Well, that's exactly what I'm here to do as well, and I will also say that we being here to defend the faith, there must be a standard to judge us by. I must submit to a standard, he must submit to a standard and we are agreeing that that standard is the word of God. So that is the way you must judge us. You can call what I say smooth speeches or fair words or however you want to call it, but the ultimate question is what does the Bible say and that's the thing I want the listener to consider.

Secondly, he mentioned passages of scripture that say that God hides himself and that there is only one God. Again, you know in my opening statement that I said there is only one God and, secondly, I believe that in Jesus Christ God has revealed himself. The Bible teaches us in Hebrews 1 that in these last days Jesus Christ has come, the Son of God has come and has made known the Father. Jesus said that in John 14:7-9, he said, "When you have seen me, you have seen the Father," in the sense that the Father makes himself seeable through the Son. And so we believe with all of our hearts that Jesus Christ is the revelation of God, in other words, we get an insight into God's own being by knowing Jesus.

Another thing, he mentioned that he knows no one save Jesus Christ and him crucified, quoting, of course, the Apostle Paul, and my response to that is that's our message as well. But the message of Jesus Christ and him crucified, he would have to admit, includes his resurrection. Paul does not include all of the specific details about the person of Jesus Christ in that one statement but he is meaning by saying, "I preach Jesus Christ and him crucified," everything that Jesus Christ reveals to us and Jesus is revealed as the Son of God, the Son of the Father, and this immediately throws us into the question of the Trinity since he speaks of himself as the Son distinct from his Father.

Then there were other passages mentioned regarding Jesus being the fullness of the Godhead bodily and revealing God in that way, and we, of course, believe that thoroughly that Jesus Christ is the revelation of God, he is the fullness of God incarnate, and so none of these things that he has said conflict with or destroy the doctrine of the Trinity.

Dale. All right. Steve.

Steve. Okay. Now what I said I was going to do was prove that Jesus Christ is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, so let me start with proving, first off, that Jesus Christ is the Father, not just a representative of the Father, not just portraying his characteristics but actually the Father himself.

The first verse I want to look at, and if you have your Bibles please open them to the book of Isaiah 9:6. Now I'm going to quote the scripture to you. It says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Now in this verse I want you to, even my opponent will recognize that this verse is a prophecy of the Lord Jesus, that question is not in doubt here, what is in doubt according to my opponent is that the fact that Jesus is called the Father. Well, this verse calls him "The everlasting Father," and at the same time, if you notice, it says that he is the Son. The Son that was born was to be called the everlasting Father so we have the same person given two different titles, Father and Son, in this verse, Jesus Christ called the Father and Son.

What I also want you to notice in this verse is that Jesus Christ is called "The Prince of Peace." Now it said that "the government shall be upon his shoulder," Jesus' shoulder, the government shall be upon his shoulder, that means that Jesus Christ is also a king. Jesus Christ in this verse is called a Father and Son and also a king and a prince. Now a prince is the son of a king so we have two different relationships of the same nature here by the words Father and Son, and Father and Son by the words king and prince, or "the government shall be upon his shoulder," meaning that he will be the king. Now everybody knows that Jesus Christ is called the King of kings, that's not in doubt, so the point I'm making is that Jesus is a king and he's a prince, he's a father and he's a son, and this, to me, is a direct and undeniable teaching that Jesus is the Father. Now my opponent is going to give you an argument that this doesn't really say "The everlasting Father," he's going to change the words, and so I want you to read what it says. He claims to believe what the Bible says but when he wants to give his belief on it, he changes the words. He will change the words on his view but it does say that Jesus Christ is "The everlasting Father."

Now I have several other verses that I'm going to go over proving that Jesus is the Father but I would like to get my opponent's view on Isaiah 9:6 and then I will move to John 14 to also prove that he is the Father.

Mark. All right, I would be happy to respond to that. The first thing that I would like to say in reply is that this passage of scripture does not call Jesus the Father of the Son. Now I want you to notice something very important. In the Bible, the word "Father" simply means the originator of something, the father, the one who begets over something. For example, in Malachi 2:10 the scripture says, "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?" In other words, it is talking about God being our Father because he's our creator and that is what the relationship of Father, God as Father to the whole world stands as. And then God is the Father of us as believers. We have entered into a relationship of adopted sons toward God. And so the term "Father" can be used in many senses. What he must show and demonstrate is that Jesus is the Father of the Son of God. That's what he must demonstrate because we would both have to grant that the term "Father" is used in many ways. For example, Jesus in the New Testament speaks of the devil as the father of lies, and he speaks of the devil in certain terms as father, but he's not the same father.

And this scripture says that Jesus is "The everlasting Father." Now if I'm going to change the words at all, I'm going to go back to the Hebrew words here and show you that this simply means that he is the Father of eternity. That is the only sort of altering that I would do, would be to show that the words here mean that Jesus is the originator of all eternity. And let me ask the question or pose the idea before completing my answer to this passage of scripture, if you'll look in the New Testament and you ask what is Jesus the Father or originator of in the New Testament, I think it's going to be very clear to all of us that the New Testament consistently emphasizes that Jesus is the Father of all creation. You'll see that in John 1, he was in the world, the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. In other words, the world was the product of his creative power and therefore he is the Father of all creation. Now then when we start talking about Jesus as the Father of the Son, now we're in a whole other area, we're talking about a New Testament revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit persons and the nature of God, and I think we're walking on two different grounds here. So in Isaiah 9:6 it simply does not say he is the Father of the Son, it simply affirms that he is the Father of all eternity.

Dale. Steve.

Steve. Okay, I would like to respond to that, to his objection there and his response to my statement. First off, he says that the Father of eternity is the correct title here that is given to Jesus. Well, like I said and what I said was true, he did change the wording of the Bible. The wording said that he is "The everlasting Father." The everlasting Father, not just a everlasting Father, not some Father of some of Israel or of the believer, as he said, but "The everlasting Father." So my opponent would have to believe that there are now two everlasting Fathers, the Father that he believes in plus the everlasting Father of Jesus Christ.

Mark. Well, let me, if I could, interject there, Steve. What I'm saying is that Jesus being called "The everlasting Father" does not mean that the Father and the Holy Spirit are not also the origin of creation because we as Trinitarians believe that the works of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are in perfect harmony and it comes from the nature of God. And so the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are involved in the creation of the world and yet the one God created the world. And when the scripture says he is "The everlasting Father," it is equal to saying he is God, but it's affirming the fact that he is God because he is the origin of all of God's creation. And so I think just to make that point of clarification, Steve, I'm saying that Jesus is "The everlasting Father" but that does not mean that the Father and the Holy Spirit are not also "The everlasting Father." We're talking about the one nature of God here so I just wanted to make that point of clarification.

Steve. Well, let me ask you about this term Father of eternity, as you say. Can you tell me how long eternity is? What is your definition of eternity?

Mark. Well, the term eternity, of course, used in both the Old and New Testament can refer to an age. The New Testament word is "aion," the Greek word, and in both the Old and New Testament it can refer to an age, it can refer to an endless duration, it can refer, it has different context.

Steve. As it's used in this scripture, though, eternity refers to what?

Mark. I think in this particular passage, since I am understanding this to be him being the origin of all creation, I would say that it refers to the age of the whole creation and so he is the Father of all the age. He's the Father of all eternity, yes, in the sense that it's all of God's creation, all of God's time of creation.

Steve. Well, I would have to strongly disagree with that definition because the common understanding of the word eternity is forever, forever, not ending, neverending, never having a beginning, never having an end. Now if he says that Jesus Christ is the Father of eternity, the phrase Father of eternity, or as he puts it, the originator of eternity because Father to him means originator, originator of eternity is a contradiction in terms. If eternity means forever without any end or beginning, how can you have an originator or somebody that begins it? You cannot begin forever. Forever has always been. And so he comes after he changes the scripture, he is in a catch-22 because he now has a contradiction of his own terminology. Father of eternity or originator of eternity makes absolute no sense at all...

Mark. Let me again, if I could interject, number 1, I think if the viewer will study all of the usages of the terms everlasting and eternal in the Old Testament, he will find that everlasting can mean the time period of a particular age or duration. So the meaning of the term must be understood and defined by its context, that's true in any place that you look. But I would not only say that but I would say, secondly, that let's say that the definition, let's apply the definition that you used, we don't arrive at the point that you're trying to make and that is because whenever we speak of God as being the Father of all eternity, we are simply meaning that God, that the Father is the one, to use certain language here, is the one who grounds all eternity. There would be no eternity, there would be nothing if it were not for God. And so when we speak of Christ as being the Father of all eternity, we're simply saying he is the one from whom everything comes. There is nothing without him. So that is a simple way of responding to what you've said.

Steve. Well, in Isaiah 9:6, let's look at these titles again. It calls Jesus Christ, "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." All of these titles were titles of deity of Christ. They were all only applied to God himself. And what he does is he takes these titles of deity and now makes them another title that doesn't have to be applied to deity. When he says an originator of something, an originator, yes, we have lots, we have a father of musical instruments in the Bible, a father of this and that, but this scripture is talking about one particular Father, "The everlasting Father." And if words mean anything in the Bible, this means, has to mean that Jesus Christ is called "The everlasting Father" and that means that he is the Father. Go ahead, Mark.

Mark. Well, let me just say again, each of these terms, as you said and I agree with this, each of these terms are descriptive of deity but we have already affirmed that Jesus Christ is God and so I think to continue going on on this term is really going in circles about something we agree on. What I'm saying and I think it should be obvious, what I'm trying to say is that when Jesus is called "The everlasting Father" it is a title of deity, it is a name of deity and so it proves the deity of Christ. But what I'm wanting to say is it does not affect the doctrine of the Trinity because it's not saying he's the Father of the Son. Now that's where I think we should center more in on, and perhaps we'll bring this up as we proceed. I think that's really more where our debate lies, it's not in passages such as this that affirm the deity of Christ.

Steve. Well, let me end it with this, then, and I'll move on to John 14. Is the Father of your Trinity, is he called "The everlasting Father"?

Mark. I do not know of a reference in scripture where he receives that particular name.

Steve. Can he have that title?

Mark. Yes. Yes, because that is descriptive of deity.

Steve. Okay, so you have one called "The everlasting Father" and now you have the Son called "The everlasting Father."

Mark. Right, just as we call the Father God, we call the Son God, and we call the Holy Spirit God. Likewise we can say he is "The everlasting Father," because I mean by everlasting Father that he is the one who grounds eternity. There's nothing without him and without the Father there is nothing, without the Son there is nothing, without the Holy Spirit there is nothing, and that's simply what the passage is saying.

Steve. Well, to those who are watching, that's very simply two everlasting Fathers. He can beat around the bush on that but one everlasting Father that's different from another everlasting Father is two everlasting Fathers.

Mark. No, no...

Steve. And that destroys the doctrine of the Trinity.

Mark. Okay, let me just reaffirm my distinction. There is one God, three persons. There may be two persons who are the everlasting Father but there's only one everlasting Father. One being, three persons. So you're crossing my distinction here. You're crossing the distinction of the doctrine of the Trinity. It's just like this, the Bible says that a husband and wife become one flesh. I can sit there and go, "No, they're two flesh." And you could say, "No, the Bible says they're one flesh." I can say, "Look, I can count them, one, two." But God is describing this relationship between husband and wife as one flesh because of the union which before God stands as an inseparable union. Two persons become one in flesh, they are still two in person. Likewise there is one God. I can refer to

a man and his wife as one flesh and you can say two flesh all day long but they're still one flesh because God has said by virtue of their union they are one. And that's all I'm saying. There are three who are called "The everlasting Father" and to say that just because there are three who are called "The everlasting Father" makes there three everlasting Fathers is to violate the principle that we have already established that stands at the root of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Steve. Well, it's simply to add one plus one plus one which anybody can do and they don't need college degrees to do that.

Mark. No, but, okay, now let's take that for just a moment because I want to establish this point. Husband and wife, you and your wife, one plus one equals 2, but God says they're one. Answer that.

Steve. God says they're one flesh.

Mark. That's right.

Steve. He didn't say they were one person.

Mark. All right, that's exactly right and the doctrine of the Trinity says there's three persons, one God. And so I don't say there's three persons or three Gods, I say there are three persons who are one God, all right? And whenever you say it's easy to add one plus one plus one, well, that's great when you're adding persons and that's exactly what we do as Trinitarians. There's one person, two persons, three persons, that's three persons and we already say there's three persons. I don't say there's one person. Now if you catch me saying there's one person, then you've got me but so far you haven't.

Steve. Okay, let's go on to John 14:7 through 9. In the book of John, Jesus is talking here to the disciple Philip, Thomas, excuse me, I'm sorry, Philip, and in verse 7 it says, "If ye had known me," Jesus speaking, "ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 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?" So you have Philip coming up to Jesus asking him, "Lord, I want to see the Father. Show us the Father." Now my opponent will have to admit that the word "show" is speaking in reference to Philip wanting to see with his eyes. He uses the word "show." If I said, "Show me something," that means I want to see it. Philip wanted to see the Father. Jesus said, "You're looking at him, Philip. He that has seen me hath seen the Father."

Now if Jesus was not trying to confuse Philip and say, "Philip, I don't want you to misinterpret me here. I'm not really saying I'm the Father." He sure picked the wrong phrase to say when he said, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." If that does not say that he is the Father and that you're looking at him, Jesus deceived Philip. But we all know that Jesus did not deceive Philip and for my opponent to try and get out of this

scripture and explain it away, he's going to have to say that the word "show" does not have anything to do with seeing with your eyes but has to do with feeling and understanding and perceiving what is the nature of God.

Well, I want to go on to that. Jesus said in verse 9, let's read it again. It says, "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?" Well, let's go back up to verse 7. It says, "from henceforth," let me read verse 7 again, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." Jesus distinguished, now this is a very important point, Jesus distinguished between knowing and seeing. Jesus understood what "know" meant and what "see" meant. Philip not only knew the Father in Jesus Christ but Philip saw the Father with his eyes, saw the Father's flesh standing before him.

So Jesus made a distinction between knowing and seeing. My opponent will try to tell you that Jesus was just telling him that you know the Father but Jesus said know and see. Knowing was not seeing. Knowing was understanding. Seeing was with the eyes. And so Philip saw the Father.

Mark. All right, sure, I'd love to respond. First off, he knows as well as I do that the Bible teaches consistently that God is invisible. The Bible says, John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at any time." The Bible tells us in John 4:24 that God is a spirit. The Bible tells us, I think, 1 Timothy 1:17, "Now unto the king immortal, eternal, invisible, the only wise God." You can't see the very nature and essence of God physically because God is not a physical being, but as I said earlier in this debate, Jesus comes to be the visible incarnation and manifestation of the invisible God. You can't see God but Jesus makes him visible through his life, through his words, through him being the incarnate God. He manifests and makes known the Father and that is simply what is being said here. Thomas is saying or Philip is saying, "Lord, show us the Father. We can't see him. We want you to bring him down and make him seeable." And Jesus is, in essence, saying, "You've missed my ministry. I have come to make known to you the Father so that you may see him." Yes, you know him and see him. You know him in that you've come to have a realization of him and you perceive him, you see him through the life and actions and ministry of Jesus Christ.

But I think that that is a very simple way of understanding this and what I want to point out to you is something else. In verse 10, you'll notice that Jesus goes on to say and this is in the same context, he goes on to say, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" He doesn't say, "Believe not that I am the Father." Now that's my challenge to Steve. Jesus says, "Yes, you've seen me, you've come to know me or you know the Father, you see the Father through me," but now I'm asking him the question why does Jesus not come out very clearly and categorically and say, "When you see me, I am the Father." That's my question. Jesus never says, "I am the Father." In fact, even after what Steve would consider to be in this passage of scripture perhaps the strongest statement in all the Bible where Jesus says something like he is the Father, which I very much am opposed to what his conclusions are on this passage, but in this verse of

scripture where he is making this sort of claim, my question is why does Jesus not come out and say, "I am the Father," instead after he says this, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me," describing a sort of mutual interrelationship but affirming the distinction between himself and the Father. What I'm saying is that in this very passage of scripture Jesus is affirming the Trinitarian distinctions rather than destroying them.

Steve. Okay, let me just ask you, Mark, did Philip ask to know the Father or did he ask to see him?

Mark. He asked to see him. "Show us the Father."

Steve. "Show us the Father." So my opponent does, Mark does say that Philip wants to see with his eyes.

Mark. Isn't God invisible, however?

Steve. Of course God is invisible. God is also visible. God is invisible and visible at the same time. Now you made a statement that God is not a physical being. You just came flat out and said God is not a physical being. God was manifested in the flesh.

Mark. That's right.

Steve. God has flesh. God is a physical being.

Mark. All right, Steve, let's go back 20 million years.

Steve. That contradiction, Mark...

Mark. Let's go back 20 million years ago before the creation order.

Steve. You did not say 20 million years ago. You came out and used present tense verb, Mark, and you said....

Mark. Let me make my distinctions clear.

Steve. Well, just let me repeat here. You said God is not a physical being.

Mark. What I meant by that....

Steve. Is. I listen to words. I follow words and if you say God is not a physical being, then what you're saying, you're denying that God ever became a man.

Mark. No, because the audience will know that I just got through saying that God became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Let me ask you a couple of questions to make clear what I'm trying to say. 1. Let's go back before the creation of the world. Is there a physical part of God actually existent then?

Steve. God was a spirit. No.

Mark. That's right, there's no physical eternal part of God. That's right?

Steve. No.

Mark. God is not...

Steve. Except when he became....

Mark. God is not eternally physical?

Steve. No.

Mark. All right, now God is unchanging as to his eternal nature, is that not right?

Steve. That's true.

Mark. God does not change.

Steve. Scripture says, "I change not."

Mark. That's right, "I am the Lord, I change not." God is still as to his eternal spirit invisible, is that not right?

Steve. God is presently invisible but I said also visible.

Mark. All right, is he invisible as to his eternal nature? In other words, what he eternally was is he still in that respect invisible?

Steve. His spirit is invisible.

Mark. That's right.

Steve. Except in the flesh of Jesus Christ.

Mark. But God does not change. You're affirming and I think we're playing word games here because we're, in essence, saying the same thing and that is that God eternally is invisible and then through the incarnation he becomes visible.

Steve. Yeah.

Mark. And that's the essence of the point that we're both making and that's what I see in John 14. In other words, I see the point that you are making and I see the point that I am making but I do not see what establishes your point and destroys Trinitarianism.

Steve. Well, twice in this passage, Jesus said twice and Philip asked twice to see the Father. Jesus rebuked him twice for not understanding that he was seeing the Father.

Mark. That's right.

Steve. Jesus rebuked him in such a manner, "Hath thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He was surprised, he was shocked that Philip could not understand that he was actually looking at the Father but you make Jesus out to be someone that is leading Philip on and coaxing him to kind of believe that, "Yeah, well, maybe I am the Father," but no, all of a sudden then he says after staying twice to Philip that he has seen the Father and rebuking him for that, then comes and says, and then he makes the point that, well, Jesus never said, "I am the Father." Jesus didn't ever say "I am God" either in the scripture but he will affirm that Jesus is God. You know, statements like that that Jesus said, never said "I am the Father" don't disprove my doctrine. Like I said, Jesus never said "I am God." Now we both believe he is God and we can show scriptures that say so, but Jesus didn't have to say "I am the Father" when he looked a person directly in the eye and says "You're looking at the Father."

Mark. All right, let me just respond. 1. If the context here stopped with verse 9, you might have a point. You might. You could construe it that way. But in verse 10, now you mentioned Jesus leading on Philip here, well, if there was any leading on in verses 7 through 9, they're destroyed in verse 10 because Jesus said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father," not "I am the Father." He continues to reaffirm but what he's saying is, "Philip, look, I want you to understand that I am in the Father, the Father is in me. In other words, there is an interrelationship, there is an interaction, an interpersonal relationship between the Father and the Son that makes me the revelation of the Father." But what you're doing is you're stopping at verse 9 and you're failing to see that Jesus continues on by affirming that he is distinct from the Father in the rest of the passage here.

Steve. Oh, I'm not afraid to deal with verse 10 at all, in fact, that was a question that I was going to ask you later is how is Jesus Christ in the Father. When Jesus says "I am in the Father," I wanted him to answer how is Jesus in the Father? Well, my understanding of that passage is that, and it does not destroy my doctrine, but the fact that Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in him, if Jesus Christ is the eternal spirit, and if Jesus Christ and that the Father is flesh, Jesus' spirit and Jesus' flesh, yes, Jesus Christ is in the Father, the spirit is in the flesh, and Jesus Christ said, "The Father is in me," well, the spirit is in me, the Father is in me. It doesn't destroy my doctrine.

Mark. No.

Steve. If Jesus Christ is spirit and that spirit is the Father, if the spirit is the Father then the Father was in the flesh but the flesh was also the Father as well. So Jesus could say that he was in himself, that the spirit was in the flesh.

Mark. Let's take those words, "I am in the Father and the Father's in me." You're taking them to refer to the fact that Jesus here, the Father as a spirit dwells in him and he is dwelling in the Father since he's a spirit that's everywhere, is that what you're saying?

Steve. Yes, I'm saying Jesus is claiming to be the spirit Father, the Father who is spirit, and he's saying that, "the Father is in me."

Mark. He says, "I am in the Father, the Father is in me," not "I am the Father."

Steve. Right, "I am in the Father." If he was the Father in the flesh, he could say that, "I, the spirit of eternity, is in, I am in the Father." Me, the flesh.

Mark. But isn't the Father in you?

Steve. Yes, he is.

Mark. The spirit from all eternity?

Steve. Yes, he is and that's...

Mark. And aren't you in the Father?

Steve. I'm in his Son Jesus Christ.

Mark. But aren't you in the Father?

Steve. Oh, yes, I am.

Mark. Yes, you are in the Father, the Father is in you.

Steve. Yes. That's right.

Mark. All right, now how is that different from what Jesus was saying here? Are you saying that you are in the Father and the Father is in you like Jesus is saying it?

Steve. Oh, it's a lot different because I'm not claiming to be the Father himself that's dwelling in the Father's flesh.

Mark. Look what you're reading into the passage. It says simply, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me," and I just asked you both those statements and you said they're true of you, and then I ask you what's the difference and then you said there's a great deal of difference. Where are you getting the difference from in this passage?

Steve. I just explained the difference to you. Yes, the spirit of God dwells in me and I am in union with Christ according to the Bible, I am in him.

Mark. Ah, notice something that's entered in. I want this to be seen very clearly. What he said now here is, "I am in union with Christ. I am in him and he is in me," and then he inserted, "I am in union with him." In other words, he's adding an interpretive aspect of this that's describing personal relationship. "I am in union with the Father," and that's what it means, "I am in Christ," or that sort of expression. That's exactly the point that I was trying to make. Jesus, the Father was in him and he was in the Father in the sense of inseparable union, and it was that inseparable union that makes him the unique manifestation of the Father. Do you see my point?

Steve. Yeah, but that's not something I'm going to labor on. And no, I don't think you've done any harm to my position. If I chose, I did choose a wrong word, union, because that word is not in scripture so that was a bad choice of words on my part but that doesn't do away with the fact that Jesus can be spirit and Jesus can be flesh, both being the Father. So Jesus could say that, "I," the spirit, "am in the Father," the Father, the flesh, the spirit is in the Father, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." That doesn't destroy that fact.

Mark. All right, let me make another point to press this point just a little further. In John 17 in the high priestly prayer of Christ, is it not true that Jesus uses this same sort of language, "I in you. You in me," this sort of language? What does it mean in that context?

Steve. We're going to deal with John 17 later so I want to go on, okay? We're going to come back to that.

Mark. Well, then, let me finish....

Steve. That's part, that's one of your questions that you're going to ask me.

Mark. All right.

Steve. This is my time right now and I want to move on.

Mark. Well, can I make a summarizing statement just very quickly?

Steve. Well, we're running out of time. I would like to continue, if I could.

Mark. All right. I only want to make one quick comment and that is if the one who is watching this program will read John 17, you'll see the same sort of language here and it is descriptive of union, not physical dwelling in. That's the only point I wanted to make and the passage of scripture here still reaffirms personal distinction. Go ahead.

Steve. Okay, speaking of seeing the Father, this wasn't the only occurrence in scripture where somebody is said to have seen the Father. Jesus in John 12:45 states that, and here he's talking here, Jesus is saying, "he that seeth me seeth him that sent me." He that seeth me seeth him that sent me. Now in John 15:24 he says something similar, he goes on and says, Jesus is speaking and he says, "But this cometh to pass that the word might be

fulfilled that is written in their heart," I'm sorry, I'm on verse 25. Verse 24, "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." Here Jesus again says that they have hated and seen the Father in him, that they had actually seen the Father. Three times he said this in the book of John and actually, so you have Jesus saying this four times altogether, that he that sees him sees the Father.

Now if seeing Jesus wasn't actually seeing the Father in the flesh, Jesus, like I said, he deceived his listeners because any common man that would be listening to that statement, you know, if I came up to you and said, "Mark, he that hath seen me hath seen my father," you couldn't tell my father from the man on the moon if you didn't know who he was, you wouldn't be able to pick him out in a crowd. But if I said that to you, you, I don't know if you would but most people anyway would be saying that I'm claiming to be that person, he that sees me sees the person I'm talking about, you're looking at him. And I don't think, you know, Jesus didn't speak in a language that was hard to understand but you're making it where he's speaking in this gnostic kind of language, this language, this flowery language where a common man can't understand him.

Now he wanted to see with his eyes the Father and Jesus said, "You're looking at him." This was what happened in John 15 and John 12 and in John 10. And let me go on to a couple of other scriptures about the Father.

Mark. Can I deal with that just real briefly?

Steve. Okay, go ahead.

Mark. Just a comment on this idea of in seeing Jesus you see the Father, and these sorts of ideas. Again, I think the principles that we've already stated in John 14 explain this but I want to make two points very quickly. The first one is he mentioned his father sitting in a crowd and me not being able to identify him, well, that's true but I would say that if his father, if Steve McCalip was the exact representation of what his father is, if he shines forth everything his father is, if he radiates his being and he's the exact impress of his father's person, I would be able to identify his father by looking at him. That's point number 1, and the second point that I would make is there are passages of scripture in the gospel of John and in other places in scripture where Jesus will say things like, "He who receives you," speaking of his disciples, "he who receives you receives me." Well, that is not a blurring of personal distinctions. When you receive me you're not receiving the person of Jesus Christ in a literal sense, you're receiving him in me because I am representing him, and you see or receive Jesus, you receive the Father or see the Father and know the Father in Christ because he is the one who makes known the Father. Again, every one of these things affirm the personal distinctions that the doctrine of the Trinity is establishing and defending.

Steve. Okay, since Mark believes that God is three different people and only one of those persons came down and died on the cross, does not this show that Jesus exemplified or showed a greater love for all of mankind than the Father or the Holy Spirit because of the

fact that Jesus laid down his life? This person of this, one of your members of your Trinity died for the whole world but the other two didn't. Isn't that a greater love shown than the Father who did not, according to you, lay down his life?

Mark. No, and just to give a very brief answer to that, all of salvation flows from God. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all involved in the giving of themselves for our salvation. And Jesus Christ, yes, he does become, the Son of God becomes incarnate and dies upon the cross but this is a tremendous act of love from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and I think that to ask these questions of quantitative love and this sort of thing is to really go into an issue that the Bible simply does not even entertain. It tells us that God loved us so much that the Father sent his Son, and the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are each involved in our salvation, and I think this kind of question ultimately is irrelevant to the subject.

Steve. Oh, I think it's very relevant because it's very practical in my worship of Jesus. I am going to worship the God who died for me, period, end of story. If the Father did not die for me, I don't owe him anything.

Mark. Oh...

Steve. Jesus Christ died for me. Jesus Christ, the Father, gave his life for me therefore I am able to worship him for so many reasons but the main thing is because he is the Father and he's God and he laid down his life.

Mark. Steve, I just want to say on this and we're trying to get as many questions as we can in here, but I want to say on this that this idea that because the Father did not become incarnate and die for me I owe him nothing, you owe him everything you are. You owe God whether he ever dies for you, whether he does anything for you. You owe him everything you are. And to me that kind of thinking shows an irreverence toward God. I really do. I just want to say that and then we can move on.

Steve. Well, I wasn't trying to be irreverent in saying that I wouldn't love God if he didn't die for me, that wasn't my point. I understand that and if I gave that impression that's not true.

Mark. But you said you owe him nothing.

Steve. I'm saying I owe, if God is going to die for me, I owe the person that died for me all of my affection and love, not the other two.

Mark. But it was the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit who made possible your salvation and mine. Without the Father there would be no Son. Without the Son there would be no Holy Spirit who comes and regenerates our hearts. So, you know, there would be no salvation without the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Steve. Well, Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." Jesus defined what the greater love was, so my point was Jesus did show the greater love by laying his life down for his friends. He showed a greater love than your Father or your Holy Spirit.

Mark. And what I'm saying is that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were all involved in the action of giving and therefore to divide them up and say, "I owe this one more than this one, or this one has a greater love," is to miss the point. Without the Father you'd have no Son. Without the Son you'd have no Holy Spirit. So you can't pick Jesus and reject the others. You accept one, you accept the others.

Steve. In John 10, Jesus said, "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

Mark. That's right.

Steve. Giveth his life. According to your doctrine, the Father is the shepherd and he has life, why didn't he give his life?

Mark. Steven, you're again missing the point. You're talking about a context in which Jesus speaks of himself as the good shepherd, he's not like the hireling who runs when the sheep get in trouble, he's the one who gives his life for the sheep. He's speaking of himself in a certain context, making a certain point, but he's not talking in John 10 about the Trinitarian relationship. You're talking he's contrasting himself with other leaders who came before him. You're going into an issue that the passage does not address and if the Bible teaches the Trinity, and I want the listener to see this, if the Bible teaches the Trinity then these questions are irrelevant. All right?

Steve. Well, once again, I'm asking these questions, Mark, not out of just curiosity. I'm asking them out of practical theology, out of the person that may be out there that wants to know who to worship and who to love with all his heart, soul, mind and strength, and I'm saying that you're going to love the God that died for you, that's the one you're going to love. But anyway, let me go onto the next question.

Mark. Wait a minute, I just want to say one quick thing. The listener can decide who is the great God of love, the one who eternally is a God of self-giving love, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit eternally giving within the one true God, who in time chooses to pour out his love onto humanity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit each involved in our salvation. If you have trouble finding that God, a God that is to be worshiped and to be praised, then we are on two different levels of thought here. But go ahead with your next question.

Steve. Well, I just, I have to say something on that too and that if the listener could, you know, if I could lay down my life for you, the listener, you make up and you be the judge, you make up your mind and be the judge, would I be giving the greatest sacrifice by laying down my life or sending somebody else to do the dirty work?

Mark. Okay, then let me just say one other thing as well, at the sake of losing time for other questions I want to make one other point and that is Jesus himself gave a parable in which he spoke of a man who lent out his vineyard to certain men and they worked it, and then he sent back various servants of his to receive from that vineyard and they killed those servants one by one and mistreated them. And then the scripture says that father or that ruler, that lord, in the greatest act of love, he said, "I will send my son unto them. Perhaps they will reverence my son." This was an act of love. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." That's what the scripture teaches, God gives his Son and his Son dies, and my point is to draw these distinctions and say, "I'll worship this one and I won't worship this one," is to miss what the Father's done and what the Holy Spirit has done. But let's, please, go on to other questions.

Steve. Is Jesus Christ all of who God is, Mark?

Mark. The doctrine of the Trinity states that he is all of what God is, he has all the divine attributes, he shares in the divine being, but he is not the Holy Spirit and the Father as to his person, therefore, he is not all of who God is.

Steve. So I want that to be clear to the listener, that Mr. McNeil just stated that Jesus Christ is not all of who God is.

Mark. Yes, and I stated...

Steve. He is just part of who God is. He is part of who God is. He is not all. And you see, the Bible says that Christ is all. In Colossians 3:11 the Bible says Christ is all and in all.

Mark. Let me respond again. First off, whenever we speak here of Christ being all and the scripture also says that all has been put under him, and then it tells us but it's evident that the Father is accepted. In other words, we're talking about all being put under him or him being, you know, above all but that doesn't mean he's above the Father or the Holy Spirit. In other words, we're talking about two different categories here. You're talking on the category of the created world, you're talking about Jesus being above all in the created world or these kind of ideas, but when you're talking about the internal nature of God you're in a whole other sphere, you're in a whole other category of discussion. And I don't know the point but I forgot what it was. Go ahead and comment.

Steve. Well, you're simply dividing who God is from what he is.

Mark. Oh, right.

Steve. You're drawing a line and saying God is three, you know, you have who and what God is and you think you can separate the two. You cannot separate the two.

Mark. All right. What I'm saying as a Trinitarian and I started this, this should be no blinding revelation to anybody watching this because I started out by saying there's Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three distinct persons, one God. There's one nature, essence,

being, substance, whatever term you want to use of God. There's one God but there are three persons who are God. That's the point that I made from the very start so it should be no blinding revelation that I tell you that Jesus is the "who" of the Son but he's not the "who" of the Father and the Holy Spirit. I don't see what's so shocking about that.

Steve. Well, you know, and I know our listeners have several scriptures that they would want to ask me probably about my position and one of them being, "Let us make man in Our image." Very quickly, on a chart that I have here if you want to see, when God and man are in the same image, if you would mind putting this on this chart here, God and man being in the same image, if God and man are in the same image and they are because God said he created man in his own image, man's image is body, soul and spirit. That's the image of man. Man, image means likeness. Now he can go into terms of what image means but image means likeness according to Genesis 1. God also has a body, a soul and a spirit. If God is three personalities, three personalities, then we would have to have three to be in his image but we only have one, and I don't think you can tell me that there are people that have three unless you believe in schizophrenia and all that.

Mark. No. Well, my response to that is simply this, we certainly would disagree on what the scripture means by the image and likeness of God. I think if you look at the book of Genesis and you trace this through, you see that man is created to be the image-bearer of God. In other words, he bears God's image to the world and that specific image is that he is to rule over the creation of God. God is sovereign over all and God has created man to reflect his image to the world. What is that image? That image of holiness. That image of authority. That sort of image. What did man do? Man chose to sin against God by rejecting the authority of God and that is the rejection of what we are as people being made in the image of God. So I think, and I could go on for that for a long time, but the point that I'm trying to make is that the concept for the image of God is very significant in scripture but I think he's taken something out of it that was never intended by Genesis 1.

Steve. Well, here's some more pictures that I want to show on my charts, if the camera can show this. Here are some pictures of the Trinity. I just got them one day out of an encyclopedia, one is out of a Catholic encyclopedia, one's out of another publication, I don't remember. But if the camera can zoom in on this, this shows three individual distinct persons of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If that's not three gods, and I'm glad you can zoom in on that, three gods, if that's not three gods then really, you know, he can sit over there and laugh but this is representative of a great deal of Trinitarianism and he may not uphold to this doctrine of three persons that you can see but this is exemplified all throughout Christendom as he believes in it.

Mark. No. Let me just, please, comment on this. Steve is bringing up, first off at this point, issues that were never raised in this discussion and that he knows and he knows very well that I would never use illustrations like that. He knows that I would deny those. I've denied them all day long by saying that God is invisible. How can you draw a picture of three human persons and say that this represents the doctrine of the Trinity? Therefore what he has done is he has built a straw man. That means he has brought forward

something that I don't believe and he's knocked it down. That's not the way to debate. You debate by entertaining and challenging the viewpoint of the one that you are discussing things with. This is not Trinitarianism as I hold it, nor as anyone that I would choose as a representative of my position, nor is it historic Trinitarianism. Every careful Trinitarian will say God is invisible and God is not a human person eternally, God is a divine Trinity of persons, and this cannot be brought down to the level of human illustrations like this. I hope the illustrations you give are going to be ones that I would use.

Steve. Okay, well, I started off that, Mark, by saying that I know that you did not hold to that so I wasn't accusing you. But anyway, let me go on. If the camera can zoom in on this, I have what's called "Who's on First?" You know, and that's the thing used by the baseball parody when they're talking about who's who and where they are. But I have some questions here, Mark. God said, "Let there be light." Do you know who said that?

Mark. God said that.

Steve. Did the Father, Son or Holy Spirit, do you know which one of them said it?

Mark. The scripture says God said that.

Steve. And you don't know who it was?

Mark. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So Father, Son and Holy Spirit said, "Let there be light."

Steve. All three of them were talking at the same time?

Mark. You're acting as if we have some sort of verbal communication going on through a certain voice box with a certain amount of wind blowing through it in order to be uttered through a physical mouth. You're bringing God down to the level of man.

Steve. Well, I can go on and I can also point out that Mark does not know really which member of his Trinity said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Very important, first commandment. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Mark. This, this...

Steve. Just a second, Mark.

Mark. Okay, we've got about one minute left.

Steve. So my basic point is Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice. My sheep hear my voice." He doesn't know who's talking so therefore he doesn't know the voice of God therefore Trinitarians don't know who created the universe because he doesn't know who said, "Let there be light"; he doesn't know who they worship because he doesn't know

who said, "Don't worship anybody but me"; and he doesn't know who saves them because in Isaiah God says, "Look unto me and be ye saved." Who said that, Father, Son or Holy Spirit?

Mark. Let me respond to this and I think this should do for our time, and I think this is a good place to stop. He says there, number 2, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and he says who said this, the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit, as if they are three gods. That reveals that this man has missed the whole point I've been making all day, and that is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God. There is no other God than that one God. And when he says we don't know which one and you don't know which God to serve, it only betrays that he doesn't understand what I've been saying in this whole discussion. As Trinitarians we believe in one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. There are passages where he speaks in this sort of way where it is simply God who is speaking and there is no need to distinguish between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But here's my challenge: there are many places where the scripture uses not "me" but it uses "us" and "we," and this part of language, this communication of plurality of persons does not fit his model. It fits the Trinitarian model and understanding of scripture. That's my point. The Bible fits all of the evidence of Trinitarianism but not that of his doctrine.

Dale. I would just like to say we're out of time. We want to thank Steve for coming and it's been a very lively debate. Mark, thank you as well. Look into the scriptures and decide for yourselves. It's a very important issue, most important of all could decide between heaven and hell to know the true God, the God of the Bible, and you can only know him through his Son Jesus Christ. You must get alone with God and you must count the cost and then give yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ. Let him be Lord of your life and then fellowship with God will be restored and you'll be made a new creation by the Holy Spirit.

We thank you for watching. Until next time, God bless.

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