

# Problems People have with the "Trinity" Doctrine (Part 2)

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By way of reminder: We must not think of the word *person* here *as if we were discussing a human being* (or even an angel) when we use that term to refer to the Father, Son or Holy Spirit. This, and other human terms as well, when applied to the being of God were chosen not because they are "accurate in every respect," but because we have not found any better words to use. Such words are "far behind the thought, and the thought is far behind the actuality."<sup>1</sup> As humans, we can only attempt to preserve the actuality in this inadequate way, and should never forget that it is the reality itself and not the words which matter. (For some, the word *persons* may never be capable of describing anything more than separate beings in their mind, and thus be not only inadequate, but also offensive when discussing the nature of God's existence with them. Unfortunately, the only descriptive terms available to us are those which we also use of humans.)

## What God tells us He is not!

Because it is so difficult to describe something truly unique, or in this case, a truly unique being with no equal, it may be helpful to describe some of what God is **not** or cannot do:

### God is not a man *and* He cannot lie!

- "God is not a man, that He should lie,...; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (Numbers 23:19a, c; NAU)."
- "...in hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the ages began (Titus 1:2; NET)."
- "In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie,... (Hebrews 6:17-18b; NAU)."

### God cannot be *tempted by evil*, nor tempt anyone else!

- "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God **cannot** be tempted by evil, and He Himself **does not** tempt anyone (James 1:13; NAU)."

## God does not *require* rest nor time!

God **never** becomes tired<sup>2</sup> — nor has He ever needed some kind of fuel to survive (God has **limitless energy** within Himself)! He is **never perplexed nor** in need of “time” to think through anything He (has already) decided to do: His wisdom and understanding are **infinite**.

- “Do you not know? Have you not heard? **The Everlasting God**, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does **not** become weary or tired. **His understanding is inscrutable** [“unsearchable” (ESV), “no one can fathom” (NIV), “there is no limit to His wisdom” (NET) cf. Psalm 147:5, Romans 11:33] (Isaiah 40:28; NAU).”

## God does not need *anything* from *anyone* (He is entirely self-sufficient)!

- “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; <sup>25</sup> nor is He served by human hands, **as though He needed anything**, since **He Himself gives** to all *people* **life** and breath and **all things**; (Acts 17:24-25; NAU).”

## God does not *change*, nor does He *repent*!

- “God is **not** a man, that He should lie, **Nor** a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (Numbers 23:19; NAU)”
- “Also the Glory [or Splendor] of Israel [a name for God] will **not** lie or **change His mind**; for He is not a man that He should change His mind (1 Samuel 15:29; NAU).”
- “For I, the LORD, **do not change**; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed (Malachi 3:6; NAU).”

Critics have claimed there is a contradiction in Scripture between these and other passages. The reality is that they have either failed to understand the context in which the same Hebrew word must have different meanings, or the fact that the language speaks of God *changing what He said He would do* **because men first changed** their beliefs and/or actions in relation to a conditional statement God had made.<sup>3</sup> What you will never see in Scripture is a declaration about God’s attributes (such as His righteousness) or an unconditional promise He has made, of which it is later stated that He has *changed* His nature or has *gone back on* or canceled one of His promises! God has **never** sinned, so has never had anything He needed to *repent* of, **nor** is there any act (within *or outside of* history) that God has ever *regretted* doing; there’s nothing He wishes He could have done differently, as in any of the *regrets* humans may have.

To pursue this further, we need to understand the Hebrew language has fewer words to work with (a smaller vocabulary) than Greek or English, which it *compensates for* by using the same word to cover different meanings in different contexts. It’s also true that the Hebrew writers used *anthropomorphic* descriptions of God; that is, spoke of Him in various passages as if He were a man (or as one having the *same feelings* as a man);

which is quite understandable, since there is no other being to compare Him to. One of the most important words used of God in this category is: נָחַם (nācham; *Strong's* 05162, TWOT 1344); which has been translated as: *to console oneself, comfort, have compassion, pity, being sorry, sorrow, grief, relent, change one's mind, regret and repent*; among others. (Obviously, there's a difference between *having grief and changing one's mind*).

For example, there *appears to be* a contradiction within 1 Samuel 15, where verse 35 says God *regretted* making Saul king. But only seven verses earlier, Samuel said that God *never changes His mind, repents or has regrets* (1 Samuel 15:29); the same Hebrew word (nācham; in different *forms*) is used in both verses. However, in verse 29, we have a statement about God's unchanging purposes, whereas in verse 35 (and 11: "I **regret** that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me..." NAU), God tells us He can experience sorrow over someone's disobedience. Does that mean God didn't know what Saul was going to do? Of course not. God declares "the end from the beginning" (see Isaiah 46:10 NET). But that doesn't detract from God also being able to genuinely *grieve* in spite of an event being part of His plan for the world (see Genesis 6:6).<sup>4</sup> Exodus 32:14 (which also uses nācham) would include both *grief* and *at least* the conditional response of Moses; it should be noted that God still judged some rather than all of them. (Amos 7:3, 6 is similar.)

And here's something that *is* true about God: **God can see\* everywhere!**

- "Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see\* him?" declares the LORD. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD (Jeremiah 23:24; NAU)."
- "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? (Psalm 139:7)"

This attribute is true only of God. There is nowhere in the whole created Universe where God is not immediately aware of what is occurring there. This is also true for any other *plane of existence* (the "heavens" plural; not just in earth's atmosphere, nor beyond all galaxies — to whatever the farthest extent of the physical Universe may be, **but also** in the realms wherever all the angels and departed souls dwell). \*Note again that the use of the word *see* here is merely an anthropomorphic description of God's *omnipresence*. He had no need of hands (which Scripture often attributes to God) to create the Universe, nor does He require eyes to see us. And if anyone believes such descriptions must be taken literally, then according to their view God must also have wings (see Psalm 91:4)!

## **There is only One God!**

God is **\*not\*** one of a class of many beings that can be equal in power or in any other attribute, or *even come close to* being like Him. In the book of Isaiah, we read:

- “**I** am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides **Me** there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; <sup>6</sup> That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other.” (Isaiah 45:5-6; NAU)
- “For thus says **the LORD, who created the heavens** (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it *and* did not create it a waste place, *but* formed it to be inhabited), “**I am the LORD, and there is none else.**” (Isaiah 45:18; NAU)
- “Declare and set forth *your case*; indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not **I, the LORD**? And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me. <sup>22</sup> Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for **I am God**, and there is no other.” (Isaiah 45:21-22; NAU)

Thus, Christians who accept all that God has revealed to us in Scripture, believe in **only the one true God**; not 2 or 3 or more *gods*. They are **not** polytheists in any sense of that word; which is, however, what *Latter Day Saints’ (LDS; Mormon) theology teaches* about the relationship between Jesus and the Father; *that they are two separate beings, two different gods, and even that there are many other gods in the universe; each of which was once a man!*<sup>5</sup>

**Nor** do Christians believe **the Word** (see John 1:1, 14) was (or is) some kind of lesser being than **the eternal God who created everything**. Yet, that is what *the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach; that God the Father (“Jehovah” in their theology) created the Word, and then everything else was created through him.*<sup>6</sup> But, in the same Bible passages which they use as references for their name “*witnesses*,” we read that God Himself, the All Knowing and Wise God, does **\*not\* know** (see Isaiah 44:8) **of anyone even like Him** (see Isaiah 44:7; 46:9)! They understand the dilemma, so have decided that Jesus must be like a created *angel* instead; some class of being other than God the Father. **But** there **cannot** be *another “Creator” nor “Savior”* other than **God!** It is impossible for Jesus to be some other kind of being; one that does not have the same nature as God the Father, and yet also be the Creator and Savior of the world.

- **Isaiah 43:10:** “You are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that **I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me.**” (NAU)
- **Isaiah 44:6-8:** “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: “**I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me.**”<sup>7</sup>“Who is like Me? Let him proclaim and declare it; yes, let him recount it to Me in order, From the time that I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming and the events that are going to take place. <sup>8</sup>“Do not tremble and do not be afraid; have I not long since announced it to you and declared *it*? And you are My witnesses. **Is there any God besides Me, or is there any other Rock? I know of none.**” (NAU)
- **Isaiah 46:9:** “Remember the former things long past, For **I am God**, and **there is no other**; *I am* God, and **there is no one like Me**” (NAU; cf. Exodus 8:10)

Yet, the *Jehovah's Witnesses* declare in their bible that the Word [Jesus] was: **"A god," in contrast with "the God."**<sup>7</sup> Therefore, they can **never** escape **the fact** that they believe in at least **one other god** apart from the one and only true God! But God says, **"there is no God besides Me** (Isaiah 44:6)." They are stuck in this position because rather than allowing God's Word, the Scriptures, to dictate what they should believe, they have placed the words of men above those of God. They would rather believe the false prophets of the *Watchtower Bible and Tract Society*.

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<sup>1</sup> Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith* (Eerdmans, ©1956; Baker Edition, 1977); page 158.

<sup>2</sup> A few critics have tried to confuse Believers by saying this contradicts what is said of God in Genesis: That He "rested" on the 7<sup>th</sup> day after creating the Universe. But that simply provides yet another example of the "baggage" humans carry with them concerning words about *persons*: At some point or other most people (especially physics students) will encounter one of Isaac Newton's *Laws of Motion*, called The Law of Inertia (1687): "A body at rest tends to remain at rest. A body in motion tends to stay in motion. Bodies will continue in their current state, whether at rest or in motion, unless acted on by a greater outside force." When a mass is 'at rest,' that simply means it's not moving in relation to some other specified body. It's **not** because it got tired (or even because a motor ran out of fuel, which would affect *acceleration*, but not cause it to stop; it's *friction* or some other kind of force acting against a body's motion that may do so). Likewise, Genesis 2:2 simply means that God ceased His work of creation, **not** that He *had to* because He needed to *regain strength* like men! The reason most English translations still use the somewhat *flowery* word 'rested' here is to emphasize that the Law of the Sabbath (and the idea of a 7-day week with a day of 'rest') is directly related to God's declaring that after six days of creation, He 'rested' (see Exodus 20:11). Unlike the traditional translation, the NET Bible has "...and he ceased on the seventh day" in Genesis 2:2 (NET) with this note: "tn The Hebrew term שָׁבַת (*shābbath*) can be translated "to rest" ("and he rested") but it basically means "to cease." This is not a rest from exhaustion; it is the cessation of the work of creation."

<sup>3</sup> If almost anyone is placed into a pool of water at least 14 feet deep, either unconscious or weighted down and restrained, it's highly likely water will fill their lungs and they will drown. In contrast, if an average adult is not drugged nor restrained and the water is only 4 feet deep, they should have no problem. **Did the properties of water change?** Of course not, it was the circumstances that changed. Another analogy: You look at a mountain, a certain distance from its south face, then travel to a different location the same distance away but exactly opposite, looking at its north face and declare, "It changed. It looks completely different now!" **Did the mountain really change?** Likewise, when Scripture uses words like *relented* or *repented* of some action that God had said would happen, the first thing we need to do is check the context for anything that someone has done which altered their relation to some condition. See Jeremiah 18:7-10 and note the word **if** at the beginning of verses 8 and 10. It is precisely because God is immutable (never changes), that God's relation to men must change, if they do.

For those who enjoy math or science: The force of gravity can be calculated using

$F = (G \cdot m_1 \cdot m_2) / d^2$ , where G is the Gravitational Constant. If both  $m_1$  and the distance (d) remain the same, but we find a difference in the force (F), which of the following is more likely:

- 1) The Gravitational Constant has *changed*, or
- 2)  $m_2$  has changed? (I think you get the point.)

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<sup>4</sup> Regarding emotions, God is not like a robot or a computer program, but neither is He merely like some kind of *exalted* human being. Paul wrote, “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit” (in Ephesians 4:30), so we know that even the Spirit can experience this emotion in some way. But how ever God actually *experiences* some emotions, they will never alter any of His attributes; unlike humans, who, for example, can at times *lose control* to their emotions of *anger* or *grief* or by *being shocked* in certain circumstances, then say or do things they normally would not.

<sup>5</sup> Their prophet, Joseph Smith, said: "I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and the Holy Ghost...: and these three constitute three distinct personages **and three Gods.**" "**We have three Gods... they are plural.**" (Page 370 of *Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*; Joseph Fielding Smith, 1938). "**In the Heaven where our spirits were born, there are many Gods,**..." (see **25.** at top of second column, on page 37 of *The Seer*, Volumes 1-2; edited by Orson Pratt, 1853). See our page here: [Some Teachings of the LDS](#) for full-page copies (so the context is clear) of these and other references (and links); including their teaching that **God was once a man like us!**

<sup>6</sup> In **Colossians 1:16-17**, we read: “**For by Him all things were created**, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – **all things** have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> **He is before all things**, and in Him **all things** hold together (Colossians 1:16-17; NAU).” But the *Jehovah's Witnesses* insist that **God created everything by means of the Word, the first created being**: So, every appearance of the phrase "**all things**" in those verses above was altered in the so-called *translation* printed by the *Watchtower Bible and Tract Society* to read: "all **[other]** things". When Scripture disagrees with their beliefs, rather than submit to the Word of God, they have essentially said, ‘**who cares, we’ll just change our bible!**’

<sup>7</sup> *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* (©1969, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania), page 417 (page 401 in the 1985 edition). See our page: [Some of What Jehovah's Witnesses Teach](#), for a full-page copy (so the context is clear) of this reference. Later in this study, we'll examine what they provided in the endnotes of this work for coming to such a conclusion.