



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting **every man** perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XIV
Issue 347

The Deity of God

Part 1 of 4

The Only True God

by — John H. Essex (1907-1991)

The great French composer, Charles Gounod, once paid a generous tribute to his Austrian counterpart, Mozart. Gounod remarked,

When I was twenty, I used to say, "I." When I was thirty, I said, "I and Mozart." When I was forty, I said, "Mozart and I." But now I am sixty, I say, simply and sincerely, "Mozart."

Our spiritual growth into a realization of God may be expressed in a similar way. When we are young, we say, "I." God scarcely enters into our thoughts. After a time, we begin to take account of the Deity, and our contemplations are modified to the conception of "I and God," though we probably would not give public expression to this. Later on, God's Spirit begins to take a greater hold on us, and exercises our minds "to **will** as well as to work for the sake of His delight" (Philippians 2:13). Then He is placed first, and we say, "God and I." But the highest pinnacle of spiritual perception is not reached until the "I" has completely faded out of the picture, and we say, simply and sincerely, "God."

This is the pinnacle to which the apostle Paul is directing our thoughts when he states, as he does on several occasions, that "All is of God" (I Corinthians 11:12; II Corinthians 5:18; Romans 11:36); when he declares that the evangel is "**God's power for salvation**" (Romans 1:16); and when he emphasizes that God is

Operating all, in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11).

It is particularly significant that it is in the prison let-

ters, the most spiritually advanced of Paul's writings, that he prays most earnestly that

*The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation **in the realization of Him*** (Ephesians 1:17).

That you may be filled full with the realization of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, you to walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God (Colossians 1:9-10).

The Greek word, here translated "realization," is *epignosis*, (lit. *on-knowledge*). In the *King James Version*, it is generally translated "knowledge," thus ignoring the prefix *epi*, though three times the word is rendered "**acknowledging**" and once "**acknowledgment**." The prefix indicates that there is more in the word than mere knowledge, and the *Concordant Version* renders it either "recognition" or "realization," depending on the context (cf. *Keyword Concordance*, p. 242).

Humanity as a whole does not "test God to have Him in recognition" (Romans 1:28). Humanity is not ignorant of God (:21), but "**knowing God, not as God do they glorify or thank Him**." Because of this, their unintelligent heart is darkened, and God "gives them

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume XIV, No. 347 – June 5, 2012

This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

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Over the summer I look forward to seeing some of you, as the saints in CO and CA are preparing to host weekends of fellowship and study time. Mark your calendars!

Colorado Springs, CO June 22-24

A popular tourist and vacation destination, Colorado Springs has stunning views of Pikes Peak, the Rocky Mountains, and plenty of cultural and outdoor activities for all ages. For pre-teens and teens, there will be social activities and a couple of Bible studies. Bring your family and make a mini-vacation of it.

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Saturday, June 23rd:

9 am-8 pm (w/lunch and dinner breaks) at the Lewis-Palmer High School, 1300 Higby Rd.; Monument, CO 80132

Sunday, June 24th:

9 am-3 pm (same location; w/lunch break); 3-6 pm fellowship time at the Hufford's home.

Full details:

DEITY (continued from front page)
over to a disqualified mind."

In contrast to this general trend, the eyes of our hearts have been enlightened (Ephesians 1:17), and Paul prays that we may be growing "into a realization of Him," that we may become

Competent for a part of the allotment of the saints in light (Colossians 1:10-12).

Let us note that it is "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" Who gives us "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him" (Ephesians

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Friday night, August 3rd

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(916) 515-9355
charlesrutsch@gmail.com

Saturday, August 4th

The meeting begins in the hotel at 9 am and ends at 9 pm with breaks for lunch and dinner.

Sunday, August 5th

The meeting resumes at 9 am and ends at 6 pm.

If you have any questions you can contact Charles Rutsch (information above), or Darron Haworth:
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1:17), and it is the same God and Father Who makes us "competent for a part of the allotment of the saints, in light" (Colossians 1:12). Thus is the Deity of God manifested in the believers, and thus we see the importance of our subject.

THE DEITY

The word "deity" only occurs once in the Greek Scriptures, in Colossians 2:9, where they speak of the entire complement of the Deity dwelling bodily in Christ. The word is defined in the *Keyword Concordance* as "that which pertains to God," and when we speak of "the deity of God," it is a way of expressing "the ►



godness of God" (there is no word "godness" in English, so we have to use the word "deity"). As we understand it, it is a means of ascribing to God all that is rightly His, whatever field of His operations we may be considering, and, in particular, in attributing to Him all of the glory to which He alone is entitled.

The Scriptures are emphatic in placing God *first* and *foremost*. The initial commandment to Israel was,

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me (Exodus 20:3).

Through one of His major prophets, Isaiah, God challenged His people, Israel, with the question,

To whom will you liken Me, and make Me equal, and compare Me, and we shall be alike? (Isaiah 46: 5).

I am Yahweh, and there is none else (Isaiah 45:18).

I am Yahweh; that is My name, and I will not give My glory to another, nor My praises to carvings (Isaiah 42:8).

Let us beware lest we detract from God the glory that is His due!

GENESIS 1:1

The very first sentence of Scripture is of supreme importance in establishing the deity of God.

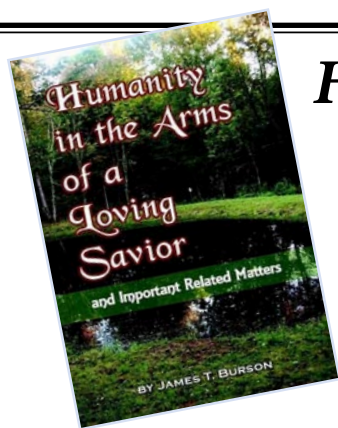
In a beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth.

This is a plain, simple, straightforward statement; no words could be more specific, nor less open to misunderstanding. Yet they have been challenged by no less than seven human philosophies, and, as all human philosophies are inspired by the Adversary, this means that Satan considers this Divine statement of fact so important that he has attacked it from seven different directions. Let us consider the statement in detail.

Elohim (God)

This word repudiates

1. *Atheism*, the philosophy of "No God." Atheism *denies* God.
2. *Polytheism*, the philosophy of "Many Gods." Polytheism *divides* God into many smaller deities.
3. *Agnosticism*, which says that it cannot be known whether there is a God or not.



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These three philosophies (Atheism, Polytheism and Agnosticism, or the theories of “No God,” “Many Gods” and “The Unknown God”) all seek to rob God of His glory as a unique Being. God answers their challenge in Isaiah 45:5,

I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me.

Elohim (God) Created

These words repudiate philosophies four and five, namely,

4. *Fatalism*, which says that everything came into being by chance. Fatalism disputes creation.

5. *Evolution*, which says that one thing just grew out of another. Evolution debars creation.

These two philosophies would rob God of His glory as a Creator. God answers their challenge in Isaiah 40:26, 28.

Lift up your eyes to the height and see; Who created all these? Who is bringing forth their host by number? ... Do you not know? Should you not hear? The Elohim eonian is Yahweh, Creator of the ends of the earth; He is not fainting, nor is He wearying. And there is no investigating of His understanding.

Elohim (God) Created the Heavens and the Earth

This whole phrase repudiates philosophies six and seven, namely,

6. *Pantheism*, which makes God and nature one and the same, and

7. *Materialism*, which claims that matter is eternal.

These philosophies, by reducing God to the level of His creation, deny Him the glory of His supremacy. He answers their challenge in Isaiah 40:25 and Isaiah 45:5,

Then to whom will ye liken Me, and whose equal will I be? Saying is the Holy One ... I am Yahweh, and there is no other; Except for Me, there is no Elohim; I am forearming you, yet you do not know Me.

The fact that this opening verse of Scripture is attacked by so many human philosophies shows how determined are the efforts that have been made to undermine the validity of God's Word.

Even more to the point is that it shows how determined and ruthless have been the attempts of the Adversary to destroy the absoluteness of the *deity of God*.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

When God gave His law to the nation that had just entered into covenant relationship with Him, He made the first commandment,

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me! (Exodus 20:3).

He followed this up by forbidding them to make, worship or serve any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven or earth or in the water. That is to say, they were not to give to any creature the glory and adoration that was due to Him as the Creator. He must be Supreme, and the glory of His supremacy He will not give to another, for all others are creatures, while He alone is the Creator.

Yet, while Moses was actually receiving this commandment at the top of the mountain, the people below were flagrantly flouting its principle by constructing and worshiping a golden calf, and they even persuaded Aaron to connive with them.

No wonder Moses was [angry], and broke the tables of stone on which the commandment was written. The people had already broken it before ever they had received it in writing (they had already received verbal instruction from God, and had agreed to obey it (Exodus 19:7-8) so they were without excuse). God was [angry] with the people, too, and there was a great judgment in which about three thousand died (Exodus 32:1-28).

This state of affairs is not a symptom peculiar to Israel; it is to be found in all humanity. Paul tells us in Romans 1 that mankind,

Knowing God, not as God do they glorify or thank Him ... [but rather] ... change the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of a corruptible human being and flying creatures and quadrupeds and reptiles (Romans 1:21-23).



Two verses later they are spoken of as those

Who alter the truth of God into the lie, and are venerated, and offer divine service to the creature rather than the Creator.

This is the great lie referred to in Romans 1:25 – altering the truth of God to make it seem proper for worship to be given to a creature rather than to the Creator. It is the same great lie which is spoken of in II Thessalonians 2:11 where, upon those who are perishing, because they do not receive the love of the truth for their salvation, God is sending “an operation of deception for them to believe the lie.” The love of the truth would direct them to the knowledge that “all is of God” – that the evangel is His power for salvation, based on the preaching of the cross; but the lie, backed up by all kinds of false signs and miracles, inspired by the Adversary, leads them into all sorts of false philosophies which have as their basis the thought that man is capable of higher things, that he can achieve his own salvation independently of God, that he can work out his own destiny. This is worship of the creature rather than the Creator, and is an affront to the Deity of God.

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me!

This principle is carried through into the writings of Paul, for the apostle declares, in I Corinthians 8:6,

For us there is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is, and we through Him.

Then the apostle adds, with some significance,

But not in all is there this knowledge (:7).

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THE SUPREME GOD

For us there is one God.

It is not sufficient that we should just recognize this; we must add the further truth,

Out of Whom all is.

This additional truth is meaningless unless we stress the comprehensiveness of the word *all*. We cannot have *part* out of God and *part* from someone else. This Scripture is in line with Romans 11:33-36, where the thought is expanded.

O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For who knew the mind of the Lord? Or, who became His adviser? Or, who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid him? Seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!

These verses declare, in an absolute sense, the *Deity of God*. They are majestic in their conception, they are *all-embracing* in their scope.

They cover *the whole* of God’s purpose from its origin to its consummation – from the beginning when all was in God to the ultimate when God will be “*All in all*.” All is out of God; and this not only includes all that was created at the beginning, but also all that is needed to direct and sustain that creation until it has reached its final goal: *all* is through Him. What a wonderful picture!

God is supreme, all-knowing and all-wise.

Who can advise Him, or to Him dictate?

None is like Him, so glorious and so great.

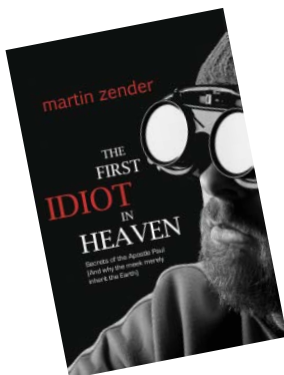
His Name is written in the star-filled skies,
and in the earth His power unerring lies.

His was the Mind to purpose and create,
and to allot to each his humble state.

In Him all live, Who every need supplies.

“*To Whom shall I be equal?*” says the Lord. Before His challenge other claims must fall. His declarations stand; His sovereign word may not return in vain, but must fulfill the purpose of the One Who works all according to the counsel of His will.

This is the God Who could appear to Abram as the “*God Who suffices*,” Who could declare to Israel



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Secrets of the Apostle Paul (and Why the Meek Merely Inherit the Earth)

by — Martin Zender

Paul was a visionary. He saw the world as no one else saw it. Jesus Christ blinded him with truth. *“To live is Christ,”* this man said, and he lived life with singular purpose: to see and know Christ.

In Paul’s evangel, God justifies sinners, not law-keepers or moral performers. According to what the terrestrial-bound Jesus taught (the gospel of the Circumcision), law-keepers and moral performers stay on Earth (*“the meek shall inherit the Earth”* – Matthew 5:5). So the Christians who think that imitating Jesus will get them to heaven will instead (assuming they can actually imitate Jesus) wind up on Earth.

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through Isaiah that He was the only Savior; and yet could lock up all together in stubbornness and, indeed, subject the whole creation to vanity.

Yet in locking up both the nations and Israel *“all together in stubbornness,”* it is so that *“He should be merciful to all”* (Romans 11:32), for mercy can be best demonstrated against a background of stubbornness (see also Ephesians 2:1-7). In subjecting the whole creation to vanity, it is so that it might have an expectation. A creation subject to vanity would suggest that all is futile and that there is no expectation whatever; and this is exactly how it would be if it was not for the all-sufficiency of God, Who Himself provides the expectation (see also Ephesians 2:8-10). In the ultimate, when creation has attained to its realization, it will be *“God’s achievement,”* just as the *ecclesia*, which is the body of Christ, is *“God’s achievement”* now. All is of God!

I CORINTHIANS 8:6

For us there is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is, and we through Him.

Yes, to us there is one God, and one God only: the Father, out of Whom all is. This One is quite separate and distinct from the Lord Jesus Christ, though, of course, there is a close relationship between them. The One is the Father, the other is the Son. The One is Supreme, the other is termed Sovereign (Colossians 1:18).

Let us note this; the Lord Jesus Christ is Sovereign only because God, the Supreme One, has made Him so. Peter explained this to Israel when he stated most emphatically, as recorded in Acts 2:36,

Let all the house of Israel know certainly, then, that God makes Him Lord as well as Christ – this Jesus Whom you crucify.

Paul also tells us this:

Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father (Philippians 2:9-11).

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

What room is there here for the concept of the Trinity – three gods in one and one three, and all co-eternal and co-equal?

The doctrine of the Trinity, as generally understood, is a most pernicious one, and is yet another attempt by the Adversary to undermine the Deity of God. **The words “Father” and “Son” lose their meaning if the Father does not precede the Son, and if the Father is not greater than the Son.** Jesus Himself said, *“The Father is greater than I”* (John 14:28), and spoke of ►



the Father as His God (John 20:17).

It is surprising how widespread this undermining doctrine has become, and how many believers it has deceived. We get into real difficulties whenever we use terms that are not in the Scriptures to describe scriptural matters. "Trinity" is a term invented by theologians; it has its origin in their creeds and finds expression in their hymns. We should be very wary of using terms which are unscriptural, and even more wary of building doctrines on them. It is true that there is a Father, a Son and a holy Spirit; but they are not three Beings in one, and still less are they one in three.

The Father is God in absolute right; He was, is and always will be, the Supreme. As such, He is entitled to the worship and adoration and affection of all.

The Son is "God" in a relative sense only. He is "*the only begotten God*" (John 1:18), as the Original of God's creation (Revelation 3:14), the Firstborn of every creature (Colossians 1:15), so that He might reveal to creation the God Whose true Image He is.

Invariably the Son is pointing to the Father and directing that glory be given to Him. It is the Father, Who (subsequent to obedience of His Son on the cross) ordains that acclamation be given to Christ, when He highly exalts Him and gives Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. It is clearly stated that this acclamation is "*for the glory of God, the Father.*"

The beautiful relationship which exists between the

Father and the Son was most aptly expressed by Jesus when He said, "*I and the Father are one*" (John 10:30), but this can by no means be used to support the theory of the Trinity, for later Jesus prayed that His disciples may also "*be one, according as We are*" (John 17:11), and later in the same chapter, "*that they may all be one, according as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us*" (:21).

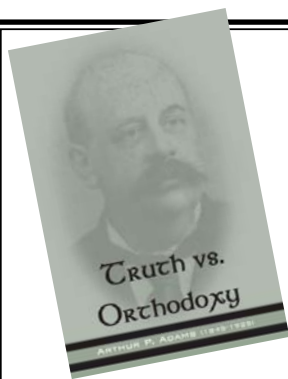
Jesus always recognized the Deity of His Father, and will always do so, for at the consummation He gives up the kingdom to His God and Father, and Himself is subject to the One Who has subjected all to Him, that God may be All in all (I Corinthians 15:24-28).

Let this disposition, which is in Christ Jesus, be in us also, and let us give all honor and glory to God, realizing and acknowledging that we can do nothing of ourselves. Thus may we subject ourselves to Him, that He may be All in us now.

GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT

The holy Spirit is not a god at all, but simply the power of God as manifested in His invisible, intangible operations. For example, it operated invisibly in order to bring about the conception of the baby Jesus (Matthew 1:18). It operated, too, on the minds of the various ones chosen by God to write down His Word (II Peter 1:21). Now it dwells in the hearts of God's saints (I Corinthians 3:16). It is never, in itself, an object of worship, but directs praise and acclamation to God and to His Son.

(To be continued.)



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