

A REVELATION OF.....
THE POWER OF THREE IN
GOD AND THE CHURCH
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 'THREES' IN THE
PURPOSES OF GOD

ONE OF A SERIES OF REVELATIONS ON VARIOUS
ASPECTS OF SCRIPTURE, AS INSPIRED BY THE
HOLY SPIRIT.

Penned by:

DAVID TAIT

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A NOTE FROM DAVID.....

In walking further with Jesus, I increasingly appreciate that this particular revelation of 'threes in God' has been hugely important in developing my understanding of God and how He works both in the church and in our lives.

It matters not whether you are a 'oneness', 'twoness', or 'trinitarian' believer. The concept still applies. For we're all very good at putting God in a box, limited to the walls of our theology and understanding. But, one day, we will know all the truth of the great mystery of God.

In the meantime, if you can grasp this simple, yet profound concept, I'm sure it will open up new realms of understanding for you too about God and His plans for His people in these end days.

It certainly developed my faith tremendously, being able to grasp more of God's mighty plan for me. And for you too!

So let's get into it!

May God bless you, and you bless God.

His servant and yours,

David Tait

PART 1: THE BACKGROUND

THE POWER OF THREE

DEFINITION OF TERMS

GOD — (A.S. and Dutch God; Dan. Gud; Ger. Gott), the name of the Divine Being. It is the rendering (1) of the Hebrew <El, from a word meaning to be strong; (2) of <Eloah, plural <Elohim. The singular form, Eloah, is used only in poetry. The plural form is more commonly used in all parts of the Bible, The Hebrew word Jehovah (q.v.), the only other word generally employed to denote the Supreme Being, is uniformly rendered in the Authorized Version by “LORD,” printed in small capitals. The existence of God is taken for granted in the Bible. There is nowhere any argument to prove it. He who disbelieves this truth is spoken of as one devoid of understanding (Ps. 14:1).

The arguments generally adduced by theologians in proof of the being of God are:

- (1.) The a priori argument, which is the testimony afforded by reason.
- (2.) The a posteriori argument, by which we proceed logically from the facts of experience to causes. These arguments are,
 - (a) The cosmological, by which it is proved that there must be a First Cause of all things, for every effect must have a cause.
 - (b) The teleological, or the argument from design. We see everywhere the operations of an intelligent Cause in nature.
 - (c) The moral argument, called also the anthropological argument, based on the moral consciousness and the history of mankind, which exhibits a moral order and purpose which can only be explained on the supposition of the existence of God. Conscience and human history testify that “verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.”

The attributes of God are set forth in order by Moses in Ex. 34:6,7. (see also Deut. 6:4; 10:17; Num. 16:22; Ex. 15:11; 33:19; Isa. 44:6; Hab. 3:6;

Ps. 102:26; Job 34:12.) They are also systematically classified in Rev. 5:12 and 7:12.

God's attributes are spoken of by some as absolute, i.e., such as belong to his essence as Jehovah, Jah, etc.; and relative, i.e., such as are ascribed to him with relation to his creatures. Others distinguish them into communicable, i.e., those which can be imparted in degree to his creatures: goodness, holiness, wisdom, etc.; and incommunicable, which cannot be so imparted: independence, immutability, immensity, and eternity. They are by some also divided into natural attributes, eternity, immensity, etc.; and moral, holiness, goodness, etc. 1

GODHEAD — (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:20; Col. 2:9), the essential being or the nature of God. 1

GOD. God is and he may be known. These two affirmations form the foundation and inspiration of all religion. The first is an affirmation of faith, the second of experience. Since the existence of God is not subject to scientific proof, it must be a postulate of faith; and since God transcends all his creation, he can be known only in his self-revelation.

The Christian religion is distinctive in that it claims that God can be known as a personal God only in his self-revelation in the Scriptures. The Bible is written not to prove that God is, but to reveal him in his activities. For that reason, the biblical revelation of God is, in its nature, progressive, reaching its fullness in Jesus Christ his Son.

In the light of his self-revelation in the Scriptures, there are several affirmations that can be made about God.

I. His Being

In his Being God is self-existing. While his creation is dependent on him, he is utterly independent of the creation. He not only has life, but he is life to his universe, and has the source of that life within himself.

Very early in biblical history this mystery of God's being was revealed to Moses when, in the wilderness of Horeb, he met with God as fire in a bush (Ex. 3:2). The distinctive thing about that phenomenon was that 'the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed'. To Moses this must have meant that the fire was independent of its environment: it was self-fed. Such is God in his essential being: he is utterly independent of every environment in which he wills to make himself known. This quality of God's being probably finds expression in his personal name Yahweh, and in his self-affirmation: 'I am who I am', that is, 'I am the one that has being within himself' (Ex. 3:14).

This perception was implied in Isaiah's vision of God: 'The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary. . . He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength' (Is. 40:28-29). He is the Giver, and all his creatures are receivers. Christ gave this mystery its clearest expression when he said: 'For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself' (Jn. 5:26). This makes independence of life a distinctive quality of deity. Throughout the whole of Scripture God is revealed as the Fountainhead of all there is, animate and inanimate, the Creator and Life-giver, who alone has life within himself.

II. His nature

In his nature God is pure spirit. Very early in his self-disclosure as the author of the created universe, God is represented as the Spirit who brought light out of darkness, and order out of chaos (Gn. 1:2-3). Christ made this disclosure of God as the object of our worship to the woman of Samaria: 'God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth' (Jn. 4:24). Between these two affirmations there are frequent references to the nature of God as pure spirit and as divine spirit. He is called the Father of spirits (Heb. 12:9), and the combination 'the Spirit of the living God' is frequently used.

In this respect we must distinguish between God and his creatures that are spiritual. When we say that God is pure spirit, it is to emphasize that he is not part spirit and part body as man is. He is simple spirit without form or

parts, and for that reason he has no physical presence. When the Bible speaks of God as having eyes, ears, hands and feet, it is an attempt to convey to us the senses that these physical parts convey, for if we do not speak of God in physical terms we could not speak of him at all. This, of course, does not imply any imperfection in God. Spirit is not a limited or restricted form of existence, it is the perfect unit of being.

When we say that God is infinite spirit, we pass completely out of the reach of our experience. We are limited as to time and place, as to knowledge and power. God is essentially unlimited, and every element of his nature is unlimited. His infinity as to time we call his eternity, as to space his omnipresence, as to knowledge his omniscience, as to power his omnipotence.

His infinity likewise means that God is transcendent over his universe. It emphasizes his detachment as self-existing spirit from all his creatures. He is not shut in by what we call nature, but infinitely exalted above it. Even those passages of Scripture which stress his local and temporal manifestation lay emphasis also on his exaltation and omnipotence as a Being external to the world, its sovereign Creator and Judge (cf. Is. 40:12-17).

At the same time God's infinity implies his immanence. By this we mean his all-pervading presence and power within his creation. He does not stand apart from the world, a mere spectator of the work of his hands. He pervades everything, organic and inorganic, acting from within outwards, from the centre of every atom, and from the innermost springs of thought and life and feeling, a continuous sequence of cause and effect.

In such passages as Is. 57 and Acts 17 we have an expression of both God's transcendence and his immanence. In the first of these passages his transcendence finds expression as 'the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy', and his immanence as the one who dwells 'with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit' (Is. 57:15). In the second passage, Paul, in addressing the men of Athens, affirmed of the transcendent God that 'the God who made the world and everything in it,

being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all men life and breath and everything', and then affirms his immanence as the one who 'is not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:24, 28).

III. His character

God is personal. When we say this we assert that God is rational, self-conscious and self-determining, an intelligent moral agent. As supreme mind he is the source of all rationality in the universe. Since God's rational creatures possess independent character, God must be in possession of character that is divine both in its transcendence and immanence.

The OT reveals a personal God, both in terms of his own self-disclosure and of his people's relations with him, and the NT clearly shows that Christ spoke to God in terms that were meaningful only in person to person relationship. For that reason we can predicate certain mental and moral qualities of God, such as we do of human character. Attempts have been made to classify the divine attributes under such headings as Mental and Moral, or Communicable and Incommunicable, or Related and Unrelated. Scripture would seem to give no support to any of these classifications, and in any case God is infinitely greater than the sum of all his attributes.

*God's names are to us the designation of his attributes, and it is significant that God's names are given in the context of his people's needs. It would seem, therefore, more true to the biblical revelation to treat each attribute as a manifestation of God in the human situation that called it forth, compassion in the presence of misery, long-suffering in the presence of ill-desert, grace in the presence of guilt, mercy in the presence of penitence, suggesting that the attributes of God designate a relation into which he enters to those who feel their need of him. That bears with it the undoubted truth that God, in the full plenitude of his nature, is in each of his attributes, so that there is never more of one attribute than of another, never more love than justice, or more mercy than righteousness. If there is one attribute of God that can be recognized as all-comprehensive and all-

pervading, it is his *holiness, which must be predicated of all his attributes, holy love, holy compassion, holy wisdom.

IV. His will

God is sovereign. That means that he makes his own plans and carries them out in his own time and way. That is simply an expression of his supreme intelligence, power and wisdom. It means that God's will is not arbitrary, but acts in complete harmony with his character. It is the forth-putting of his power and goodness, and is thus the final goal of all existence.

There is, however, a distinction between God's will which prescribes what we shall do, and his will which determines what he will do. Thus theologians distinguish between the decretive will of God by which he decrees whatsoever comes to pass, and his preceptive will by which he enjoins upon his creatures the duties that belong to them. The decretive will of God is thus always accomplished, while his preceptive will is often disobeyed.

When we conceive of the sovereign sway of the divine will as the final ground of all that happens, either actively bringing it to pass, or passively permitting it to come to pass, we recognize the distinction between the active will of God and his permissive will. Thus the entrance of sin into the world must be attributed to the permissive will of God, since sin is a contradiction of his holiness and goodness. There is thus a realm in which God's will to act is dominant, and a realm in which man's liberty is given permission to act. The Bible presents both in operation. The note which rings through the OT is that struck by Nebuchadrezzar: 'He does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, 'What doest thou?'' (Dn. 4:35). In the NT we come across an impressive example of the divine will resisted by human unbelief, when Christ uttered his agonizing cry over Jerusalem: 'How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!' (Mt. 23:37).

Nevertheless, the sovereignty of God ensures that all will be overruled to serve his eternal purpose, and that ultimately Christ's petition: 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' shall be answered.

It is true that we are not able to reconcile God's sovereignty and man's responsibility because we do not understand the nature of divine knowledge and comprehension of all the laws that govern human conduct. The Bible throughout teaches us that all life is lived in the sustaining will of God in whom we live and move and have our being', and that as a bird is free in the air, and a fish in the sea, so man has his true freedom in the will of God who created him for himself.

V. His subsistence

In his essential life God is a fellowship. This is perhaps the supreme revelation of God given in the Scriptures: it is that God's life is eternally within himself a fellowship of three equal and distinct persons, Father, Son and Spirit, and that in his relationship to his moral creation God was extending to them the fellowship that was essentially his own. That might perhaps be read into the divine dictum that expressed the deliberate will to create man: 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,' that it was an expression of the will of God not only to reveal himself as a fellowship, but to make that life of fellowship open to the moral creatures made in his image and so fitted to enjoy it. While it is true that man through sinning lost his fitness to enjoy that holy fellowship, it is also true that God willed to make it possible to have it restored to him. It has been observed, indeed, that this was probably the grand end of redemption, the revelation of God in Three Persons acting for our restoration, in electing love that claimed us, in redeeming love that emancipated us, and in regenerating love that recreated us for his fellowship. (*Trinity.)

VI. His Fatherhood

Since God is a Person he can enter into personal relationships, and the closest and tenderest is that of Father. It was Christ's most common designation for God, and in theology it is reserved specially for the first

Person of the Trinity. There are four types of relationship in which the word Father is applied to God in Scripture.

There is his Creational Fatherhood. The fundamental relation of God to man whom he made in his own image finds its most full and fitting illustration in the natural relationship which involves the gift of life. Malachi, in calling his people to faithfulness to God and to consideration of one another, asks: 'Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us?' (Mal. 2:10). Isaiah, in a plea to God not to forsake his people, cries: 'Yet, O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou art our potter; we are all the work of thy hand' (Is. 64:8). But it is, more particularly, for man's spiritual nature that this relationship is claimed. In Hebrews God is called 'the Father of spirits' (12:9), and in Numbers 'the God of the spirits of all flesh' (16:22). Paul, when he preached from Mars' Hill, used this argument to drive home the irrationality of rational man worshipping idols of wood and stone, quoting the poet Aratus ('For we are indeed his offspring') to indicate that man is a creature of God. The creaturehood of man is thus the counterpart of the general Fatherhood of God. Without the Creator-Father there would be no race of man, no family of mankind.

There is the Theocratic Fatherhood. This is God's relationship to his covenant-people, Israel. In this, since it is a collective relationship that is indicated, rather than a personal one, Israel as a covenant-people was the child of God, and she was challenged to recognize and respond to this filial relationship: 'If then I am a father, where is my honour?' (Mal. 1:6). But since the covenant relationship was redemptive in its spiritual significance, this may be regarded as a foreshadowing of the NT revelation of the divine Fatherhood.

There is Generative Fatherhood. This belongs exclusively to the second Person of the Trinity, designated the Son of God, and the only begotten Son. It is, therefore, unique, and not to be applied to any mere creature. Christ, while on earth, spoke most frequently of this relationship which was peculiarly his. God was his Father by eternal generation, expressive of an essential and timeless relationship that transcends our comprehension. It is significant that Jesus, in his teaching of the Twelve, never used the term

‘Our Father’ as embracing himself and them. In the resurrection message through Mary he indicated two distinct relationships: ‘My Father, and your Father’ (Jn. 20:17), but the two are so linked together that the one becomes the ground of the other. His Sonship, though on a level altogether unique, was the basis of their sonship.

There is also the Adoptive Fatherhood. This is the redeeming relationship that belongs to all believers, and in the context of redemption it is viewed from two aspects, that of their standing in Christ, and that of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in them. This relationship to God is basic to all believers, as Paul reminds the Galatian believers: ‘For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith’ (Gal. 3:26). In this living union with Christ they are adopted into the family of God, and they become subjects of the regenerative work of the Spirit that bestows upon them the nature of children: one is the objective aspect, the other the subjective. Because of their new standing (justification) and relationship (adoption) to God the Father in Christ, they become partakers of the divine nature and are born into the family of God. John made this clear in the opening chapter of his Gospel: ‘To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power (authority) to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God’ (Jn. 1:13). And so they are granted all the privileges that belong to that filial relationship: ‘if children, then heirs’ is the sequence (Rom. 8:17).

It is clear that Christ’s teaching on the Fatherhood of God restricts the relationship to his believing people. In no instance is he reported as assuming this relationship to exist between God and unbelievers. Not only does he not give a hint of a redeeming Fatherhood of God towards all men, but he said pointedly to the cavilling Jews: ‘You are of your father the devil’ (Jn. 8:44).

While it is under this relationship of Father that the NT brings out the tenderest aspects of God’s character, his love, his faithfulness, his watchful care, it also brings out the responsibility of our having to show God the reverence, the trust and the loving obedience that children owe to a father.

Christ has taught us to pray not only ‘Our Father’, but ‘Our Father who art in heaven’, thus inculcating reverence and humility.

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SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS Numbers are also used with a symbolical or theological significance.

One is used to convey the concept of the unity and uniqueness of God, e.g. Dt. 6:4, ‘The Lord our God is one Lord’. The human race stems from one (Acts 17:26). The entry of sin into the world is through one man (Rom. 5:12). The gift of grace is by one man, Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:15). His sacrifice in death is a once-for-all offering (Heb. 7:27), and he is the first-born from the dead (Col. 1:18), the firstfruits of the dead (1 Cor. 15:20). ‘One’ also expresses the unity between Christ and the Father (Jn. 10:30), the union between believers and the Godhead, and the unity which exists among Christians (Jn. 17:21; Gal. 3:28). ‘One’ further expresses singleness of purpose (Lk. 10:42). The concept of union is also found in the saying of Jesus concerning marriage, ‘and the two shall become one’ (Mt. 19:6).

Two can be a figure both of unity and of division. Man and woman form the basic family unit (Gn. 1:27; 2:20, 24). Animals associate in pairs and enter the ark in twos (Gn. 7:9). Two people often work together in companionship, e.g. Joshua’s spies (Jos. 2:1), and the Twelve and Seventy disciples were sent out in pairs (Mk. 6:7; Lk. 10:1). In addition, at Sinai there were two stone tablets, and animals were often offered for sacrifice in pairs. By contrast two is used with separating force in 1 Ki. 18:21, as it is also implied in the two ‘ways’ of Mt. 7:13-14.

Three. It is natural to associate the number 3 with the Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, and the following references among others may be instanced:

Mt. 28:19; Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:2, where this teaching is implied. The number 3 is also associated with certain of God's mighty acts. At Mt Sinai the Lord was to come down to give his Law on 'the third day' (Ex. 19:11). In Hosea's prophecy the Lord would raise up his people 'on the third day', probably meaning a short time (Ho. 6:2). There is a similar usage of 'three' in Lk. 13:32, where 'third day' is 'poetical for the moment when something is finished, completed, and perfected' (N. Geldenhuys, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, 1950, p. 384, n. 4). Jonah was delivered (Jon. 1:17; Mt. 12:40), and God raised Christ from the dead, on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4). There were three disciples admitted to special terms of intimacy with Christ (Mk. 9:2; Mt 26:37), and at Calvary there were three crosses. Paul emphasizes three Christian virtues (1 Cor. 13:13). A further instance of three being used in connection with periods of time is the choice offered to David of 3 days' pestilence, 3 months' defeat or 3 years' famine (1 Ch. 21:12). The deployment of Gideon's army furnishes an example of division into three (Jdg. 7:16), and the fraction, a third, is employed in Rev. 8:7-12.

Four, the number of the sides of a square, is one of symbols of completion in the Bible. The divine name Yahweh has 4 letters in Heb. (YHWH). There were 4 rivers flowing out of the garden of Eden (Gn. 2:10) and there are 4 corners of the earth (Rev. 7:1; 20:8), from whence blow the 4 winds (Je. 49:36; Ezk. 37:9; Dn. 7:2). In his vision of the glory of God, Ezekiel saw 4 living creatures (ch. 1), and with these we may compare the 4 living creatures of Rev. 4:6.

The history of the world from the time of the Babylonian empire is spanned by 4 kingdoms (Dn. 2; 7). Four is a prominent number in prophetic symbolism and apocalyptic literature, as the following additional references show: 4 smiths and 4 horns (Zc. 1:18-21), 4 chariots (Zc. 6:1-8), 4 horns' of the altar (Rev. 9:13), 4 angels of destruction (Rev. 9:14). In addition, there are 4 Gospels, and at the time when the gospel was extended to the Gentiles Peter saw in a vision a sheet let down by its 4 corners.

Five and ten, and their multiples, occur frequently on account of the decimal system used in Palestine. In the OT 10 Patriarchs are mentioned before the Flood. The Egyptians were visited with 10 plagues and there were Ten Commandments. The fraction one-tenth formed the tithes (Gn. 14:20; 28:22; Lv. 27:30; 2 Ch. 31:5; Mal. 3:10). In the parable of Lk. 15:8 the woman possessed 10 coins, and in the parable of the pounds mention is made of 10 pounds, 10 servants and 10 cities (Lk. 19:11-27). Of the 10 virgins, 5 were wise and 5 foolish (Mt. 25:2). 5 sparrows were sold for 2 farthings (Lk. 12:6); Dives had 5 brothers (Lk. 16:28); the woman by the well had had 5 husbands (Jn. 4:18), and at the feeding of the 5,000 the lad had 5 loaves. There are 10 powers which cannot separate the believer from the love of God (Rom. 8:38f.) and 10 sins which exclude from the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:10). The number 10, therefore, also signifies completeness; 10 elders form a company (Ru. 4:2).

Six. In the creation narrative God created man and woman on the 6th day (Gn. 1:27). 6 days were allotted to man for labour (Ex. 20:9; 23:12; 31:15; cf. Lk. 13:14). A Heb. servant had to serve for 6 years before he was freed. The number 6 is therefore closely associated with man.

Seven has an eminent place among sacred numbers in the Scriptures, and is associated with completion, fulfilment and perfection. In the creation narrative God rested from his work on the 7th day, and sanctified it. This gave a pattern to the Jewish sabbath on which man was to refrain from work (Ex. 20:10), to the sabbatic year (Lv. 25:2-6), and also to the year of jubilee, which followed 7 times 7 years (Lv. 25:8). The Feast of Unleavened Bread and the Feast of Tabernacles lasted 7 days (Ex. 12:15, 19; Nu. 29:12). The Day of Atonement was in the 7th month (Lv. 16:29), and 7 occurs frequently in connection with OT ritual, e.g. the sprinkling of bullock's blood 7 times (Lv. 4:6) and the burnt-offering of 7 lambs (Nu. 28:11); the cleansed leper was sprinkled 7 times (Lv. 14:7), and Naaman had to dip 7 times in Jordan (2 Ki. 5:10). In the tabernacle the candlestick had 7 branches (Ex. 25:32).

Other references to be noted are: the mother of 7 sons (Je. 15:9; 2 Macc. 7:1ff.); 7 women for one man (Is. 4:1); a loving daughter-in-law preferable to 7 sons (Ru. 4:15). The Sadducees proposed a case of levirate marriage

whith 7 brothers (Mt. 22:25). The priests encompassed Jericho 7 times (Jos. 6:4). Elijah's servant looked for rain 7 times a day (1 Ki. 18:43). The psalmist praised God 7 times a day (Ps. 119:164), and Gn. 29:18; 41:29, 54 and Dn. 4:23 mention 7 years (times). The early church had 7 deacons (Acts 6:3) and John addresses 7 churches in the book of Revelation, where there is mention of 7 golden candlesticks (1:12) and 7 stars (1:16). At the miraculous feeding of 4,000 from 7 loaves and a few fishes (Mk. 8:1-9), the 7 basketsful collected afterwards may indicate that Jesus can satisfy completely. The complete possession of Mary Magdalene is effected by 7 demons (Lk. 8:2), while the dragon of Rev. 12:3 and the beast of Rev. 13:1; 17:7 have 7 heads.

Eight. 1 Pet. 3:20 records that 8 people were saved in the ark of Noah. Circumcision of a Jewish boy took place on the 8th day (Gn. 17:12; Phil. 3:5). In Ezekiel's vision of the new Temple the priests make their offering on the 8th day (43:27).

Ten. See Five.

Twelve. The Heb. year was divided into 12 months, the day into 12 hours (Jn. 11:9). Israel had 12 sons (Gn. 35:22-27; 42:13, 32) and there were 12 tribes of Israel, the people of God (Gn. 49:28). Christ chose 12 apostles (Mt. 10:1ff.). Twelve is therefore linked with the elective purposes of God.

Forty is associated with almost each new development in the history of God's mighty acts, especially of salvation, e.g. the Flood, redemption from Egypt, Elijah and the prophetic era, the advent of Christ and the birth of the church. The following periods of 40 days may be listed: the downpour of rain during the Flood (Gn. 7:17); the despatch of the raven (Gn. 8:6); Moses' fasts on the mount (Ex. 24:18; 34:28; Dt. 9:9); the spies' exploration of the land of Canaan (Nu. 13:25); Moses' prayer for Israel (Dt. 9:25); Goliath's defiance (1 Sa. 17:16); Elijah's journey to Horeb (1 Ki. 19:8); Ezekiel's lying on his right side (Ezk. 4:6); Jonah's warning to Nineveh (Jon. 3:4); Christ's stay in the wilderness prior to his temptation (Mt. 4:2), his appearances after his resurrection (Acts 1:3).

For 40 years, the general designation of a generation, the following may be quoted: the main divisions of Moses' life (Acts 7:23, 30, 36; Dt. 31:2); Israel's wandering in the wilderness (Ex. 16:35; Nu. 14:33; Jos. 5:6; Ps. 95:10); the recurring pattern of servitude and deliverance in the era of the judges (e.g. Jdg. 3:11; 13:1); the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon (Acts 13:21; 2 Sa. 5:4; 1 Ki. 11:42); the desolation of Egypt (Ezk. 29:11).

Seventy is often connected with God's administration of the world. After the Flood the world was repopulated through 70 descendants of Noah (Gn. 10); 70 persons went down to Egypt (Gn. 46:27); 70 elders were appointed to help Moses administer Israel in the wilderness (Nu. 11:16); the people of Judah spent 70 years of exile in Babylon (Je. 25:11; 29:10); 70 weeks, 'sevens', were decreed by God as the period in which Messianic redemption was to be accomplished (Dn. 9:24); Jesus sent forth the Seventy (Lk. 10:1); he enjoined forgiveness 'until seventy times seven' (Mt. 18:22).

666 (or 616) is the number of the beast in Rev. 13:18. Many interpretations of this number have been proposed, and by gematria, in which figures are given the value of corresponding letters, the number 666 has been identified with the numerical values of the names of a variety of personalities from Caligula and Nero Caesar onwards, and with such concepts as the chaos monster.

For a full discussion, and of 'thousand', see commentaries on the book of Revelation, especially NBCR; H. B. Swete, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, 1906, pp. 175-176; J.-J von Allmen, art. 'Number' in *Vocabulary of the Bible*, 1958; D. R. Hillers, *BASOR* 170, 1963, p. 65.

Rev. 7:4; 14:1 records the number 144,000 'which were sealed'. It is the number 12, the number of election, squared, and multiplied by 1,000, an indefinitely large number, and symbolizes the full number of saints of both covenants who are preserved by God.

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***PART 2: A REVELATION OF.....
THE POWER OF THREE IN
GOD AND THE CHURCH***

THE POWER OF 3 IN GOD

One of the most powerful “discoveries” the Lord has granted me in my walk with Him has been the significance of the number “three” in God’s heavenly order. For those of you who have studied “numerics”, that is the study of the significance of numbers in the bible, this will come as no surprise. For “3” is recognised as being the number of God. It doesn’t take a genius (so even I can understand) that the “GOD” of the Christian faith is a very specific deity of 3 ‘parts’ (not a good description), God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, most often called the “Trinity”.

Those in the ‘Oneness’ and ‘Oneness’ movements dispute this definition, but still basically accept that God is manifested in 3 forms, as Father Son and Spirit.

Each of the three theologies explain certain aspects of the character of God well, others not so well.

Unfortunately man limits God to the level of his, or her, own understanding, putting ‘Him’ into a box. This we cannot do for we cannot limit or fully comprehend the mystery of God. One day, when we meet Him, all will be revealed.

The ‘Power of Three in God’ transcends our various theologies and helps us understand more of what an amazing God we have, of how He works amongst us, and His past, present and future plans for His church.

PHYSICAL EXAMPLES

There are numbers of different illustrations available to explain the Godhead. Some are better than others. Let' s have a look at a few.

SIMPLE BUT POOR ILLUSTRATIONS

One illustration commonly used, but which is inaccurate is of an apple cut into 3 or an orange split into 3 segments. The whole of the particular fruit is split into the 3 functions.

This is okay to a simplistic point, but it encourages thoughts of separation, of ' 3 kings on 3 thrones' , rather than illustrating the integral unity and wholeness of God.

There are several other illustrations that are far superior.

3 FORMS OF PRECIPITATION

From the clouds (singular) we can be doused with 3 different forms of precipitation.

RAIN

HAIL

SNOW

Three forms of ' water' from the same source, dependant upon the temperature and other conditions.

3 PARTS OF 1 SKY

SUN (Father) The source of light.

MOON (Jesus) Reflector of God' s light.

STARS (Holy Spirit) Distributor of God' s light within each individual.

A good illustration showing interaction between differing physical masses in the sky.

3 ROLES OF MAN, 3 ROLES OF GOD

A man can be

FATHER

SON

HUSBAND

all at the same time!

We fulfil differing roles in life, depending upon the circumstances we are involved in. God too.

3 PARTS OF 1 MAN, 3 PARTS OF 1 GOD

GOD

Father (Invisible)

Son (Visible)

Holy Spirit (Invisible)

MANKIND

Body (Visible)

Soul (Invisible)

Spirit (Invisible)

We are made in the image of God, 1 part visible, 2 parts invisible.

THE BEST SERMON ILLUSTRATION!

Take a block of ice, and depending upon where you live (and how long you speak!) either melt it or let it melt to water, and then add heat to boil the water and make steam.

ICE (Jesus) Finite physical form. Easy to see, measure and weigh. We have all these recorded in the Bible.

WATER (Father) Pour into dry dirt or sand. Invisible but you can see its effects. Permeates all of creation.

STEAMS (Holy Spirit) Put a hand into the steam and remove quickly! Otherwise you will get burnt! Holy Spirit is invisible but changes us on the inside.

A beautiful illustration of the diversity and functions of God!

THE THREE TOGETHER

IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In The Beginning The first 2 verses of the Bible mention ' God' and His ' Spirit' .

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. (Genesis 1:1-2)

If you skip across to the New, in the Book of John, the same two verses confirm that Jesus was indeed there at the beginning also.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. (John 1:1-2)

The Search For a Wife For Isaac Moving on to Chapter 24 of Genesis, we have a beautiful spiritual picture, an illustration of the interrelationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Abraham represents the Father, Isaac, Jesus, with the trusted servant being a representation of the Holy Spirit. The trusted servant takes his instructions from Abraham to find a wife for Isaac. And, of course, he meets and returns with Rebecca.

Jesus too, is returning for His ' bride' at the end of the Age.

Abraham was now old and well advanced in years, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. 2 He said to the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh. 3 I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, 4 but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."

5 The servant asked him, “What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?”

6 “Make sure that you do not take my son back there,” Abraham said. 7 “The LORD, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father’s household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give this land’—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. 8 If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there.” 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

10 Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and left, taking with him all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim and made his way to the town of Nahor. 11 He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water.....

57 Then they said, “Let’s call the girl and ask her about it.” 58 So they called Rebekah and asked her, “Will you go with this man?”

“I will go,” she said.

59 So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham’s servant and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

“Our sister, may you increase to thousands upon thousands; may your offspring possess the gates of their enemies.”

61 Then Rebekah and her maids got ready and mounted their camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

62 Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. 63 He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he

looked up, he saw camels approaching. 64 Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel 65 and asked the servant, ‘Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?’

‘He is my master,’ the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.

66 Then the servant told Isaac all he had done.

67 Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death. (Genesis 24:1-11, 57-67)

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The 3 manifestations of God are mentioned in 1' s, 2' s or 3' s right throughout the New Testament.

Jesus talks about the relationship in John.

15 ‘If you love me, you will obey what I command. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.’ (John 14:15-21)

ONE GOD, IN 3 FORMS, FULFILLING DIFFERING SPIRITUAL ROLES

God the Father, the designer of the universe, an all powerful, invisible spirit being.

“who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see.”

(1 Timothy 6:16)

God the Son. Jesus is the human image of God, the creator and ruler of the universe.

‘He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities, all things were created by him and for him.’(Colossians 1:15-16)

We could do with Him here now, to explain how creation did evolve! Ask the maker for the real answer! Would quickly solve a lot of arguments!

And finally, God the Holy Spirit, our spiritual teacher, guide and comforter, helping us find our way through the intricate intimacies of life – when we allow Him to!

‘But when he, the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears and he will tell you what is yet to come.’(John16 :13)

The verse also provides insight into the unity of the Godhead as well as defining the role of the Holy Spirit.

Have just had a thought! Must be inspired! Well, maybe!

Wouldn't it be great if we could have 3 individual bodies for different purposes. A sure way to win the Olympic decathlon! The strong body of the sprinter (without the need to take steroids!), the slim, lean body of the distance runner for the 1500 metres, exchanged for one of sheer bulk and power for the field events. An unbeatable combination!

Sometimes I think an invisible body would be very handy too! A fly on the wall perhaps? Better say no more!

While the mystery of the Godhead is awesome and has challenged the understanding of Christians down the ages, what follows over the next 2 weeks is just absolutely amazing! For through the “power of three” God reveals His plans for His church and our lives. From the beginning of time until the return of Jesus!

Truly exciting? Yes! Because as we approach end times, we can see God’s ultimate plan and purpose for us and His church become a reality. What could be more exciting than that? Beats a Big Mac any day!

A PERSONAL PATTERN OF...

DEVELOPMENT IN GOD

Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, (Hebrews 6:1)

JESUS: Salvation.

9 I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. (John 10:9)

HOLY SPIRIT: Spirit.

17 Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ (Acts 9:17)

THE FATHER: Submission.

2 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. (Colossians 4:12)

Contrary to much (incorrect) teaching, our walk with Jesus just starts with salvation. We are then to move on to experience the power of the release of the Holy Spirit in our lives. To reach maturity we also must submit our will to that of the Father, the ultimate challenge for us all!

THE NEW COVENANT

**33 “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.
(Jeremiah 31:33)**

JESUS: The Sacrifice.

13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! (Hebrews 9:13-14)

*9 Then he said, ‘Here I am, I have come to do your will.’ He sets aside the first to establish the second. 10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.
(Hebrews 10:9-10)*

HOLY SPIRIT: The Seal.

*4 On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’
(Acts 1:4-5)*

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Act 2:1-4)

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him

with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13-14)

THE FATHER: The Promise.

10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. (Hebrews 8:10)

Incredibly, way back in the time of Jeremiah, the Father promised that He would become ' internal' (grace) rather than ' external' (under the Law) This was the promise of the New Covenant (Testament) we live under today.

The cost or sacrifice of the transaction was the life of Jesus, the Father' s only son, crucified for you and for me.

The signature, or seal, of the Covenant was the deposit of the Holy Spirit, living inside us today.

How faith building! All foretold 600 years before it happened. And still experienced in our lives today!

3 PARTS OF MAN

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

JESUS: Body.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. 19 Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom

you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

HOLY SPIRIT: Spirit.

34 and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. (1 Corinthians 7:34)

THE FATHER: Soul.

28 Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Matthew 10:28)

26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26)

We are made in the image of God, of 3 parts, two invisible, one (often too much!) visible.

3 PARTS OF THE SOUL

10 This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 11 No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. (Hebrews 8:10-11)

JESUS: Mind.

2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test

*and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.
(Romans 12:2)*

HOLY SPIRIT: Emotions (Heart).

9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. (Romans 10:9-10)

THE FATHER: Will.

*37 But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing.
(1 Corinthians 7:37)*

Our soul, or personality, the uniqueness that makes each of us different to the other, is also made up of 3 parts. We think with our mind, feel with our emotions, and act through our will.

We believe in Jesus, primarily with our mind, we release the Holy Spirit, primarily in our emotional area and obey the Father, through our will. All three areas need to be subjected to our God.

NEW TESTAMENT TRIAD

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)

JESUS: Hope.

*8 But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.
(1 Thessalonians 5:8)*

HOLY SPIRIT: Faith.

17 For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (Romans 1:17)

THE FATHER: Love.

14 Do everything in love. (1 Corinthians 16:14)

We are to live our lives victorious in the hope of the salvation of Jesus, full of faith, built up by the Holy Spirit within, loving the Father and others above our own needs and desires.

THE 3 BIRDS

26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? (Matthew 6:26)

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great." 19 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. 20 But the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who had performed the miraculous signs on his behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped his image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. 21 The rest of them were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh. (Revelation 19:17-21)

JESUS: Sparrow.

3 Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, O LORD Almighty, my King and my God. 4 Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. Selah (Psalm 84:3-4)

HOLY SPIRIT: Dove.

*2 Then John gave this testimony: ‘I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ 34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.’
(John 1:32-34)*

THE FATHER: Eagle.

*14 The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach.
(Revelation 12:14)*

We can twitter round near the ground, simply accepting the salvation of Jesus, as does the sparrow. Or we can fly like the dove (pigeon) through the power of the Holy Spirit. Or again, we can soar to the mountaintops, through obedience to the Father. The choice is ours.

Interestingly, in the bird world, there are many more sparrows than doves, and even fewer eagles. First in the natural, then the spiritual.

THE MAGI’S GIFTS

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.’ 3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 When he had called together all

the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. 5 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written: 6 "'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'" 7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.'" 9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. (Matthew 2:1-12)

JESUS: Myrrh.

*23 Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it.
(Mark 15:23)*

HOLY SPIRIT: (Frank)incense.

*34 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take fragrant spices—gum resin, onycha and galbanum—and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts,
(Exodus 30:34)*

THE FATHER: Gold.

10 'Have them make a chest of acacia wood—two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. 11 Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out, and make a gold molding around it. 12 Cast four gold rings for it and fasten them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. 13 Then make poles of acacia wood and

overlay them with gold. 14 Insert the poles into the rings on the sides of the chest to carry it. 15 The poles are to remain in the rings of this ark; they are not to be removed. 16 Then put in the ark the Testimony, which I will give you. 17 ‘Make an atonement cover of pure gold—two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. 18 And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. 19 Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. 20 The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover. 21 Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the ark the Testimony, which I will give you. 22 There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.
(Exodus 25:10-22)

It now comes as no surprise that 3 gifts were given to the baby Jesus.

The gold recognised His kingship, the frankincense His divinity and the myrrh, His sacrifice.

For us, the gold represents love, the frankincense faith, and the myrrh, trials and testings. All three are at the core of our walk with Jesus.

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

14 ‘Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. 15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. 17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. 18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. 19 ‘After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five

more.’ 21 *‘His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’* 22 *‘The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’* 23 *‘His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’* 24 *‘Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’* 26 *‘His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. 28 ^xTake the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. 29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 25:14-30)*

JESUS: One Talent. *Matthew 25:18*

HOLY SPIRIT: Two Talents. *Matthew 25:16*

THE FATHER: Five Talents. *Matthew 25:17*

We’ re all given different talents and abilities. We are required to use them for God to the full extent of our capabilities. It is not a competition, one with another, but rather, a matter of utilising fully, that which we have been given.

PARABLE OF THE 10 MINAS

11 While they were listening to this, he went on to tell them a parable, because he was near Jerusalem and the people thought that the kingdom of God was going to appear at once. 12 He said: ‘A man of noble birth

went to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. ‘Put this money to work,’ he said, ‘until I come back.’ 14 ‘But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, ‘We don’t want this man to be our king.’ 15 ‘He was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. 16 ‘The first one came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned ten more.’ 17 ‘Well done, my good servant!’ his master replied. ‘Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.’ 18 ‘The second came and said, ‘Sir, your mina has earned five more.’ 19 ‘His master answered, ‘You take charge of five cities.’ 20 ‘Then another servant came and said, ‘Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. 21 I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.’ 22 ‘His master replied, ‘I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?’ 24 ‘Then he said to those standing by, ‘Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’ 25 ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘he already has ten!’ 26 ‘He replied, ‘I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away. 27 But those enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and kill them in front of me.’”

(Luke 19:11-27)

JESUS: Kept. 1 Mina. Luke 19:20-24

HOLY SPIRIT: Earned. 5 Minas Luke 19:18-19

THE FATHER: Earned. 10 Minas Luke 19:16-17

A parallel story, reflecting also that our heavenly rewards will be determined by our actions now.

BUILDING FAITH

***4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.
(1 Corinthians 12:4-6)***

JESUS: Gifts. 1 Corinthians 12:4

HOLY SPIRIT: Service. 1 Corinthians 12:5

THE FATHER: Working. 1 Corinthians 12:6

Following along from the 2 parables, our giftings are to be used for service and works.

JESUS IS...

6 Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

JESUS: The Way.

HOLY SPIRIT: The Truth.

THE FATHER: The Life.

Jesus is the only way to the Father.

Jesus embodies all truth.

Jesus gives us His life.

THE POWER OF 3 - David's Revelation

JESUS: $3 \times 1 = 3$

HOLY SPIRIT: $3 \times 3 = 9$

THE FATHER: $3 \times 3 \times 3 = 27$

No scriptural backing! But from observation, the 'multiplier effect' applies to our spiritual walk. Those who simply rely upon Jesus have some effect. Those who have experienced the baptism or release of the Holy Spirit are generally keener for God and often produce considerably more fruit. But it

is those who have also become ' one with the Father' s will' who finally fulfil their heavenly potential with the talents they have been personally given. Remember, to whom much is given, much is required.

A JOURNEY TOWARDS MATURITY

This list, while not complete, is comprehensive enough to switch the light on, even in my simple mind. Surely all these similarities cannot be just chance? I think that God is trying to say something here – in fact I am sure of it - because He has confirmed it to me. How about you?

Yes, the pattern is there for all to see. The Christian walk is a journey towards maturity, not just an event. It saddens me to meet people whose only highlight in their walk with Jesus has been their salvation. This applies also to those who stop at the baptism, or release, of the Holy Spirit. For there is so much more to be had! Today, God is calling us as individuals and a 'church', to a new level of faith, commitment and maturity in Him.

A CHURCH PATTERN OF...

These teachings are extrapolated from the principles set out in the chapter on the personal application of the ' Power of 3' in our lives.

Please refer back there for the basic scriptures and guidelines.

AN EVOLVING CHURCH

God never intended His Church to be static! It is to continually evolve and develop until the day of our Saviour' s return.

While Jesus remains the same, yesterday, today and forever, we individually, and as a Church, cannot, until we too, attain perfection.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:5-15)

Throughout the history of the Church, people have sought God and been given a new revelation. Unfortunately, in our humanness, this then becomes ' our doctrine' and we build a denomination or grouping upon it.

Of course, when God wishes to give another revelation, we won' t hear, for we already ' have it all' ! So God will seek out a new group who are willing to listen. And the cycle gets repeated, again and again.

It is a truism that those at the forefront of the last revival are the greatest critics of the next! Yes, pride so quickly permeates us.

Therefore, let us be humble and understand that, no matter how great a revelation we receive, there is still much more to come. And earnestly seek His face to find it. No revelation is ours! We have no ownership of it, for it is God' s property alone!

THE PROGRESSION OF THE CHURCH

A 3 PART CHURCH BASED UPON THE REVELATION OF...

Church development since the 16th century Reformation can be generally categorised into 3 parts or streams relating to the element/s of the Godhead upon which they are based.

JESUS: Traditional & Evangelical (Non Charismatic) Churches

JESUS + HOLY SPIRIT: Pentecostal & Charismatic Churches

JESUS + HOLY SPIRIT + THE FATHER: The Bride

Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. 2 A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand, the table and the consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. 3 Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, 4 which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. 5 Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now. (Hebrews 9:1-5)

We are now going to take the teachings from last week and regroup them into categories based primarily upon Jesus, the Holy spirit and the Father. In doing this we will clearly see how the ' Power of 3' accurately describes the 3 categories of Churches, as well as our personal walk towards maturity.

Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, 2 instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. 3 And God permitting, we will do so. (Hebrews 6:1-3)

JESUS: Traditional and Evangelical (Non Charismatic) Churches

(Scriptures are repeated, so please refer to previous pages for details.)

DEVELOPMENT IN GOD *Hebrews 6:1*

Salvation *John 10:9*

THE NEW COVENANT *Jeremiah 31:33*

The Sacrifice *Hebrews 9:13-14, 10:9-10*

3 PARTS OF MAN *1 Thessalonians 5:23*

Body *1 Corinthians 6:18-20*

3 PARTS OF THE SOUL *Hebrews 8:10-11*

Mind *Romans 12:2*

NEW TESTAMENT TRIAD *1 Corinthians 13:13*

Hope *1 Thessalonians 5:8*

THE 3 BIRDS *Matthew 6:26, Revelation 19:17-21*

Sparrow *Psalms 84:3-4*

THE MAGI'S GIFTS *Matthew 2:1-12*

Myrrh *Mark 15:23*

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS *Matthew 25:14-30*

One Talent *Matthew 25:18*

PARABLE OF THE 10 MINAS *Luke 19:11-27*

Kept 1 Mina *Luke 19:20-24*

BUILDING FAITH *1 Corinthians 12:4-6*

Gifts *1 Corinthians 12:4*

JESUS IS... *John 14:6*

The Way

THE POWER OF 3 - David's Revelation

$3 \times 1 = 3$

Thus, in general terms, ' Traditional' churches such as the Lutheran, Anglican (Episcopal) and ' Evangelical' ones, e.g. Baptist, are founded on the principles of salvation, the sacrifice and person of Jesus. They share an intellectual faith based on hope, symbolised by the sparrow and myrrh (Speaking of ' natural good'). Many adherents relate to the one talent and mina. There is an emphasis on the non charismatic gifts, acknowledging Jesus as ' The Way' , producing fruit at a factor of 3.

This, of course, is a generalisation, but these characteristics, to a greater or lesser extent, typify these churches. And God loves His people.

JESUS + HOLY SPIRIT: Pentecostal & Charismatic Churches

DEVELOPMENT IN GOD

Spirit *Acts 9:17*

THE NEW COVENANT

The Seal *Acts 1:4-5, 2:1-4, Eph. 1:13-14*

3 PARTS OF MAN

Spirit *1 Corinthians 7:34*

3 PARTS OF THE SOUL

Emotions (Heart) *Romans 10:9-10*

NEW TESTAMENT TRIAD

Faith *Romans 1:17*

THE 3 BIRDS

Dove *John 1:32-34*

THE MAGI'S GIFTS

(Frank)incense *Exodus 30:34*

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Two Talents *Matthew 25:16*

PARABLE OF THE 10 MINAS

Earned 5 Minas *Luke 19:18-19*

BUILDING FAITH

Service *1 Corinthians 12:5*

JESUS IS...

The Truth *John 14:6*

THE POWER OF 3 - David's Revelation

$3 \times 3 = 9$

These churches, both from Pentecostal and Charismatic roots, are too numerous to mention. For one of their features is that they split, very easily! Sufficient to say, these are the churches who recognise an additional

baptism, or infilling, of the Holy Spirit, very often confirmed by the ability to speak in other tongues.

They embrace the same principles of Jesus as characterise the Traditional and Evangelical churches, but add the dimension of the power of the Holy Spirit. At least, theoretically!

The Holy Spirit, the ' Seal' (signature) of the New Covenant, is celebrated with emotion and in faith. These churches are symbolised by the dove, while frankincense represents ' spiritual food.' Generally more committed, as indicated by the 2 talents and 5 minas. Likely to be more committed to service and to the more literal truth of The Word. With an effectiveness level of 9.

Once again, remember that this is a generalisation only! We can all think of many individual exceptions! And God loves His people.

JESUS + HOLY SPIRIT + THE FATHER: The Bride

DEVELOPMENT IN GOD

Submission *Colossians 4:12*

THE NEW COVENANT

The Promise *Hebrews 8:10*

3 PARTS OF MAN

Soul *Matthew 10:28,16:26*

3 PARTS OF THE SOUL

Will *1 Corinthians 7:37*

NEW TESTAMENT TRIAD

Love *1 Corinthians 16:14*

THE 3 BIRDS

Eagle *Revelation 12:14*

THE MAGI'S GIFTS

Gold *Exodus 25:10-22*

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Five Talents *Matthew 25:17*

PARABLE OF THE 10 MINAS

Earned 10 Minas *Luke 19:16-17*

BUILDING FAITH

Working *1 Corinthians 12:6*

JESUS IS...

The Life *John 14:6*

THE POWER OF 3 - David's Revelation

$3 \times 3 \times 3 = 27$

The Bride is not a traditional church in the way we know it. For there is no human measure of ' submission' to the will of God. It is uniquely personal. We can commit to salvation through a prayer and join a church. We can be baptised in the Spirit, speak in other tongues and join a church. But one cannot measure the inner state of another' s heart. It is between you and God. However, we can expect to see the following characteristics becoming apparent in our lives.

It is a faith based around submission to God' s (not the pastor' s) will for our life. Of being sold out to the Promise of the New Covenant.

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.(Jeremiah 31:33)

Fully committed in soul (our unique personality)we ' will' love (agape) others, even the unlovely. Represented by the eagle and the gift of gold, (celestial good) using 5 talents and earning 10 minas. A total commitment to working for the enhancement of the Kingdom, (but not necessarily full time!) walking in love. With an effectiveness level of 27.

The Bride will be drawn from those Christians prepared to pay the price, irrespective of affiliation, or non-affiliation, for that matter.

These are the ones the Lord is seeking today.

FORETOLD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THROUGH THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES

The ' Power of Three' pictured as

JESUS: *OUTER COURT*

HOLY SPIRIT: *HOLY PLACE*

THE FATHER: *HOLY OF HOLIES*

*8 'Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.
9 Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will
show you. (Exodus 25:8-9)*

AND CONFIRMED IN THE NEW

In the key verse of Walking With Jesus Ministries. Revelation 12:11. It talks about the way that satan will finally be overcome.

They overcame him by

JESUS: *the blood of the Lamb*

HOLY SPIRIT: *and by the word of their testimony;*

THE FATHER: *they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.*

Yes, ' The Power of Three' , the number of God, the way He works, permeates the Scriptures. Are we prepared to fully submit our lives to Him?

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. 11 They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. 12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.' (Revelation 12:10-12)