

“One, Two, Three”

Introduction:

1. [C] Scripture Reading: Acts 17:22-31. We’ve heard the expression, “It is as simple as one, two, three.”
2. The same can be said about the simplicity of the gospel’s plan of salvation and other important things taught in Scripture.

Discussion:

“ONE”

The Bible lists some significant “ones” for us to consider. For example, Paul spoke of “one blood” in Acts 17:26. All nations and therefore people come from *one blood*. This proves that nations are not so different as we perceive them to be and it proves further that we as individuals are not either. Science has caught up with Scripture showing us from the human genome that all humans are 99.9% the same genetically. Our differences are not so much based on biology but on the way we think (...we ought not to think...17:29; apply evolution, races, etc.). Paul also notes where the *one* origin of all our problems stems from and, from the “One” solution (Rom. 5:12, 17).

- I. [C] **ONE BODY.** Paul speaks of “one body” (Eph. 4:4). The church is identified as this body in the same letter (Eph. 1:22, 23). One body is one church. It is the church Jesus promised to build in Matthew 16:18 and it is the body/church that the Lord adds the saved to (Acts 2:47). Paul teaches that through one Spirit we are baptized into this one body (1 Cor. 12:13). How do we know this is not Holy Spirit baptism? Simple...
 - A. All are baptized into one body but all are not baptized into the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2, only the apostles were baptized with the Spirit. Notice the apostles are in view in Acts 1:2. Follow the pronouns down (1:4), Holy Spirit baptism to these apostles, see “you” (1:5). Matthias with the “eleven apostles” (1:26).
 - B. When Pentecost had fully come, “they” (2:1). Notice “they” and “them” Acts 2:2-4. It is as simple as 1, 2, 3—only the apostles were baptized! Those who heard and received the gospel message were baptized in the name of Christ (Acts 2:38-41). They were “added” to the body of Christ, the church of Christ (2:47). Only a few were baptized with the Spirit but all are baptized into the body of Christ to be saved.
 - C. The case of the Samaritans: they were baptized into the name of the Lord but not Spirit baptism (Acts 8:9-18). The power of the Holy Spirit was given to a select few through Spirit baptism. The power was given to more through the laying on of hands. Simon sinned, but he was correct in what he saw, “that through the laying on the of apostles hands the Holy Spirit was given” (8:18). The focused emphasis is on the apostles’ hands.
- II. [C] **ONE SPIRIT.** The Spirit carries on the work of Jesus (Jn. 14:25, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:8ff).
- III. [C] **ONE HOPE.** This hope is tied to the second coming of Jesus Christ and our eternal life (Titus 2:13; 1:2). The oldest promise ever revealed is the hope of eternal life—before time began (Titus 1:2).
- IV. [C] **ONE LORD.** He is our Great God and Savior who gave Himself for us (Titus 2:13, 14). He is our Lord and our Mediator. There is only *one* mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). It is not Mary, the Pope, a human priest, or a pastor. Jesus alone is our mediator.
- V. [C] **ONE FAITH.**
 - A. The faith was once and for all times delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3). There was no latter-day revelation of the faith. It was given in the first century.

- B. It was preached by the disciples of Christ. Paul preached the faith which he once tried to destroy (Gal. 1:22-24). While the faith was preached by Paul, it was also preached before Paul—while he was seeking to destroy it. You can't destroy something that doesn't exist.
- C. Notice what it was that Paul preached. He preached the faith (Gal. 1:23). He preached God's Son, Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:16). He preached the gospel (Gal. 1:11). [cl] We have three designations of the same body of truth. In preaching the faith, Paul preached the Son of God and in preaching Him, he preached the gospel. One cannot preach Christ without preaching the gospel. The Man is tied to the plan! The gospel was given for men to preach and receive. There is only "one gospel" to save men (Gal. 1:6-9).

VI. [C] ONE BAPTISM.

- A. We are saved by developing faith in the faith and expressing that in obedience. Paul preached the gospel (Gal. 1:11). The gospel was heard (Gal. 3:2). The blessings of the Spirit were given through the hearing of faith, not keeping the Law of Moses.
- B. This hearing led to "believing" (Gal. 3:22). The meaning of Galatians 3:22 is that although the Scripture (personified here as someone imprisoning all under sin), the promise by faith in Jesus might be given to those who believe. What promise?
 1. This promise has all the attendant blessings promised to Abraham (Gal. 3:14). The promise is an inheritance that God promised through Abraham (3:18). The "inheritance" included "all the families of the earth" being blessed in Abraham (see Gen. 12:1-3). Therefore it is accurate to say that the rest of the Bible is about fulfilling the promise given to Abraham. The Law cannot make all nations blessed in Abraham. The inheritance is not from the law which came 430 years later but through the promise given to Abraham.
 2. Securing these blessings is not through keeping the Law of Moses. It is found by believing the faith which was revealed (3:22-24). We are justified by faith, not the law of Moses. We become sons of God through the faith that was revealed (Gal. 3:25, 26).
 3. Specifically, when do we lay claim to the inheritance spoken of in Abraham's promise? When we are baptized (immersed) into Christ (Gal. 3:26, 27). We must recognize "in Christ" there are no divisions or classes of men (Gal. 3:28). Salvation is the same for the free and the slave. If you are in Christ, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs (3:29). This is the same promise Peter spoke of in Acts 2:38, 39. Baptism is the dividing line between the heir and the disinherited, between the son and the stranger, between the justified and the unjustified, and between the saved and the lost.

VII. [C] ONE GOD AND FATHER (Eph. 4:6). Regardless of our earthly father, we share a common Father—God! Carefully notice the downward and inward trajectory of these inspired words.

- A. [cl] He is "above all." He is preeminently over all things. Psalm 95:3, "For the LORD is the great God, And the great King above all gods." Isaiah 25:1, "O LORD, You *are* my God. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name, For You have done wonderful *things*; Your counsels of old *are* faithfulness *and* truth."
- B. [cl] He is "through all." All members of the church have access to the Father (Eph. 2:16) and God works through them. All the abilities we have come from God. "...if any man ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies" (1 Pet. 4:11).
- C. [cl] He is "in all." Jesus spoke, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." He is in every member of the church as every member is in Him. This is summed up as the apex of what God has built for and within us (Eph. 2:19-22).

[C] INVITATION

“TWO”

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 4:7-12. Solomon contrasts the one alone living a selfish solitary life (with no companion, brother, or child) with the two. Two are better because of their *reward*. Two can work better than one alone. Two are better than one for *edification*. If one falls the other will help lift him up. Two are better than one for stimulation as they both keep each other warm. As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend (Prov. 27:17). Two are better than one for protection. One is overpowered but two can withstand. The strands of a cord can easily be broken when separated from the others. Together there is strength.

- I. [C] Man has two primary components that make up his life (Eccl. 12:1-7). There is a material and an immaterial substance to man’s makeup. Solomon calls these the *dust* and the *spirit*.
 - A. He uses many metaphors to describe aging. Our time to find God or remember our creator is limited. The *loosing, breaking, and shattering* represent the termination of physical life. The Pulpit Commentary suggests the first “or” to be read as “and” for better sense (12:6). The *lamp or golden bowl* hangs down by a silk cord from the roof; a fragile clay pitcher is used to carry water; a wheel is at the well to draw the water. Like these, the body draws in life but is breakable as the silk cord, the pitcher, and the wheel. The body eventually turns into dust. The spirit doesn’t.
 - B. Jean Davis gave me a quote from Ben Franklin consoling his niece after the death of his brother John: “A man is not completely born until he is dead. Why then should we grieve that a new child is born among the immortals? We are spirits. That bodies should be lent us while they afford us pleasure, assist us in acquiring knowledge or in doing good to our fellow creatures is a kind of benevolent act of God. When they become unfit for these purposes, and afford us pain instead of pleasure, instead of aid become an encumbrance and answer none of these intentions for which they were given, it is equally kind and benevolent that a way is provided by which we get rid of them. Death is that way.”
 - C. The “body” is dead without the spirit (Jas. 2:26). Science, apart from religion observes the decomposition of the body and the physiological effects of decay at work in the body’s members. We experience the effects of a gradual and yet continual decay as we grow older. A physiologist may say that his science has nothing to do with religion. Yet it should stand out very clearly that the gospel has a good deal to do with his science. Science apart from religion cannot explain *why* we age and decay or for what purpose it occurs.
 1. [C] The apostle Paul gives us a theology of the body and its breakdown. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-9.
 2. God has placed the gospel (treasure) within mortals (earthen vessels) to bear forth. He has not entrusted these to mighty angels but to breakable and fragile men. We have feeble bodies that are subject to fatigue, disease, and decay. We have frail minds where even the enlightened and intellectual are still ignorant. “And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he **knows nothing** yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor. 8:2).
 3. Entrusting treasure in earthen vessels is to demonstrate that the power is from God and not men. Pulpit Commentary: “The grand reason why frail men are employed to preach the gospel is that the glorious renovating and soul-saving effects may evidently appear as the work of God, and not of man. When sermons prove effective in converting souls, it is not because of the originality of their thought, the force of their logic, the splendour of their rhetoric, or the majesty of their eloquence, but because of the Divine power that accompanies them.”
 - a) The earthen vessel is hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted, and struck down. But he is sustained and kept from being crushed, brought to despair, forsaken, and destroyed. In being subject to these trials the life of Jesus is manifested in our bodies. Read 2 Corinthians 4:10-11.

- b) Paul's perspective is that death was working in him. Read 2 Corinthians 4:12-15. We don't often view death as something positively working within us but when God is glorified it is. It worked for life in others. Because he believed he spoke to get others to hear and then believe!
 - c) The obstacles that withstood the apostle only further mobilized him! The taller the obstacle would only be met with a higher leap. The heavier the weight...the greater the energy. The bigger the burden only brought the larger rallying of strength! He could not be brought to despair only greater resolve. While you can have science without religion, science without Christianity doesn't offer hope; it doesn't gather and rally strength; it doesn't promote inner resolve because it doesn't renew the inner man.
4. [C] Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:1. Paul, therefore, speaks of not *losing heart*. While the outer man perishes the inner man is renewed.
- a) The outer man presently perishes...it is continual and gradual. When we are young we are most impressed with the external. Our senses are rapidly excited by them. As we grow older things change. Now the *outer* man begins to suffer and our mortality is underscored by the body's breakdown.
 - b) Death can work in us with Christ. It can bring an *inner* revival and restoration of righteousness. We find this so when we grow less delighted in *aesthetic* beauty and more impressed with *moral* beauty. We further take heart knowing that we will be raised by God to inherit what is eternal. Paul placed the sufferings of the outer man as "light affliction," "a moment," and "temporary." Yet the suffering, like death, works for us to attain what is "far more exceeding," "eternal weight of glory," and "eternal" (2 Cor. 4:16-18. Death is the transition needed to replace an earthly tent with a house not made with hands (2 Cor. 5:1).

II. The two shall become one flesh (Matt. 19:3-6).

- A. [C] The question posed revolves around frivolous divorce. [cl] Jesus affirmed the original creation with that of male and female. Jesus is not only a creationist but is also the creator. He designed Adam and Eve and instituted marriage. The definition of marriage is a holy union between a man and a woman.
- B. God made "male and female" (see Gen. 1:27). Regardless of what the person wants to identify as males have an "x" paired with a "y" chromosome. Both genders were made by God to glorify God. Our gender identity crisis is more of a gender rebellion against God's design. If you have two "x's" don't ask "why?" If you have a "y" don't ask "why?" Glorify God in the gender He chose!
- C. Men and women are different! HELPS Lexicon, Discovery Bible, "*Women* naturally show their 'God-like orientation' by their *high relational energy*. Who can miss the animated smiles of females – and that their expressions light up the world? *Males* exhibit aspects of God's *strength* like staying on task for the stability of family and society..."
- D. He made man from the dust of the ground but made a woman from man! She is therefore to be honored as the glory of man (1 Cor. 11:7). A man loves himself when he loves his wife (Eph. 5:28, 29). What does this suggest about the one who doesn't love his wife?
- E. [C] God made man and woman fully compatible (Matt. 19:4, 5). What defines marriage should be as easy as "1, 2, 3"! The two shall become one!
- F. [C] This is the Lord's direct reproof to their low view of marriage and women and their high view of divorce. Since God joins the two together, man is not to divide them. These men wanted many justified reasons to send away their wives (see Matt. 19:7, 8). [C] Immorality is the only just cause (Matt. 19:9).

1. The bible warns against sexual immorality in the strongest terms. It is a foe to one's body, to marriage, and service to God (see 1 Cor. 6:15-20). *Every other sin is outside the body*; these sins use something externally to defile the body. *Fornication* uses the body to defile the body. Sin is directionally discussed here as "outside" (using something outside to sin) versus "inside" (Gk. eis) or rendered "against" the body. Sexual immorality is called "sin" *missing the mark or wandering from the path of righteousness*. We must view the body as God's temple.
 2. Christians need to learn the only proper response is to flee this sin because it defiles the temple of God. Converted Gentiles needed this clear warning too (cf. Acts 15:29). "About five miles from Antioch stood the town of Daphne. It had a temple devoted to Apollo and Diana which boasted of its *sacred prostitution* – supposedly done as a means of "worship" to the gods (cf. G. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 392)" (HELPS).
- G. Our Lord speaks of that *one* sin against the body as a permissible cause for divorce in Matthew 19:9.
1. [C] The Lord's general teaching then is whoever divorces his wife and marries again another commits adultery. Likewise, whoever marries the woman who is divorced commits adultery.
 2. [C] Our Lord endorsed one exception: on the grounds of *unlawful sexual activity* (for example, adultery, homosexuality, incest, etc.) one can lawfully put away and remarry.
 3. The Pharisees didn't like this teaching and wouldn't receive it. Many today do not like this teaching and won't receive it. Even the Lord's disciples were surprised by the teaching and retorted that it would be better to not marry (Matt. 19:10).
 4. Jesus didn't get bogged down by who would accept it or not. I've met many through the years who understand they were bought with a costly price (1 Cor. 6:20). They have made it the number one goal to attain the kingdom of heaven by coming out of various difficult situations. Jesus has those in mind in Matthew 19: 11, 12.
 5. [C] [C] could add one other critical factor that pertains to remarriage, and that is when a spouse dies. Death dissolves the marriage bond and therefore it cannot be adultery when they remarry (Rom. 7:2, 3).
- III. [C] The Bible calls for two births (Jn. 3:3-5).
- A. There is a physical birth and a spiritual birth. No man can enter his mother's womb again. But even an old man can hear the sweet will of God and be born again.
 - B. [cl] Those who *believe* in Jesus have been given the *right (power)* to become *children of God* (Jn. 1:11-13).
- IV. [C] The Bible also speaks of two deaths (Heb. 9:27; Rev. 2:11).
- A. The second death is in the lake of fire and brimstone—hell (Rev. 21:8).
 - B. [cl] The point from these last two points is: If you are born twice, then you can expect to only die once (cf. Jn. 8:51). If you are born only once, you can expect to die twice (Rev. 20:11-15).

INVITATION: Revelation 21:14. The blessed right to the tree of life comes from obeying the commandments. Blessedness is not found in living a life as one pleases but in learning to live a life that pleases the Lord. The fountain of life is available to all who trust and obey!

“THREE” Scripture Reading: 1 John 5:6-13.

Trinity is not a word found in the Bible, but its concept is. There are three divine beings at work for our salvation. [C] We find all three in our Scripture reading. After assuring disciples of the victory over the world by faith, the beloved apostle speaks of Jesus coming by water and blood (1 Jn. 5:6). This most likely speaks of His earthly ministry that began with His baptism and was completed or “finished” in His death on the cross. Note carefully that the Spirit, water, and blood are not “witnesses” that can be called upon but rather these are witnesses that perpetually bear witness. We are left to believe the testimony or reject it.

We find these three together in many places in Scripture. In the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20). [C] Recently we saw these three in the platform for unity (Chart Eph. 4:4-6).

I. [C] Who is the Father (2 Jn. 1:3)?

A. He is the legislature of the plan. He crafted it and it was completed by His will (see Gal. 1:3, 4).

II. [cl] Who is the Son (1 Jn. 5:10)? He is sent as Savior (1 Jn. 4:14). He is Jesus the Christ (Matt. 16:13-17).

A. He is the redeemer and the executive carrying out the will of the Father (Gal. 1:3, 4; Heb. 10:7-9).

B. Notice that Jesus cannot be *only a man* because although Paul was made an apostle through Jesus Christ, he was not made one “from man” (see Gal. 1:1). Paul preached the gospel which was *not according to man*, was not received from a man, and he was not taught it by a man but he did receive it through the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11, 12). Jesus is more than a man!

III. [cl] Who is the Holy Spirit (1 Jn. 5:6)?

A. All three are referenced in Jn. 16:13-15 but the Holy Spirit’s work is to reveal the will of God. As such He guides and comforts us through the revelation of the word of God.

B. Is the Holy Spirit God? To whom did Ananias lie in Acts 5:3-4?

IV. [C] Who is Jehovah?

A. *Jehovah* (Yahweh) is the personal name of God and relays His eternal self-existence. “And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them” (Exod. 6:3, KJV). Notice that *Jehovah* must be in quality, “*God Almighty*.” He is called “I AM” (Exod. 3:13, 14). Whomever Jehovah is, is who God Almighty is—the eternal self-existing One. Revelation 1:8 and 4:8 conveys this. He always was, is, and will be—no beginning or end.

B. In Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God *is* one Jehovah” (YLT). When we insist on “one God” we are insisting on “one Jehovah.” Can it be said then that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all Jehovah?

1. [cl] *The Father* is Jehovah. Psalm 2:7. The “LORD” (Jehovah) who is speaking here is not the Son, but the Father (see 2 Pet. 1:17).
2. [cl] *The Son* is Jehovah. Isaiah 40:3 speaks of one crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of “the Lord” (Jehovah). The voice in the wilderness is not Jehovah but is preparing the way for Jehovah. Who is the voice crying in the wilderness? It is John the Baptist (Jn. 1:23). Who is John preparing the way for? Jesus (Jn. 1:29, 30).
3. [cl] *The Holy Spirit* is Jehovah. The Lord was contrasting Moses with other prophets in Numbers 12:6, “Then He said, “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, *I*, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream.” Yet, let’s consider that Jehovah Himself makes Himself known to prophets in visions and dreams. Amos adds, “Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets” (Amos 3:7). Jehovah makes

Himself known and reveals His secrets to His prophets. Yet, we find that it is specifically the Holy Spirit who reveals these things to the apostles and prophets (see Eph. 3:3-5; 2 Pet. 1:21).

- V. [C...] **What practical lessons does this teaching mean for a child of God?** Since all three are Jehovah, there is an ever-abiding presence of all three in my life. Remember what Paul told the Athenians, "...He is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:27). What does this omnipresence look like for me as a child of God?
- A. *It looks like He sees everything that goes on in my life (see Hagar in Gen. 16:6-14).*
1. She recognized that despite being treated harshly, God heard and saw what went on. He was watching over her. We need to remember that also. When we are hurt or when we hurt—God sees. Let this text become your *Beer Lahai Roi*: Well of the One Who Lives and Sees Me!
 2. See Psalm 139:1-12. Anxiety can be swallowed up in the thought of God's continuing presence. Such wonderful knowledge should comfort us in sorrow, prod us to live better, and do more even when others don't see. It should cause us to steer clear of secret sin, pray more fervently, and have less fear of evil as the days unfold.
- B. *It looks like God is over me (Eph. 4:6).*
- C. *It looks like God is under me carrying me (Deut. 33:26, 27).* Exod. 19:4, "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself." Deuteronomy 1:31, "and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place." King David's hymn says, "For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, But the LORD upholds the righteous" (Psa. 37:17).
- D. *It looks like God is surrounding me.* "As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the LORD surrounds His people From this time forth and forever" (Psa. 125:2; never forsake, Heb. 13:5).
- E. *It looks like God is in me.* Colossians 1:27, "To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Christ does not dwell in us mysteriously or directly. He dwells in us through faith (Eph. 3:17). Yet faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). These things show that we go with God even when living in a world that opposes all that is of God.

Conclusion:

1. According to God's word, what does the choice to not believe mean (see 1 Jn. 5:10). He makes God a liar. Yet believing is connected to eternal life (1 Jn. 5:11-13). There is no middle ground.
2. [C] Will you come to the invitation of the Holy Spirit to believe and be baptized for the remission of your sins? The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God (see Rom. 8:14-17).
3. [C] *How so?* Consider this parallel. What did Jeremiah say God would do in Jeremiah 31:33, 34? When quoted in the NT (Heb. 10:15-17) it prefaces it with *the Holy Spirit witnesses to us*. "Witnesses" is our word in 1 John 5.
4. [cl] **THE POINT:** We can read the Holy Spirit's witness in Bible! When He tells us that we become children of God by faith when we are baptized (Gal. 3:26, 27), we are reading His testimony.
5. [C] "It is crucial for people to base their assurance on the Scripture which makes sense of experiences. When we make experiences the basis and ground of salvation we have the cart before the horse. ...The Spirit has borne testimony in the Bible, let's major in that. Let's interpret our experiences by the Bible and not the Bible by our experiences" (Jim McGuiggan).