

# TRIUNE GOD

## Forecast & Review

In our final major segment of our study, we are going to turn our attention to the Triune God in the Old Testament. I hope to offer us various tools to read the Old Testament skilfully toward this end.

- Tool 1: Overhearing God's Self-Talk
- Not a Tool: The name *LORD* can refer to Father, Son, and/or Spirit.
- Tool 2: The Word of the LORD (as the Son)

## TOOL 3: THE WISDOM OF GOD

Our next three tools concern intermediary agents between God and humanity, ones who are personifications of the LORD—namely His Word, His Wisdom, and the Angel of the LORD.

### *Basic Criteria for Determining Divinity*

1. According to Isaiah 40:14 & 28, what question(s) can we ask to determine whether a biblical figure is within the “divine identity” (i.e., within God or outside of God).

### *Proverbs 8-9*

2. Who is the Wisdom of the LORD?

3. Consider Irenaeus' writing about the Word and Wisdom of God on the following page. How did this early Christian (born c. 130 AD) understand the Triune God?

*That one God formed all things in the world, by means of the Word and the Holy Spirit: and that although He is to us in this life invisible and incomprehensible, nevertheless He is not unknown; inasmuch as His works do declare Him, and His Word has shown that in many modes He may be seen and known.*

1. As regards His greatness, therefore, it is not possible to **know God**, for it is impossible that the Father can be measured; but as regards His **love** (for this it is which leads us to God by His Word), when we **obey** Him, we do always learn that there is so great a **God**, and that it is He who by Himself has established, and selected, and adorned, and contains all things; and among the all things, both ourselves and this our world. We also then were made, along with those things which are contained by Him. And this is He of whom the **Scripture** says, *And God formed man, taking clay of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life.* **Genesis 2:7** It was not **angels**, therefore, who made us, nor who formed us, neither had **angels** power to make an image of **God**, nor any one else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any Power remotely distant from the Father of all things. For God did not stand in need of these [beings], in order to the accomplishing of what He had Himself determined with Himself beforehand should be done, as if He did not possess His own hands. For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and the **Spirit**, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all things, to whom also He speaks, saying, *Let Us make man after Our image and likeness;* **Genesis 1:26** He taking from Himself the substance of the creatures [formed], and the pattern of things made, and the type of all the adornments in the world.

2. Truly, then, the **Scripture** declared, which says, *First of all believe that there is one God, who has established all things, and completed them, and having caused that from what had no being, all things should come into existence:* He who contains all things, and is Himself contained by no one. Rightly also has Malachi said among the **prophets**: *Is it not one God who has established us? Have we not all one Father?* **Malachi 2:10** In accordance with this, too, does the apostle say, *There is one God, the Father, who is above all, and in us all.* **Ephesians 4:6** Likewise does the Lord also say: *All things are delivered to Me by My Father;* **Matthew 11:27** manifestly by Him who made all things; for He did not deliver to Him the

things of another, but His own. But in *all things* [it is implied that] nothing has been kept back [from Him], and for this reason the same person is the Judge of the living and the dead; *having the key of David: He shall open, and no man shall shut: He shall shut, and no man shall open.* [Revelation 3:7](#) For no one was able, either in heaven or in earth, or under the earth, to open the book of the [Father](#), or to behold Him, with the exception of the Lamb who was slain, and who redeemed us with His own blood, receiving power over all things from the same God who made all things by the Word, and adorned them by [His] Wisdom, when *the Word was made flesh*; that even as the [Word of God](#) had the sovereignty in the heavens, so also might He have the sovereignty in earth, inasmuch as [He was] a righteous man, *who did no sin, neither was there found guile in His mouth*; [1 Peter 2:23](#) and that He might have the pre-eminence over those things which are under the earth, He Himself being made *the first-begotten of the dead*; [Colossians 1:18](#) and that all things, as I have already said, might behold their King; and that the paternal light might meet with and rest upon the flesh of our Lord, and come to us from His resplendent flesh, and that thus man might attain to [immortality](#), having been invested with the paternal light.

3. I have also largely demonstrated, that the Word, namely the [Son](#), was always with the Father; and that Wisdom also, which is the [Spirit](#), was present with Him, anterior to all creation, He declares by Solomon: *God by Wisdom founded the earth, and by understanding has He established the heaven. By His knowledge the depths burst forth, and the clouds dropped down the dew.* [Proverbs 3:19-20](#) And again: *The Lord created me the beginning of His ways in His work: He set me up from everlasting, in the beginning, before He made the earth, before He established the depths, and before the fountains of waters gushed forth; before the mountains were made strong, and before all the hills, He brought me forth.* And again: *When He prepared the heaven, I was with Him, and when He established the fountains of the deep; when He made the foundations of the earth strong, I was with Him preparing [them]. I was He in whom He rejoiced, and throughout all time I was daily glad before His face, when He rejoiced at the completion of the world, and was delighted in the sons of men.*

[Proverbs 8:27-31](#)

4. There is therefore one **God**, who by the Word and Wisdom created and arranged all things; but this is the Creator (**Demiurge**) who has granted this world to the **human race**, and who, as regards His greatness, is indeed unknown to all who have been made by Him (for no man has searched out His height, either among the ancients who have gone to their rest, or any of those who are now alive); but as regards His **love**, He is always **known** through Him by whose means He ordained all things. Now this is His Word, **our Lord Jesus Christ**, who in the last times was made a man among **men**, that He might join the end to the beginning, that is, man to **God**. Wherefore the **prophets**, receiving the prophetic gift from the same Word, announced His advent according to the flesh, by which the blending and communion of **God** and **man** took place according to the good pleasure of the **Father**, the **Word of God** foretelling from the beginning that **God** should be seen by **men**, and hold converse with them upon earth, should confer with them, and should be present with His own creation, saving it, and becoming capable of being perceived by it, and freeing us from the hands of all that **hate** us, that is, from every spirit of **wickedness**; and causing us to serve Him in **holiness** and righteousness all our days, **Luke 1:71, 75** in order that man, having embraced the **Spirit of God**, might pass into the **glory** of the Father.

Against Heresies (Book IV, Chapter 20)