

image. Sin would become a wall of separation, so it would be necessary for God to do whatever was required to remove that barrier.

What atonement could be made to erase the deadly contamination of sin? The entire picture of the sacrifice is portrayed throughout the Bible. “The Word” became the mediator between God and man. He is called “the Word of the Lord”, “the Angel of the Lord”, “the Angel of His Presence”, in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the Word was born into the human family as the Son of man and the Son of God, Jesus Christ, being made in all things like His brethren (Hebrews 2:17), and being obedient to the Father, “the Sender” (Hebrews 5:8,9).

**The wages of sin is death** (Romans 6:23). God could not be “just” if He allowed that penalty to go unpaid. That is why the death of the perfect Son had to happen — He died the atoning death for humanity. And in the process of taking our sins, He bound Himself to us as the brother of man and joint-heir with His human family, eternally (Romans 8:17)

That doesn’t mean that He is no longer “God”; we cannot cease to be what we *are*. But from the foundation of the world, this plan was made and implemented, so that sinful humans could become children of God through the Son-

ship of Jesus Christ, His Firstborn in the flesh.

So, God the Father is the Sender; Jesus Christ is the Brother and Savior. And the Holy Spirit? What is His role?

It was through the Holy Spirit that Christ was conceived as the Son of God; it is through the Holy Spirit that we are born in the waters of baptism as His children (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Spirit indwelt Christ, empowering Him to do His work (John 3:34); from the time of our birth into the Family, He indwells each Christian (Romans 8; Ephesians 3:14-21), sent by Christ to strengthen us, to make intercession to God for us, and to make us alive to God, spiritually.

It is impossible for the finite human mind to understand the infinite God who made us, but a study of His word convinces us of His existence, His power, and the immeasurable love He has for His creation.

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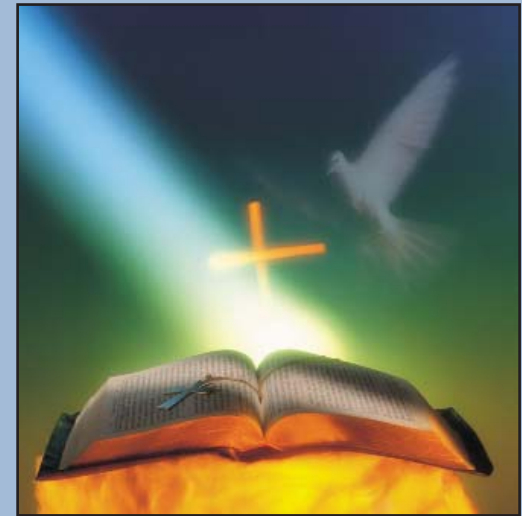
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## **Elohim: the Godhead**

**Betty Burton Choate**

**An exquisite portrayal of the Godhead: Light — the cross of Calvary — the dove of the Holy Spirit — and the Scriptures, their gift of guidance to bring mankind to his God.**

## Elohim: the Godhead

Betty Burton Choate

Our first introduction to God is made in the first verse of the first chapter of the first book of the Bible: Genesis — the book of beginnings. A careful reading of the entire Bible will show that nowhere does God attempt to prove His existence to man; it is stated as a fact that serves as the foundational truth for all that exists.

Yet, our English word does not clarify the entire message of the Scriptures concerning God. To us, it reads as a singular noun. But in Hebrew, the original language, “El” is the singular form of the word, while “Elohim” is the plural form. “El” appears in the text about 500 times. “Elohim” is there almost 3,000 times. What does this mean?

### Biblical Reference to the Triune God

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:4). Again, in English, this word for God sounds like a singular noun, but looking at the Hebrew, the statement says, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD [Jehovah: singular, a personal name] our God [Elohim, plural] is one! [Hebrew: Achid, meaning a united one, not only one]. Therefore, this verse is a declaration of the absolute oneness, in substance as well as in purpose, of the plural Personalities that comprise the Godhead.

Throughout the biblical account, if we read closely, we see the three Persons that are the one God. Even in Genesis 1:1,2 we read “*In the beginning God [Elohim; Godhead].*” Verse one identifies God as the Creator; verse two says the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the water; and John 1:1-3 identifies “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*”

Continuing to verse 14, we read, “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” Thus, we are introduced to the Word, the One of the Godhead who emptied Himself (Philippians 2:5-8), being born as the Son of man and the only begotten Son of God — God, in the flesh.

At the beginning of the account of Jesus, we read in Matthew 1 and Luke 1:26-38 that God sent the angel Gabriel to tell Mary that she would bear a son, through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy One being born would be called the Son of God. That Holy One, though, who became the Son of God had been with God, as God, in the beginning, taking part in the Creation. Thus, we see the three

Persons involved in the conception and the birth of the Word as Jesus Christ.

When Jesus was baptized, we again see the three Persons: Jesus; God speaking from Heaven, saying, “*You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.*” At the same time, “*... the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him...*” (Luke 3:22)

In Isaiah 42:1 we read a prophetic statement spoken by God: “*Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.*” Again, this passage identifies three Persons of the Godhead.

### The Work of the Triune God

Just as humans are of the same essence, and therefore are equal from the standpoint of their make-up, the three Persons of the Godhead are equal in essence: Godness. But their work is different. Revelation 13: says of Christ that He was “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*” This gives us a glimpse of the long-range plan for humanity, a plan that had tremendous effect on the loving God who created us. In His ability to look down through time and to know all things, God saw that sin would come into the world. The point of creating mankind was to have the love of beings, made in His own