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John's gospel describes Jesus coming into the world in the following way:

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Here we have a picture that the 'Son' is the Word, or we might say the 'divine element' of wisdom, taking on real form and substance in the world. And it is this wisdom in the life of Jesus that ultimately wins the victory of the crucifixion and resurrection.

And then seven weeks after the resurrection and at the time of Pentecost the disciples received the Holy Spirit as described in the book of Acts:

*When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

The Holy Spirit gave the disciples conviction, power and determination to spread the Good News and we can see this as the 'divine element' of activity wonderfully present in their lives.

God is One, but God is also 'Father', 'Son' and 'Holy Spirit' because these are the essential divine elements of love, wisdom and activity fully present in the Divine Human of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Surely our responsibility is to acknowledge the presence of God and to allow his love, wisdom and activity to fill and transform our lives

# The Oneness of God



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## The Oneness of God

Throughout history the major world religions have presented diverse views of the nature of God. Some religions have proclaimed that God is One whilst others have promoted the worship of many gods. You can see this vividly portrayed in the stories of the Old Testament. For the Jewish people there was absolutely no question about it. For them the words *“The Lord your God is one Lord”* were at the heart of their religion.

But the Old Testament records the details of many other nations. Their religions involved the worship of many gods, each responsible for all sorts of different aspects of their lives. On many occasions the Jewish people drifted away from their own forms of worship and began to adopt the styles and customs of other tribes and nations. But each time they were warned to return to the proper worship of the One God who had led them out of slavery in Egypt and guided them towards the promised land.

But the New Testament adds a new dimension to our understanding of God and through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ presents an image of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Mathew’s Gospel emphasises this point by closing with these words:

*And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

How do we reconcile the idea that God is One, with such a statement and what should we really make of the ‘trinity’ of Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

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Firstly we need to think about the Oneness of God. We can think of God as the source of all that is good and true in creation and of a perfection to which we can aspire. Its like seeing a great and high mountain. There can be only one peak that is the highest part of the mountain and the rest of the mountain, as it were, comes down from that point. Or maybe we can think of God as the infinite life source that is universally present in all living things. But you can’t have more than one ‘infinite’ source of life. God must be One!

Now stop and think about yourself. Imagine you want to do something you’ve never done before. It could be anything, but to make it easy lets imagine you want to build a brick wall in your garden to separate one area from another.

What you would love to have is a brick wall. But you haven’t built a brick wall before so your next step is to read up the subject in a DIY book till you are sure you understand how to do it. Finally you get together the materials and the activity gets underway.

Notice how your brick wall starts with ‘love’ (you would love to have a brick wall). This is then followed by a period of gaining sufficient ‘wisdom’ to know how to build the wall thus giving our ideas real form and substance. And finally you get on with the activity itself. Everything we do in life goes through these three stages although we may not be so conscious of them as in the case of the brick wall described above.

The Bible tells us that we are made in the image and likeness of God, however imperfect we may be, so it should not surprise us that we can picture these facets of love, wisdom and activity as the three ‘divine elements’ of the way God works.

This ‘trinity’ of love, wisdom and activity is beautifully described in the New Testament as ‘Father’, ‘Son’ and ‘Holy Spirit’. We say that God is Love. And it is this ‘divine element’ of love creating and sustaining everything that is pictured as a loving father.

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