THE ORIGINAL TESTIMONY: THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT IN APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURE

Master Theological Framework • Lexical Analysis • Koine Greek & Hebrew Study Guide

The Way of Christ — Strict Apostolic Monotheism

KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND LEXICAL DISTINCTIONS

• **Distinct Divine Names:** The Almighty Father is exclusively identified by the personal covenant name **YHWH / Yahweh**, designated as the Only True God (*Monos Alethinos Theos*), the Father, and the Ancient of Days. In sharp contrast, His Son is identified by the human and functional titles **Yeshua / Jesus of Nazareth**, the Son of God, the Messiah / Christ (*Mashiach / Christos*), the One Lord (*Heis Kyrios*), the Firstborn of all creation (*Prototokos Pases Ktiseos*), and the Lamb (*Arnion*).

• **The Holy Spirit as Helper, Breath, and Wind:** Emphasized through the Hebrew *Ruach* and Greek *Pneuma* (literally "breath", "wind", and animating life-force), functioning as the Father's operational energy and personal presence. The title Helper / Advocate (*Parakletos*) is highlighted as a functional personification of divine guidance rather than an independent third ontological being.

• **Ego Eimi and Logos:** Highlighted in their authentic Jewish contexts. *Ego Eimi* (Hebrew: *Ani Hu*, "I am [he]") indicates messianic appointment rather than an assertion of absolute deity, as demonstrated by identical phrasing from the healed blind man in John 9:9. The *Logos* (Hebrew: *Dabar*, wisdom / *Chokhmah*) represents the Father's spoken decree, divine plan, and creative wisdom realized in bodily form, not a distinct co-equal individual.

• **Additional Key Concepts:** The legal principle of agency (*Shaliah*), the functional neuter unity (*Hen*) versus numerical identity (*Heis*), the distinction between ultimate source (*Ek*) and instrumental agency (*Dia*), and early manuscript witnesses (P45, P66, P74, P75, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus) are marked throughout.

I. WHO GOD IS: THE FATHER ALONE (STRICT APOSTOLIC MONOTHEISM)

1. The Singular Person of YHWH

Apostolic faith rests upon the uncompromising monotheism proclaimed by Jesus Christ and his early Jewish followers. Scripture identifies the Almighty Creator not as an impersonal essence comprising three co-equal persons, but exclusively as the Heavenly Father, **YHWH / Yahweh**.

• **The Primary Monotheistic Confession:** The foundational creed of Israel defines God as numerically one individual, stating in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: YHWH our God, YHWH is one" (*YHWH echad*).

• **Affirmation by Jesus:** When asked to name the foremost commandment, Jesus affirmed the Shema verbatim in Mark 12:29 without introducing multi-personal modifications.

• **Pauline Distinctions of Source and Agency:** The Apostle Paul drew an absolute boundary between the identity of the One God and the identity of the One Lord in 1 Corinthians 8:6: "Yet for us there is but **one God, the Father**, from whom (*ek* — ultimate source) all things came and for whom we live; and there is but **one Lord, Jesus Christ**, through whom (*dia* — instrumental agency) all things came and through whom we live." The Father alone is the ultimate Source; all divine operations proceed through His anointed King.

• **The High-Priestly Definition:** In John 17:3, Jesus addressed the Father as the exclusive possessor of true deity: "And this is eternal life, that they know you, the **only true God** (*ton monon alethinon theon*), and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

• **The Hierarchy of Worship:** Jesus explicitly confirmed that he has a God over him in John 20:17: "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to **my God and your God**." Parallel language appears in Revelation 3:12 ("my God") and throughout the epistles.

• **Apostolic Doxologies:** Early apostolic greetings and doxologies consistently honor the Father above Christ, addressing "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:3).

• **One Mediator:** 1 Timothy 2:5 states: "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the **man** Christ Jesus." The mediator is explicitly human and distinct from the one God.

2. The Living Creator vs. Hellenistic Metaphysics

The God revealed across the Hebrew Scriptures is a dynamic, passionate, and responsive Creator who interacts directly with human history. Fourth-century council theology attempted to align the Hebrew Creator with Greek philosophical concepts of Aristotle's "unmoved mover" and absolute, emotionless impassibility (*apatheia*). Scripture rejects that detached portrait:

• **Grief and Emotion:** Genesis 6:5–6 records that when humanity fell into corruption, YHWH felt regret and His heart was deeply troubled.

• **Zeal and Protectiveness:** Exodus 34:14 declares that YHWH, "whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."

• **Dynamic Intervention:** Nahum 1:2 and Deuteronomy 4:24 present Him as a zealous, consuming fire who avenges evil, not a passive philosophical principle.

II. WHO JESUS IS: THE BEGOTTEN MESSIAH AND EXALTED MEDIATOR

1. The Literal Son of God and the Ego Eimi Construction

The New Testament never utilizes the post-apostolic phrase "God the Son." Instead, the text consistently defines Jesus of Nazareth / Yeshua as the literal **Son of God**, the promised Davidic King, and the authentic human **Messiah / Christ** (*Mashiach / Christos*).

• **Origin in the Womb of Mary:** To be an authentic son requires origin and derivation. Luke 1:35 records that the holy child was conceived through the Holy Spirit overshadowing Mary, and for that exact reason he would be called the Son of God.

• **Divine Foreordination:** Christ existed notionally in the mind, promise, and foreordination of God before the foundation of the world. 1 Peter 1:20 declares that he was "foreknown before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in these last times."

• **Exegesis of Ego Eimi in John 8:58:** In first-century Hebrew and Aramaic idiom, the phrase "before Abraham was, *ego eimi*" (Hebrew equivalent: *ani hu*) signified declaring oneself to be the designated Messiah foreordained in God's eternal plan before Abraham was born. The absolute form also echoes Isaiah's "I am he" declarations (Isa 41:4; 43:10, 13, 25; 46:4; 48:12), yet Jesus' own defense in John 10:34–36 reframes the charge of blasphemy by appealing to Psalm 82:6 ("I said, you are gods"), arguing from the lesser to the greater for legitimate sonship and agency rather than identity as God Almighty.

• **Linguistic Context in John 9:9:** The healed blind man utilized the exact same Greek phrase (*ego eimi*) to verify his personal identity ("I am the man"), proving that the expression carries no inherent grammatical claim of being Almighty God.

• **Firstborn of Creation:** In Colossians 1:15, Jesus is designated "the firstborn of all creation" (*prototokos pases ktiseos*), confirming his rank as the appointed heir and sovereign representative over the created order, fulfilling Psalm 89:27 ("I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth").

• **Exaltation Language:** Acts 2:36 records Peter's declaration: "God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." The making/appointment language is consistent with agency and exaltation, not eternal co-equality.

2. The Logos Made Flesh (John 1:1, 1:14)

In first-century Jewish theology, the *Logos* (Hebrew: *Dabar*) represented God's spoken decree, divine intention, wisdom (*Chokhmah*), and creative purpose, as seen in Psalm 33:6 and Isaiah 55:11. It was never understood as an independent person standing beside God. Parallel personifications appear in Proverbs 8 and later Wisdom literature (Sirach 24, Wisdom of Solomon).

• **God's Counsel in the Beginning:** The Logos was with God (*pros ton theon*) in the beginning as His internal reason and purpose. The anarthrous *theos* in "the Word was God/divine" is most naturally read qualitatively (the Word shared the nature/character of God) rather than as a second co-equal Person of the Godhead. The distinction "with God" remains.

• **The Nature of Immortality:** God is an immortal Spirit who cannot morph, change, suffer, or perish (1 Timothy 6:16; Malachi 3:6).

• **Incarnation as Realization:** The declaration that "the Logos became flesh" does not teach that the immortal God transformed into mortal clay, but that the Father's eternal plan and promise became a tangible living reality in the human person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the full embodiment, spokesman, and realization of the Father's Word on earth.

3. The Hebrew Principle of Divine Agency (Shaliah)

The legal principle of Jewish agency (*shaliah*) dictates that "an agent is as the man himself" (Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 5:5; cf. Kiddushin 41b). When an authorized representative speaks on behalf of the sender, he bears the sender's full authority without becoming ontologically identical to the sender.

• **Functional Unity in John 10:30:** When Jesus declared, "I and the Father are one," he employed the neuter Greek word for one (*hen*), which denotes complete unity of purpose, mission, and cooperation, rather than the masculine *heis*, which would more readily claim numerical identity of person. The plural verb "we are" (*esmen*) further marks distinction of subjects.

• **The Believer's Parallel Unity:** Jesus prayed in John 17:21–22 that all believers would be "one (*hen*) just as we are one (*hen*)," demonstrating that the oneness shared between Father and Son is functional harmony rather than a metaphysical substance shared only by two divine persons.

• **Grammatical Analysis of John 20:28:** In Thomas's confession ("My Lord and my God," *ho kyrios mou kai ho theos mou*), the repeated Greek article coordinates two titles. Within the agency framework, this honors the risen Jesus as anointed Lord while praising the Almighty Father who raised him and worked through him—consistent with Exodus 7:1 (Moses made "as God" to Pharaoh) and the broader pattern of agents bearing the sender's authority and titles.

• **Derived Power:** Jesus never claimed self-derived omnipotence, stating in John 5:19 that "the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing." Matthew 28:18 records that all authority had to be "given" to Jesus, proving that his authority is derived from the Father rather than inherent.

• **Philippians 2:5–11:** The Christ-hymn presents Jesus existing in the form of God yet not regarding equality with God as something to be grasped/exploited; he emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. God then highly exalted him and bestowed the name above every name. The movement is from humility to exaltation by God, not the temporary veiling of eternal co-equal status.

4. Direct Subordination to the Father

The New Testament uniformly records the subordination of the Son to the Father before his death, after his resurrection, and into the ages to come:

• **Relational Superiority:** Jesus stated unambiguously in John 14:28, "The Father is greater than I."

• **Limitation of Knowledge:** Jesus disclaimed universal omniscience, confirming in Mark 13:32 that "about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

• **The Eternal Headship:** 1 Corinthians 11:3 maintains an eternal chain of authority: "the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God."

• **Final Eschatological Surrender:** At the consummation of all things, Jesus will surrender the kingdom back to the Father, remaining subject to God forever (1 Corinthians 15:28): "When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all."

• **Hebrews 1:8–9:** Even when Psalm 45 is applied to the Son ("Your throne, O God, is forever and ever"), the very next verse continues: "therefore God, **your God**, has anointed you…" The Son still has a God who anoints and exalts him.

III. WHO THE HOLY SPIRIT IS: THE POWER AND PRESENCE OF GOD

1. Breath, Wind, and Operational Energy

Across the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is never presented as a third co-equal person in a triune godhead. The Hebrew word *Ruach* and the Greek word *Pneuma* literally translate to breath, wind, or animating force.

• **The Divine Presence in Creation:** The Spirit of God (*Ruach Elohim*) represents the operational power, presence, and personal energy of the Father actively working within creation (Genesis 1:2; Psalm 33:6).

• **The Comforter and Advocate:** In John 14–16, the Spirit is described as the Helper / Advocate (*Parakletos*), representing the Father's personal presence, comfort, and direct guidance sent to sustain the believers. Jesus also says the Father (and he himself) will come to the disciples (John 14:23), reinforcing that the Spirit is the mode of divine presence rather than a third independent person.

• **Parallelism in Luke 1:35:** Luke 1:35 uses Hebrew poetic parallelism to define the Holy Spirit as "the power of the Most High," confirming that the Spirit is the Father's divine ability, not a separate deity.

• **The Finger of God:** In Matthew 12:28, Jesus stated that he cast out demons "by the Spirit of God," which Luke 11:20 translates synonymously as being accomplished "by the finger of God."

2. Grammatical and Biblical Realities

• **Neuter Grammar and Personification:** The Greek noun *pneuma* is grammatically neuter. Masculine pronouns appearing in English translations of John 16:13 follow the grammatical gender of the masculine noun *parakletos* (Helper / Advocate), not proof of an individual ontological person.

• **Impersonal Scriptural Descriptions:** Scripture consistently describes the Holy Spirit with impersonal actions that cannot apply to an individual person: the Spirit is "poured out" (Acts 2:17), "breathed" (John 20:22), "quenched" (1 Thessalonians 5:19), and "distributed" in measures (Hebrews 2:4).

• **Apostolic Salutations:** In every apostolic greeting, Paul greets the assemblies from "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3, etc.), consistently omitting the Holy Spirit from the greeting formula.

• **Throne Room Visions:** In the prophetic throne-room visions of Daniel 7 and Revelation 4–5, only two entities are depicted in the primary divine administration: the Ancient of Days / One seated on the throne (the Father) and the Lamb / Son of Man (Jesus Christ). The seven spirits before the throne function as symbolic of divine fullness or agency, not a third co-equal person.

IV. SYSTEMATIC COMPARISON MATRIX

Theological Category	Almighty God (The Father)	Jesus Christ (The Son)	The Holy Spirit
Biblical Identity	YHWH; The Only True God; The Father; Ancient of Days	Yeshua / Jesus; Promised Messiah; Son of God; Lamb	Helper / Parakletos; Breath and Wind; Power of the Most High
Lexical Root	Father (Abba / Pater)	Anointed (Mashiach / Christos)	Ruach / Pneuma (Breath / Wind)
Origin and Essence	Unoriginated; Immortal Spirit; Absolute Source (ek)	Begotten; Born of Mary; Real mortal man raised to life; Foreknown	Emanating operational energy directly from the Father
Sovereignty & Authority	Supreme Head of all reality and Head of Christ	Delegated authority received from the Father (shaliah)	Operative divine power executing the Father's will
Scope of Knowledge	Possesses exclusive knowledge of the final day and hour	Knowledge limited to what the Father reveals (Mark 13:32)	The internal mind, power, and wisdom of God
Function in Salvation	The Initiator who loved the world and sent His Son	The Mediator, Sacrificial Lamb, and High Priest (1 Tim 2:5)	The Seal, Sanctifier, and Guarantee of Inheritance
Apostolic Designation	"One God, the Father" (1 Cor 8:6)	"One Lord, Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 8:6)	"Spirit of your Father" (Matt 10:20)

V. HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES FOR EXEGESIS AND RESEARCH

When evaluating biblical manuscripts, examining historical doctrine, or conducting linguistic research, maintain the following standards:

• **Prioritize the Earliest Manuscripts:** Foundational doctrine must never rely on late scribal additions introduced into Latin and Byzantine texts centuries later, such as the Comma Johanneum in 1 John 5:7 or the marginal baptismal confession in Acts 8:37. Research must rely on the earliest Greek witnesses, including P45, P66, P74, P75, Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Vaticanus. Note that the core high-Christology passages in John (1:1; 8:58; 10:30; 20:28) are present in the earliest papyri; the later addition of John 7:53–8:11 (Pericope Adulterae) does not affect them.

• **Reject Fourth-Century Imperial Syncretism:** The council creeds established from Nicaea (325 AD) to Constantinople (381 AD) and the enforcement under Theodosius were political and ecclesiastical developments. Filter all apostolic

writings through first-century Jewish monotheism rather than post-apostolic Greco-Roman philosophical categories (ousia, hypostasis, homoousios).

• **Honor the Law of Agency:** Always distinguish between the supreme Sender and the obedient Agent (*shaliah*). Honor granted to the Son reflects back upon the Father who exalted him (Philippians 2:9–11). Titles and functions shared with the Father do not automatically entail numerical identity.

• **Adhere to the Written Boundaries:** Abide by Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 4:6 to "not go beyond what is written," rejecting speculative human metaphysics in favor of the plain biblical text and its first-century Jewish context.

• **Distinguish Functional and Ontological Language:** Unity of will, shared work, and delegated authority (functional) must not be collapsed into claims of identical essence or co-equal personhood (ontological) without clear textual warrant.

VI. ADDITIONAL LEXICAL & CONTEXTUAL NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following points further solidify the framework without altering its core claims:

• **On "God" applied to agents:** Scripture occasionally applies theos / elohim to non-Almighty figures (Exodus 7:1 — Moses as "God" to Pharaoh; Psalm 82:6 — human judges called "gods"; possibly angels in some contexts). This background supports reading occasional "God" language for Jesus within agency rather than as proof of co-equal ontology.

• **Proskuneo (worship / homage):** The Greek verb can denote civil homage as well as religious worship. Context determines the force. The New Testament shows Jesus receiving honor that is directed ultimately to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:11).

• **Wisdom / Logos background:** Personified Wisdom in Proverbs 8, Sirach 24, and the Wisdom of Solomon provides the closest Jewish conceptual parallel to John's Logos. These texts personify divine attributes and activity without creating a second eternal divine person.

• **Revelation's dual focus:** Revelation consistently distinguishes the One seated on the throne from the Lamb. Both receive honor, yet the Lamb is the slain-and-exalted Redeemer who has a God (Rev 3:12) and who takes the scroll from the right hand of the One on the throne.

• **Consistency with the Synoptics and Acts:** The Synoptic Gospels and Acts emphasize Jesus as the Messiah, Son of God, and exalted Lord by God's action. They lack the more elevated Logos language of John yet remain fully compatible with the agency-and-exaltation model.

This study guide prioritizes the earliest Greek manuscripts, first-century Jewish linguistic and legal categories (especially agency), and the consistent subordination and monotheistic language of the apostolic writings. It is offered as a tool for careful lexical and contextual study.