

Original questions:

Hi Erickson,

I wanted to thank you for your time last Saturday. I have a few questions here, some of which are basically reiterating what we covered last Saturday, just for reference sake:

1.) I remember asking about some citations as to where evidence is that the original manuscripts actually contained the divine name? I have read sources of evidence for and against it. I don't really see this as central to our discussion, and *I will ask my questions under an assumption that the original text may have included the divine name* (even though none of the early NT manuscripts, or Ante Nicene quotations of the earliest manuscripts, to my knowledge, actually seemed to have the divine name mentioned.. but this is debatable), so *there is no need to provide citations here.*

2.) What is the rule or convention the NWT committee uses when choosing where to insert the divine name into the New Testament?

3.) In the case that an OT verse containing YHWH is quoted in 2 or more places in the NT, should we expect the NWT committee to have inserted "Jehovah" in all of the NT quotations of that verse?

4.) Would you be willing to provide an explanation of your own understanding of Isaiah 44.24 nwt?

5.) Would you be willing to provide your own explanation as to what is being said concerning the nature of Jehovah, as found in Isaiah 48 nwt?

6.) Would you be willing to provide your own explanation as to what is being said about the nature of Jehovah as found in Isaiah 6, nwt?

7.) Would you say Isaiah 53 (nwt) predominantly speaks of the glory of Christ in any way? If so, how?

8.) Would you be willing to provide some detail as to when Jehovah begins speaking in Isaiah 61, nwt?

9.) Hosea 12.1-5; would you be willing to provide your understanding of this passage?

10.) Could you provide your insight as to what John meant when he said "No man has seen God at any time" John 1.18, and how that dovetails with:

Gen 32.30, Ex.24.9, Num.12.8, Judges 13.22, 1 Kings 11.9, Isaiah 6.5

11.) Could you please provide your understanding as to who the addressee is in Psalm 102?

12.) Could you provide your explanation as to your understanding of Zechariah 11:12 & 13, nwt?

13.) Would you be willing to provide your commentary on Judges 6.11-24?

14.) Would you be willing to provide your commentary on Gen 31.11-13? And also, Gen 48.3-16?

I am also interested in your commentary on many other verses. I look forward to seeing you Saturday,

-Bruce

Overview of experiences:

where to begin. Well, as you probably know, I initially reached out to the local kingdom hall via phone, and requested my free bible study. About a week later, one of the elders from the the KH called me. Of course, I played along and didn't give any clues that I was not a clueless 'truth seeker'. In fact, I did & do have some genuine questions for the JW's. So I expressed to him my desire to ask some questions, and I opted to meet him down at our local KH. My reasoning, like Paul's, is to meet him where I can win more to Christ. Also, (as is the case with so many encounters in neutral locations), Jw's tend to pack up and leave quickly when put in a corner, so if we're meeting on their turf, they should have the 'home field advantage' and should be in their comfort zone...Anything to help them feel relaxed (well, anything/anyone aside from the Word and the Spirit). So for our first meeting, it was just he (Erickson) and I. It was a very good time. He came to know a bit about my background, and I made known to him my intentions, and he saw that I was of a meek and non-argumentative spirit, so he was not compelled to end things quickly. We discussed how neither of us was a stickler on using the exact divine name (i.e., Jehovah vs. Yahweh vs YHWH), just as long as we were referencing the right entity when using it, so we agreed. I also got the opportunity to share with him the derivation of 'Jehovah' (which he was not privy to, and appreciated). He self-admittedly has no major experience with using the original languages of the Scripture. During our meeting times, he relies heavily on commentaries. He and I both know (and he knows that I know, I think), that my questions have tested his sensibilities and have challenged him to square with the truth of reality, and the reality of the truth. In summary, our first meeting was largely a rapport-building meeting, so he could see that I was of a good spirit, and that he could trust my intentions, even though we were setting out to discuss topics that Christians and Jehovah Witnesses vehemently disagree about.

Before our next meeting (see , I told Erickson that I would generate a list of specific questions I had regarding the nature of Jehovah in the Old Testament. I figured I'd begin with a common ground piece of the Scripture (at least in many respects), namely the Old Covenant. I have this list of questions, sister, if you're so inclined to see. Honestly, Erickson defaulted to a lot of commentaries to address the questions. He also had one of his proteges/ministers in training (Boyd), with him, which was good. The more, the better. I was really interested to hear Erickson's exposition of these passages, as I knew he would have difficulty, and the Spirit can use that. There were 14 questions in total, and for our meeting, he had only prepared for 10 of them, the answers for most being rather insufficient. By the Spirit, I did not know he had only prepped the first 10, so the course of our discussion led us to segway straight to the 11th question. It pertained to Isaiah 44:24. This passage caused us to question the existential meaning of 'alone' and 'by myself'... I'd be happy to fill you in perhaps via voice message on this, as it can get rather hairy. We also discussed a bit about Isaiah 48 (latter part) and Isaiah 61, as to where Jehovah actually is speaking in the chapters, as the quotation marks' placement is largely the translator's choice.. See week 3 meeting minutes email. Erickson had a very difficult and unconventional time trying to explain how Jehovah could say that the strangers would call the israelis 'ministers of our God' (isaiah 61), and the way the NWT renders this, Jehovah would essentially be said to have a God. To this day, what they said does not make sense to me.. I just take the text to mean what it says. I give a clear explanation of my take in week 3 meeting minutes. Regardless of all the anomalies I've shown, the Spirit revealed to them that I was worth asking questions to, as I've been enlightened with understanding from Him. They commended me on my ability to comprehend the scripture, not that I thrive on the praises of men. Erickson then said, 'Hey Bruce, here's what I've been meaning to ask you...' And he asked me to prove the deity of the Spirit, as that is something he's always wondered about, and it seems no one could provide clarification on it. He wanted to devote the next few meeting times to this, so I told him I'd have it for next week.

So, for our recent meeting, Erickson brought in Steve, a 40 years-seasoned JW veteran in the ministry. A hardened man, who thinks he's impeccable. During this session, we really launched into 4 deity proofs of the spirit (out of 3 pages worth). It took 2 hours to get through the 4. You'll see them in your week 3 meeting minutes, and a preview in week 4, as we've not fully treated 1 Cor 2.10-11 yet. The setting was like I was Paul, Erickson was the governor, and Steve was Elymus the sorcerer from Acts 13:8 (and context). Everytime I was getting through to Erickson, Steve would bring up some ridiculous comment, much of which Erickson didn't really pay attention to. I could see Erickson grappling with the things I was saying. The look of mental processing, on his face, and the sighs and lowering and raising of the brow...Steve and I knew Erickson was really trying to grasp the things I was saying, as they have not heard of the indwelling of the Spirit before. Initially, I set them up with a couple questions. We defined 'person', and we all agreed, it was an intelligent entity. I then asked if the 'active force' was eternal. Steve: yes, Erickson: not sure, but he agreed with Steve's logic. I then made them agree that indicators of true personhood were intellect, self-awareness, will, emotion,

etc., and they agreed. I then posited that if I could show that the spirit possessed these attributes of personhood, then would it not prove that he'd be shown to be an eternal person with Father Jehovah, thus implying his deity? Erickson could see the logic, and grinned in near agreement, but rather than put himself in a trap, he said that we'll see what the Scripture says. As we progressed through the proof texts, it became very evident that the things baby Christians take for granted (milk doctrine), these men were oblivious to. Simple connections like my 'temple of the Spirit' proofs, which outright scream DEITY OF THE SPIRIT!, they had never seen before, nor had they any cogent rebuttals. The things most Christians skim over when reading a passage.. the implicit, subtle intimations of the Spirit's personality and function in the Scripture, these proved vital to my argument. And all this was shown using their NWT! As the arguments built, Erickson and Steve commended me again for my understanding of the scripture (note, I've never commended them for their utter ignorance, or so called knowledge, although I know they don't have ill motives...but are just deceived). And so here I am, having finalized my 1 Cor 2:10-11 exposition. Erickson will be back from vacation on the 14th, and we'll be at it again on the 16th.

Week 4 was characterized by the Jw's finally quitting their scramble for random rebuttals, and centering their counter arguments around the Spirit as a personification – classic Jw arguments against the deity and personhood of the Spirit. Feel free to investigate Week 4 meeting minutes. The short version though is that Erickson must have been rather nervous to be in the hot seat. His perspiration was extremely evident, even though we were in an air conditioned environment. Also, he has caught on to critiquing my elder's translation, just as I have scrutinized the NWT.

Week 5 was characterized by my responses/rebuttals to a series of points laid out by Erickson. His points were in support of his assertion (the Spirit is impersonal). Staley and Erickson were there – Staley (the older man of 40 years ministry experience), continued to be defiant, although not angry. Erickson walked through his series of emailed points. There were times he wanted to go too fast, (as he didn't want to allow time for the holes in his logic to be exposed). It was at these times I kindly interjected and asked that we park at various points. It was here that I shot down the framework on which many of his points were established. I will detail some of his points, and my counter arguments in this edition of meeting minutes. We also ended on a very pivotal point (how/why is the Holy Spirit called, "The Holy Spirit"? What is the significance of that?), which I will lay out very carefully and systematically. Unfortunately, we did not get to finish the point, even though he tried asking the question multiple times. His premises were rooted in faulty logic and misunderstanding between 'person' and 'Spirit', so I could not provide an answer without correcting some of his premises. In this edition of meeting minutes, I will seek to restructure his question as it should have been asked, and I will provide an answer. In short, this week's meeting, I saw that he had 2 heavily perspired armpits, and he did not even have to lift his arms. The moisture was visible even while his arms were down. I do not say this to tease the man, but I say this because I do believe we are making some serious headway, even if these men never become believers. They should at least have a better understanding of what orthodoxy is, and thus they should no longer continue beating the strawman that Jw's are so used to whacking. If they are to be honest in their counterarguments in future discussions (with other people), they will have to do so using the Trinitarian concept that was presented to them throughout the course of our meetings.

Followup questions/comments from week 3:

Hello Erickson, Steve, & Boyd,

Here's a recap/highlight of some of the points covered, and some followup observations:

1.) From my previous email, I had elaborated on Isaiah 48 and how the translator's choice of where to place the quotations can greatly influence how the text is to be interpreted. I personally feel that the placement of the end quote of Jehovah's words in v16 is a rather awkward place to insert them, as it disrupts the flow between what Jehovah says about having been the witness since the beginning, "*and now*" He & Jehovah's Spirit are being sent by the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. Here is the NWT's rendering of that passage in v16 (I've put the NWT's end quotation mark in bold red).

Come near to me, and hear this. From the very start I have not spoken in secret. + From the time it happened I was there. **”**And now the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has sent me, and* his spirit.

I personally think a more natural and logical rendering of this text should read as I have below, since the conjunction "And" expresses a continuation of speech, and also, "now" expresses a contrast with the notion just expressed. So, Jehovah is saying that from the very beginning He has outright spoken these things, and that now He and the Spirit are being sent.

2.) I know we then went to Isaiah 61, and we discussed where Jehovah begins speaking. All I was trying to say is that if Jehovah is speaking in v. 5 (and I would agree with you that He is speaking in verse 5, per your email), the the burden of proof is upon you Erickson to explain how Jehovah can say: "As for you, you will be called the priests of Jehovah; They will call you the ministers of our God." (NWT)

Note, this is in contrast to Jehovah saying "As for you, you will be called the priests of Jehovah; They will call you 'the ministers of our God'". I would take what you tried to explain Erickson as being communicated by this rendering. The NWT's rendering conveys a meaning that is along the lines of what Moses said to Pharaoh in Ex 8:26-27 where it is said:

"26 And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not stone us? **27** We will go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD *our God* as He will command us." (NKJV italics emphasis added).

Note, neither you nor I would say that Moses was not included in the group of individuals who were resolute in going 3 days journey into the wilderness and sacrificing to Yahweh *their* God.

**The Holy Spirit: I sought out to demonstrate that if you believe the spirit to be the eternal active force of Jehovah, and that if that active force truly has intellect, will, emotion, memory, or consciousness/self-awareness, then we are dealing with an eternal *person* who has always been with the Father. For we defined '*person*' as an entity possessing some form of heightened intelligence. The spirit can be shown to possess all of these attributes. Alternatively, even if you don't hold him to be the eternal active force, I can still demonstrate that he is not only personal, but that He is equated with Deity as a result of being referred to as such, or as a result of being shown

to possess the divine attributes (omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, etc).

3.) the Holy Spirit as found in Ezekiel:* Ezekiel 3:24 is not the only place where the Holy Spirit spoke to him. To further prove that the text, if understood in its normative sense, conveys the idea that the spirit spoke, look at Ez. 11:2 & compare with Ez 11:5 (NWT). In your own translation, Ez 11:2 capitalizes the "He" referring to Jehovah I'd presume, but in v. 5 the "he" is lowercase. Verse 5 reads:

"Then the spirit of Jehovah came upon me, and he said to me: "Say, 'This is what Jehovah says'..."

Now Erickson, regardless of how we want to interpret what the spirit is, or what it may mean symbolically, at the very least, if we read the text word for word, an entity called 'the spirit' is called a 'he', and this 'he' spirit *spoke*. That's all I'm trying to establish here, namely that this spirit exhibits a quality of personhood, namely, reasoning, as demonstrated via intelligible human language.

4.) the Holy Spirit or spirit of Jehovah, as perceived in Micah 2.7 Although I'd agree, we shouldn't base our doctrine on the views of uninspired, carnal man, there is a piece of supporting evidence in this verse which shows that the people at the very least understood the spirit of Jehovah as demonstrating an emotion diametrically opposed to His true character. Rather than attributing patience to him, they attributed impatience to him. My point here though is that they took it for granted that they were relating to an entity who possessed emotions. They sort of take it for granted that the hearers know Him to have emotions, which is evidenced in their disrespectful comment.

5.) In 1 Cor 3:16 & 1 Cor 6:19, the spirit is shown to be the entity who indwells the *temple* of the body of Christ, and the temple of the believer, respectively. Now note, in Ezekiel, it was not an ethereal concept like wisdom, or love which transported Ezekiel to a precise location. Nor was it a mere force which commissioned him with intelligent words to speak. This same rational, cognizant spirit is said to indwell the body or assembly of the saints, in addition to the individual believer.

It follows by logical necessity that if a temple is the sanctuary where God himself dwells (see <http://biblehub.com/greek/3485.htm>), and if the holy spirit is said to dwell in such a structure, and if we hold the Scripture would direct us to the One true God, then the Spirit is deity. Paul should not have used such a "figure of speech" if he had wished not to convey this understanding. This would be the normative use and understanding of such language. Note, "naos" (for English speakers) is the word used here, and it is the same word which Christ used of His own body in John 2. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it" (speaking of the temple of His body). This is one proof that Christ's own body was the house of the of Deity.

While I acknowledge that the assembly and body of a single saint is a temple of the Spirit, I reckon, like Solomon that the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Yahweh, much less my own body. So I understand the idea to be that His Spirit is resident in my body in a special way than the way in which He is present everywhere already. Solomon understood this as it pertained to the temple, for no Jew in his right mind would run behind the veil, without

Divine approval. In fact, I believe the Shekinah glory & presence of God behind the temple (in it's undoubted reality, power, and intelligence) is very similar to how the Spirit dwells in the spirit of a saint. I would explain the indwelling of the Spirit as "the *concentrated* presence of the Spirit" in my soul.

...I have much to say regarding 1 Cor 2:11, so I'll save that for my next email. Let me know if you have any questions so far.

Week 4 Preparation

To begin, I'd like to bring your attention to the last paragraph on this page: <https://www.jw.org/en/bible-teachings/questions/gods-force/>

Which states:

"But God is much more than a powerful force. The Bible says that he has feelings, such as love and hate. ([Psalm 11:5](#); [John 3:16](#)) It also reveals that the way humans act can affect God's emotions.—[Psalm 78:40, 41](#)."

So the Watchtower also agrees with me that a key indicator of personhood is the attribute of emotion. It is by this very same attribute (along with others) that we would also reckon Jehovah to be attributed with personhood. We will pocket this idea for reference later.

Our text:

For it is to us God has revealed them₊ through his spirit₊ for the spirit searches into all things, even the deep things of God.₊₁₁ For who among men knows the things of a man except the man's spirit within him? So, too, no one has come to know the things of God except the spirit of God. ₁₂ Now we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is from God₊ so that we might know the things that have been kindly given us by God. ₁₃ These things we also speak, not with words taught by human wisdom₊ but with those taught by the spirit₊ as we explain* spiritual matters with spiritual words."

Let us compare this to the KIT, and we will default to it to eliminate any confusion by the NWT.ü

<http://wol.jw.org/en/wol/b/r1/lp-e/int/E/1985/46/2#v=11>

In context, we see that the things Jehovah has prepared for them who love Him have never been conceived of in the heart of man, naturally. Rather, Jehovah has revealed them to us through his own spirit.

Now at first glance, one might point out that the spirit "searches" here, and that searching presupposes a lack of knowledge, and that this lack of Knowledge implies finiteness, or lack of omniscience; however, this need not be the case, as this exact construction, or a comparable one is used of Jehovah in multiple places:

Jehovah God is said to search (reunao) the hearts in Rom 8.27.

Jehovah God is said to search the heart and try the kidneys (same idea as reunao here), in Jer 17.10, so as to give each one according to his deeds.

Christ is said to reunao the affections and the kidneys, in rev. 2.23, to give each one according to his deeds.

1 chron. 28.9, David tells solomon that Jehovah searches through all hearts and discerns every inclination.

The list goes on. So we see here in these passages that the all-knowing Jehovah is said to be searching, and that this does not presuppose a lack of Jehovah's knowledge, but is rather an anthropopathic/anthropomorphic way of expressing the examination expressed by the mind of God.

Note too that in 1 cor 2.10, many would be quick to point out the distinction being made between the entity called the Spirit, and the entity called God, as though the spirit is absolutely separate from the entity called God. Also, the idea of one person searching the other may seem to imply a lack of unity or commonality, but as we've demonstrated, the action of "searching" applies to Jehovah God as well, and we would all agree that He is all knowing, so we must conclude that just because an entity is said to be searching another, this then does not imply that the searching entity is not Jehovah or all knowing.

Furthermore, why call one entity "God" and the other just "the spirit"? Does this imply the searching entity is not God? Trinitarians should happily agree that the title "God" is the normal designation for Jehovah Father, in the new testament (1 cor 8.6), as is "Lord" for Jesus. However, as we shall see in our future proofs, the title "God" is not exclusive to the Father, nor is the title Lord exclusive to the Son, nor is the title Spirit exclusive to the Spirit, as the titles are shared among the three in Scripture. We shall encounter this later.

Moreover, as it relates to the unity between "God" and the spirit in v10, we shall see in verse 11 that although a distinction in function and personality does exist between the entity called "God" (Jehovah Father, in context) and the spirit, a very real unity and oneness as to "being" is there too. So hold tight, as we shall witness this unity of being in v 11.

In v 10, the KIT literally says that the spirit of Jehovah is searching "panta" in the greek, which is to say "all". Notice, it does not say "into all", or even "into all things", although these ideas are included in the meaning of the word. Many times, the Scripture will use the phrase "all things", and it is generally understood that the "all things" does not include The Father. e.g., 1 cor 15.27, the One having subjected all things to Christ is exempted. Or let's look at Jn 1.3, where it literally says that "panta" through him emerged, and without him emerged not even one which has emerged (note, the NWT omits the latter part of this verse which would prove that not even one emerged without the Son's creative work). My main point here however is to show that the Father was not included in the "panta" of jn 1.3.

In 1 cor 2.10, it says that the spirit searches all, and the panta is all inclusive here because it includes "even the deep things of God". It is because of this all-inclusive nature of the Spirit's knowledge that Paul, by the Holy Spirit, felt it necessary to stress, "even the deep things of God".

So now you can relax (stop holding tight) as we've made it to v.11. In at least one respect, Paul says the Spirit's unity to the Father is likened to a human spirit's unity to the man who possesses that spirit. This like unity is in regards to what the Spirit knows regarding Jehovah Father. My human spirit knows the things of myself because my human spirit is one with my being. It is a necessary component as to who I am, and is aware of the things pertaining to my being, just as the verse says in v 11 part 'a'. Just like the example I gave you. If someone saw my lifeless body on the ground, they'd say "there's bruce!" Furthermore, if they saw my soul (like the true account of the rich man and lazarus in hades/Abraham's bosom), they say, "there's bruce!", and as you can guess, the same is true of my spirit. Each personal component is identified as of the essence of my being. Likewise, the Spirit of God is a personality of God's being.

Note, v 11 part b, in the NWT, diverges from the literal rendering in the KIT. The NWT says "no one has come to know" the things of God but the Spirit of God. The KIT simply says "has known". Once again, as was the case with "searches", the word translated "come to know" is "ginosko", and can mean (come to know, recognize, or just simply to experientially perceive) and is used of the Father's knowledge as well. In John 10.15, the Father is said to know the Son, just as the Son knows the Father. Note, the NWT translators did not translate ginoko as "come to know" here in jn 10.15, even though the greek word is the same (ginosko), for the Father's knowledge. And we know the Father did not come to know something that he did not know previously. Likewise, it is best to translate ginoko in 1 cor 2.11 as simply "has known", so as not to force a meaning into the text, as the word can simply mean "to know" or "to understand" as Rom 7.15 would suggest by its translation of ginoko (For Paul could not understand the totality of doing what he dreaded, and not doing what he knew was right). Translating it "has come to know" narrows the scope of definition, especially when the context should dictate that meaning.

And of v12, we see that saints have not received the spirit of the cosmos, but the holy spirit. Note, this reception of the holy spirit is indeed internal, for the saints are indwelt by Him. However, this is not to say that all unbelievers are indwelt by demons, or evil emissaries of Satan. Some truly are, but unbelievers have received (i.e., entertained, welcomed) the god of this age in that they have been blinded by him. 2 cor 4.3-4 says (nwt)

If, in fact, the good news we declare is veiled, it is veiled among those who are perishing, 4 among whom the god of this system of things*+ has blinded the minds of the unbelievers,+ so that the illumination*+ of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God,+ might not shine through.+

2 cor 4.3-4 basically says that the minds of unbelievers are blinded by Satan, and have in this sense received him and the things of him.

In similar fashion, 1 tim 4.1 speaks of deceitful spirits (most literally) and doctrines of demons permeating the church in latter times.

So in summary, we see the holy spirit is indeed a person who "searches all things, even the deep things of God" i.e. that he is fully aware of all things, including everything God is aware of. Furthermore, we see that as the very Spirit of the Father, He is One being with Jehovah Father, just as my human spirit is one with the rest of my being. Thus, just as my spirit knows what the things of my constitution are, so the Spirit knows the Father's. And just as my spirit can rightly be identified as me (but not as my soul or body), so the Spirit of Jehovah God can rightly be identified as Jehovah God, (although not the Father, but nonetheless as Jehovah).

Week 4 Meeting Minutes:

Hi Erickson,

A few points of recap:

1. I suppose we can agree to disagree regarding isaiah 48, and the placement of the quotes.
2. Regarding isaiah 61, i think you're starting to see what I'm refErickson to. If Jehovah truly is speaking in v5 through 6, then it would suggest that He is refErickson to a God of His, when saying "...ministers of our God." Feel free to have bryce read the passage, but keep in mind that his jw upbringing could influence his reading. I would recommend putting the text before someone with no interest in these matters (e.g., an atheist I know , etc).
3. Regarding greek nouns, pronouns, and gender. Greek nouns are either referred to as masculine in gender, feminine in gender, or neuter In gender. The pronouns that refer to the noun, essentially take the same gender as the referent noun.

It is of utmost importance that you know that noun gender does not necessarily imply anything about the actual gender of the noun being referenced, in real life. For example, the following nouns in greek are feminine in gender, but we would not say that such items in actuality are really females, nor are they necessarily feminine in nature:

Glory (The glory of Jehovah, doxa, is certainly that which pertains to the Father, a male spirit, and Christ, the Son, a male person)
head (kephalen), e.g, the head of john the Immerser, Matt 14:8
Hands
Gospel
Heart (cardia) (males and females have hearts; all hearts are not female, nor are they all feminine)
Salvation
Sin
Honor
Evil
Wrath
Unbelief/faith
Voice -- (we wouldn't say the voice of Jehovah was female or femine, as it is described as the sound of many water, or of a multitudinous army)
Egypt
Flesh (sarkos)
Disobedience
Sword (maxairon)
Soul (psyches; both males and females have souls; Male souls are not feminine.)
Thought
Intention
Creature
Confession
Grace
Wisdom (sophia). 1 Cor 1, Christ became wisdom. He did not become feminine.
Sacrifice
Prayers
Supplication
Food
Righteousness
Resurrection
Priesthood
Covenant
Tabernacle

Mind (dianonan)

Heb 9.2 (bread of the-- *presence*--*of God) the presence is certainly not feminine in nature, nor is it female

Inheritance

Ministry

Oikia house

Camel (camels are either male or female)

Locust

Viper

Ax

Dove

Foxes

kingdom (basileias) -- kingdoms strike me as manly

Masculine

Infant (Hebrews 5:12-13 "nay-pee-os", an infant, child, unlearned "...For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a *babe*.")

Neighbor (no longer teach his neighbor, Heb 8:11)

River

Stone

Foot

(stones & rivers are not male, an rivers need not be masculine in nature).

wind (anemos) Matt 14.24; Context is obvious that just because the wind force is masculine in gender, we wouldn't say it was a person of masculine gender.

sky; Matt 16:3 - we know the sky is not man

mathetes (students): matt 16:21 -- all students are not males

ophthalmous (eyes); surely, not all eyes are males or masculine. Female eyes are generally feminine.

Neuter

spirit (pneuma)

Jerusalem

Child (Matthew 2.8) paidia - a little child, an infant (who's obviously has a masculine gender). This proves that a person could be referred to with a neuter noun. The pneuma functions similarly

teknon - a child, descendant, of either sex, but nonetheless, a person (matthew 15:26)

phantasma - an apparition, ghost, i.e., a spirit being, visibly manifested (Matthew 14:26)

sheep (Matt 15:24). We know these have gender in real life

dog (matt 15:26) -- 'a little dog

small fish (matt 15:35)

daimonion (demon) Matthew 17:18--; We have to admit that demons are real intelligent spirit beings (Satan being the leader of them). Note Daimonion is neuter in grammatical gender; Real spiritual entities, such as demons, can be neuter in grammatical gender. Notice in the NWT and elsewhere, didn't the demon literally indwell the boy? You by your own admission compared the Spirit's indwelling (as I was explaining it) to that of demon possession. This verse demonstrates demon possession, and the demon is neuter in grammatical gender, but nonetheless, *it* is a very intelligent, personal being.

Birds

4. Before I proceed any further, I'd like you to honestly note your understanding on the following sentences, and write them down for reference:

- a.) The character rejoiced in amazement over the outcome.
- b.) The heroine was grieved to hear the bad news.
- c.) The message bearer sighed in anguish upon delivering the news.

What is your interpretation of these statements? What is the rule whereby you have arrived at the interpretation? (hermeneutic). I would submit to you that a proper hermeneutic or normative interpretation is as follows:

1. For sentence (a)., think whether it is remotely possible for the subject in question "character" to actually literally perform the action in question (e.g., rejoice) out of conscious emotive response (i.e., due to personhood).
2. If There is a possibility that such could ever be done literally by a real cognitive person, then assume "character" is in fact a personal being.
3. If There is absolutely no possibility that such an action (rejoice out of amazement/awe) could be done literally by a real person, then assume personification (i.e., that the subject in question is not a person, and that the emotive qualities attributed to it are due to poetic license for dramatization).

...Thus, we would not initially conclude that the 'character' in sentence 'a' is a punctuation character or symbol, because the other meaning of 'character' (i.e., a reference made to a person in a theatrical work or book) is possible; hence we default to what's in the realm of possibility first.

Likewise, with sentence b., we would not default to 'heroine' speaking of the drug, because it is within the realm of reality and actuality for a heroine (star actress) to actually be grieved due to actually hearing bad news, as a person would be.

Likewise, a message bearer should not initially be thought of as some inanimate object, because it is within the realm of possibility that such actions as 'sighing in [emotive] anguish" can be done by a real person. Since this is possible, we default to what's possible and thereby think of "message bearer" as a person first, instead of some drone, or inanimate thing.

This is the way our minds are geared to work, naturally, and this is what I mean by a 'normative' reading of the text.

**Moreover, when we read texts like "Don't grieve the Holy Spirit" or "...no one knows the things of God except the spirit of God"; these passages describe actions that *are* within the realm of possibility. It is very possible that a spirit entity *could* possess and demonstrate emotions (Satan, at his fall, was filled with pride, and the demons believe God (as a result of their knowledge of His justice and holiness) and tremble, James says). So we must therefore default to a literal, actual understanding of the Spirit's actions and personhood, before inserting secondary, poetic/personified meanings into the text. We must use the same hermeneutic for understanding demonic possession, as we would the various actions of the Spirit, who/which is also a personal entity.

Cases where we would default to understanding the actions as personifications:

- d.) The wind howled with zeal.
- e.) The lilies danced with glee.
- f.) The stairs groaned as we walked up into the old vacant attic.

Since it is *outside* of the realm of possibility that wind could actually ever howl with fervor, or that lilies could choreographically move in excitement, or that stairs could ever emote disgust verbally, we must conclude that poetic license is used here, and that the subjects in question are being personified (i.e., they are attributed with personal attributes, but the subjects themselves are not personal, intelligent entities).

So the fact that this is the normative way to interpret things, and the fact that the Holy Spirit is found throughout all genres of biblical literature (not just poetic), and the fact that the Spirit is found in all matters of contexts (happy, sad, neutral), we should be led to approach the Spirit as a personal entity.

...

I just saw your email you texted me about, which came through as I finished mine up. Stay tuned. I will address your email's point in my next email, or in person Thursday.

Week 5 Meeting Minutes

In formulation of Erickson's proof that the Spirit is impersonal, he referenced the various ways that "spirit" is used in Scripture, to give a "better" understanding of its usage.

1. Erickson's first point was to prove that Jehovah is the preeminent, superlative Spirit. I was not in disagreement with this assertion. Surely, some of the verse support he used was rather misinterpreted, but I was not in disagreement with this assertion.
2. Erickson's next assertion was that "The Scriptures also speak of Jesus Christ as a spirit". Now this assertion can be both true and false, depending on *timing*. Surely, from a Trinitarian viewpoint, Jesus Christ pre-incarnate (i.e., the Logos) was Spirit, one spirit-being with the Father and the third person of the Godhead, referred to as 'the Holy Spirit'; however, to assert that Jesus Christ is currently, merely a spirit-being is unbiblical. The verse support Erickson used to support his error was:

1 Cor 15:45 "So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living person."[†] The last Adam became a life-giving spirit"

It should be noted that the word translated "person" here is 'psuche' or 'psyche' in the greek, and is often translated soul. It would best be translated 'soul' here, as the surrounding context uses the adjectival form of the word "psychikos" which conventional translation translate as "natural" (e.g., nkjv), but would best be understood as "soulical", or "soul-governed", or relating to soul, as it is in contrast to that which is "pneumatikos" or "spiritual". Note, this isn't the first time such a distinction is referenced in Scripture. 1 Cor 2 is a prime example where Paul contrasts the soulical man and the spiritual man. The NWT inconsistently translates psychikos (the adjectival form of 'soul') as "physical" (1 Cor 2:14, 1 Cor 15:44), but translates the noun form in 1 Cor 15:45 as "person". I would not think a man's physical constitution corresponds to his personhood. Perhaps a better word to translate as 'physical' is "φυσικός", i.e., "phusikos", which when transliterated, is "physical". I believe it is the Jw intent to erroneously

translate “psychikos” in 1 cor 15 as “physical” in many cases because it supports argument that the resurrection event is not a physical event, and by extension, shows that Christ’s resurrection was not a bodily, physical resurrection. Anyhow, before I digress too much, a brief exposition on 1 Cor 5:45, as it relates to Adam who was a living “psyche” (ψυχὴν ζῶσαν), and Christ, who was an enlivening, or life-giving spirit (πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν). Before we go any further, let’s spend some time on this word ζωοποιούν :

<http://biblehub.com/greek/2227.htm>

Strongs: 2227 *zōpoiéō* (from [2221](#) /*zōgréō*, "alive" and [4160](#) /*poiéō*, "make") – properly, make alive (*zōos*); i.e. "quicken," vivify ("animate"); (figuratively) cause what is dead (inoperative) to *have life*; *empower with divine life*.

As you can see from the link, it is used in places like John 5:21, John 6:63, Rom 4:17, 8:11, and a form of the word is used in 1 Cor 15:22. In each case, the quickening refers to the power of God in re-animating/bodily resurrecting, or the Spirit giving divine spiritual life to someone.

Similarly, the word used for Adam described as “living...”, is (*zao*), speaks of the life Adam acquired when God breathed into his nostrils that breath of life, and he thereby became alive. See:

<http://biblehub.com/greek/2198.htm>

But what exactly does a “living soul” mean? Does that imply that such a thing as a ‘dead psyche’ exists? I submit to you that a ‘living psyche’ refers to inward man’s state/personal constitution, only as it is united to the body. So a living psyche is one that is indwelling the body, and a dead psyche is one which does not.

Rev. 20:4-6 (nwt)

And I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given authority to judge. Yes, I saw the souls* of those executed* for the witness they gave about Jesus and for speaking about God, and those who had not worshipped the wild beast or its image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand.+ And they came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ+ for 1,000 years. ⁵ (The rest of the dead+ did not come to life until the 1,000 years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.+ ⁶ Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection;+ over these the second death+ has no authority,+ but they will be priests+ of God and of the Christ, and they will rule as kings with him for the 1,000 years.+

So what can we conclude about 1 Cor 15:45, with this information? Well, Adam is called a “living soul” or (as NWT puts it) a ‘living person’ because at Adam’s creation, that conscious inward constitution/inward man was united to the physical body, thereby animating it. Aside from Adam’s ability to impart everlasting life to his physical descendants—a potential he forfeited--Adam did not have the capacity to impart everlasting life, on-demand, to those who were victims of the Fall. Christ, on the other hand, *once He had pioneered the way of our salvation and proved Himself as the first who would overcome Death*, He then was equipped with that right bring about the resurrection of the dead, for all men. 1 Cor 15:21 says that it was spiritual propriety that since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead (NKJV). But notice that Adam was called a living psyche/soul, but we know he was not merely a soul or inward constitution. It is very obvious (and even Jw’s agree) that he had physicality, yet the being, Adam, is called a living soul, even though it is presupposed that we know he was physical. Likewise, Christ is referred to as an enlivening spirit, yet it is presupposed we know that He too was physical, and not merely spirit. Paul is emphasizing the differences in capacities/abilities of the first man and the second man. Adam could not impart everlasting life to a fallen world, even though Adam was perfect. Christ, post-resurrection, on the other hand, could impart resurrection life to a fallen world.

So, this verse does not prove Christ as being merely spirit because:

1. Adam is called (by synecdoche) a living soul, and that, by presupposition (and when linked to Rev 20:4) is understood that he was not merely a soul, but physical as well.
2. Christ is called (by synecdoche) an enlivening spirit, and by its juxtaposition/parallel placement with Adam's description, it is not reasonable to conclude Christ was merely spirit.
3. Also, Paul's point is to highlight the soulical and spiritual capacities of Adam vs. Christ, and not to expound upon their entire personal constitution.

Also, regarding 1 Pet 3:18, it reads as follows in the NWT (note, I'm adding v 19 for context):

For Christ died once for all time for sins,± a righteous person for unrighteous ones,± in order to lead you to God.± He was put to death in the flesh± but made alive in the spirit.± ¹⁹ And in this state he went and preached to the spirits in prison,± ²⁰ who had formerly been disobedient when God was patiently waiting* in Noah's day,± while the ark was being constructed,± in which a few people, that is, eight souls,*were carried safely through the water.

The Nwt actually inserts "the" before 'pneumati' in the Greek, when the definite article is not there. This passage does not actually reference the state of Christ during the time called "resurrection" and thereafter. Rather, this passage chronicles some of the events which occurred even while Christ was still dead in the flesh. He was enlivened, i.e., active "in spirit". Christ was not a departed spirit who was relegated to wait in the paradise sector of Sheol Hades. Instead, Christ preached to the fallen spirits in Tartarus, who rebelled against God and sinned in Noah's day (perhaps a reference to Gen. 6).

Christ was either active in His spirit-man, or was active by the Holy Spirit. Either interpretation would be Scripturally accepted, as that was His anointing (Acts 10), in that He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power.

Note, v21b, Peter speaks of the resurrection because He had mentioned Baptism in v21 part (a) as being the action signifying the answering of a good conscience through the resurrection. Furthermore, Peter speaks of Baptism mainly because the event of Noah's flood is mentioned (and Baptism is the rite which corresponds with Noah's flood & the spiritual transaction that occurred there –for Noah condemned the world & was also *experientially* delivered from the world & its effects *through water*). Hence, resurrection is mentioned only as a result of this line of reasoning, and is not directly related to Peter's point of what Christ did in v18, as the resurrection of Christ pertained to a ritual (baptism) which was a type of Noahic deliverance from the world, through water. And this Noahic deliverance through water was related to the time in history wherein the spirits in Genesis 6 had sinned – spirits Christ preached to after being put to death & enlivened in spirit, in v18-19.

Now, concerning your recent addendum to the '1 Cor 2:10-12a exposition' email, you stated the following:

“Additional information: Doctrinal Statement of Lord Jesus Christ Assembly - "There is one true and living God. This Deity is Triune, having eternally existed in **three theologically and personally distinguishable personalities:** Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit. Ontologically one, the Godhead is of a single essence of Deity with a **plurality of Persons** in Trinity."

My understanding of this statement is that "Triune" is made up of 3 distinguishable "Persons"

A) "Father," - to have the title "Father" or "The Father" we would say this one is more fatherly than all other persons or beings in existence. We can provide scriptural evidence to reinforce this claim.

B) "Son (Jesus Christ)," - to have the title "The Son" we would say that this one is more sonly than all other persons or beings in existence. We can provide scriptural evidence to reinforce this claim.

The Father and Son, as well as faithful angels, are all holy.

The Father and Son, as well as faithful angels, are spirit beings/spirit persons/ or spirits.

We can provide scriptural evidence to reinforce these claims.

C) " the Holy Spirit" - to have the title "The Holy Spirit". would we say that this one is holier than all other persons or beings in existence? Would we say that it is more of a spirit than all other persons or beings in existence? Can we provide scriptural evidence to reinforce this claim?

Knowing that the 3 are "**distinguishable**" or, as John 1:14 (LMT) describes the Son, "the **Unique One from the Father**" then a person or being known as "The Holy Spirit" must have qualities that make it distinguishable from the other 2. The fact that the Father and the Son are distinguishable or unique is backed up in multiple scriptures, notably the visions listed above. If the 3rd is known as "The Holy Spirit" then surely its distinguishable quality must be holiness. The Son is not more fatherly than The Father. The Father is not more sonly than the Son. So surely The Father is not more holy than "The Holy Spirit", and there must be scriptural evidence to validate this claim."

Note: Although I agree with the section of the Lord Jesus Christ Assembly doctrinal statement you quoted, (for I am Trinitarian), don't take my endorsement of these core beliefs as a blanket endorsement of all things listed on the website, whether they be in text or electronic file form.

To expound on your, "My understanding of this statement is that "Triune" is consists of 3 distinguishable "Persons"", statement, we must give the appropriate amount of attention to both parts of the word "Tri" and "une". The 'Tri' piece stresses the 3 distinguishable Persons, or personalities you mentioned. The '...une', refers to the unity, union, and oneness of Being these three personalities have. Further, as it pertains to the word "ontologically", we are referencing the immaterial constitution and substance of the Godhead. Trinitarians hold that all 3 persons share the same substance – the substance of Deity.

Now, before I address your line of reasoning, we must not lose sight of one important premise, that God is one Being, i. (By saying 'One Spirit', I must remind you that I do believe there is physicality to the body of the Person of Christ in this Godhead, but this does not negate the fact that God, from eternity past, has been one Spirit-being. The Son, who I believe be God, added humanity to His Person).

*Note, another key to understanding Trinitarian theology is to understand the difference between 'Being' and 'Person'.

So, premise 1: God is one Spirit being. (John 4:24; Deut 6:4 – Note, Yahweh's use of the word 'Echad' here for "...one" instead of "Yachid". "Echad generally conveys the notion of oneness as a result of a composite, or unification, or togetherness –e.g., a cluster of grapes or man & woman being 'one flesh'--, and not always numeric singular oneness without some composition. Yachid merely denotes singular, numeric oneness, without the idea of composition. An interesting study which caused much trouble for the Jews of the early church centuries.)

Now if your argument is to be sound as to its logic, we must phrase it as follows (for your premise must accurately reflect my proposition, in order for you to show a true flaw in my reasoning):

"A) "Father," - to have the title "Father" or "The Father" we would say this one *demonstrates the characteristics of a Father more* than all other persons or beings in existence. We can provide scriptural evidence to reinforce this claim.

B) "Son (Jesus Christ)," - to have the title "The Son" we would say that this one *demonstrates the characteristics of a Son more* than all other persons or beings in existence. We can provide scriptural evidence to reinforce this claim.

The Father and Son, as well as faithful angels, are all holy.

**I would not agree with this statement below, as it would violate my initial premise, that God is 1 Spirit, from a Trinitarian view. And I assume you are attempting to construct a 'proof by contradiction' where you assume my argument to be true, and then seek to show a contradiction as a result of assuming my proposition to be true:*

The Father and Son, as well as faithful angels, are spirit beings/spirit persons/ or spirits. We can provide scriptural evidence to reinforce these claims.

Trinitarian theology would not hold the Father and Son as separate spirits (i.e., the Father and Son are not separate spirit beings, or separate personal spirits).

With this said, I will try to address "C.)" as much as possible, given the previous conditions. You state the following:

C) " the Holy Spirit" - to have the title "The Holy Spirit". would we say that this one is holier than all other persons or beings in existence? Would we say that it is more of a spirit than all other persons or beings in existence? Can we provide scriptural evidence to reinforce this claim?

In your thought flow, you highlighted the title of *the Father*, and that title is unique to the Father in the Godhead, & speaks of a functional & relational trait of His in the Godhead in respect to the Son. Likewise, you highlighted the title of *the Son*, and that title is unique to the Son within the Godhead and speaks of His functional trait too, and relation to the Father. However, when we come to the title "Holy Spirit", the title "Holy" is not unique to the person called "Holy Spirit", nor is the title "Spirit" unique to the person called "The Holy Spirit" (Jn17:11 '...Holy Father..'; Act 2:27 '...Holy One to see corruption...'; Acts 3:14, 4:27 of the Son, etc); . In fact, the title of "Holy" and "Spirit" are shared by all three members of the Godhead. Moreover, we must remember our premise, that God is 1 Spirit. So we can therefore conclude that the person called "The Holy Spirit" *best exhibits or demonstrates the spirit-characteristics of that 1 Spirit-Being, and the Holiness of that 1 Triune Spirit Being, who is Father, Son, and Spirit. In other words, the Spirit best showcases the spiritly nature of God and the fact that the Triune Spirit Being is Holy. This is not to say that the Holy Spirit is holier than Father or Son, nor is it to say that He is more of a spirit in essence or substance than Father and Son.*

Verse support for the spiritly nature of the Godhead being most clearly demonstrated by the Holy Spirit (nwt):

- 1.) The Spirit is virtually unseen, having no physicality (i.e., no flesh and bone):

Luke 24:39 “See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones just as you see that I have.”

John 3:8 “The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who has been born from the spirit.””

One of the reasons the world cannot receive the Spirit is because the world does not see it or know it. (Jn 14:17)

- 2.) The Spirit manifested himself as pneuma, and the very notion of spirit is derived from Him:

*Acts 2:2 “Suddenly there was a noise from heaven, just like that of a rushing, stiff breeze, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.± 3 And tongues as if of fire became visible to them and were distributed, and one came to rest on each one of them,”

Gen 1:2 – The Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. The NWT reads: “God’s active force± was moving about over the surface of the waters.”, but the Hebrew is ruah, i.e., spirit, and this spirit was hovering or brooding (as a bird over its young) over the water, the Hebrew tells us.

*All which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and likewise all spiritual entities are the result of creation by the Spirit. So our whole concept of the spiritual realm or spirit entities is indebted to the creative work of the Spirit—a creative work done via natural creation, or regeneration. (regeneration, John 3:6, 1John 5:1. Natural creation – Gen 2:7, Job 32:8, Job 33:4, Job 34:14-15; Psalm 104:30;

- 3.) The very perceived presence of God is associated with/as His Spirit, who is shown to be omnipresent – a unique attribute of Yahweh: Psalm 139:7-8.

Verse support for the Holy nature of the Godhead being most clearly demonstrated by the Holy Spirit (nwt):

1. Convinces or proves the world to be wrong regarding its sin of disbelief – the sin of not believing in the Deity, Messiahship, death & bodily resurrection of Christ. Righteousness & Judgment are two other areas of conviction (Jn 16:8)
2. All blasphemy of the Son, (and thus the Father 1Jn 2:22-23), will be forgiven of men. But blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not ever be forgiven: Matt 12:31-32 “For this reason I say to you, every sort of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven.± 32 For example, whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him;± but whoever speaks against the holy spirit, it will not be forgiven him, no, not in this system of things* nor in that to come.±” –Note, the Spirit is referred to as ‘the Holy Spirit’

in context (tou Pneumatos tou Hagiou). I would posit this as proof of the deity of the Spirit, as He can be blasphemed, and that without forgiveness. Although there is much speculation as to what exactly the nature of this blasphemy is (and I have thoughts), the point is clear—that the Spirit can be blasphemed even as a person can be blasphemed—and that without forgiveness.

Even so, I wanted to address/recount a couple lingering points, which we briefly touched on in the last session.

In your one point, you highlighted how being baptized by the spirit (matt 3.11) is in apposition to being baptized by the water and fire. So you concluded that the association of the spirit with 2 inanimate entities would suggest the spirit is also impersonal. My response to that was that in Ephesians 4:4-6, there are persons listed in the same list as inanimate entities:

One body there is,[±] and one spirit,[±] just as you were called to the one hope[±] of your calling; ⁵ one Lord,[±] one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Furthermore, you questioned how one person could be baptized into another (i.e., Matt 3:11, where the people would be baptized by/in the Spirit). My response was 1 Cor 12:13, which speaks of one Spirit baptizing the saints into the one Body (of Christ). And likewise, Rom. 6:3, it speaks of this notion again:

“Or do you not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus[±] were baptized into his death?”

Christ would speak of how He was in the Father, and the Father in Him (Jn 10:38; 14:10-11). Likewise, even in the physical realm, physical humans (babies) can be ‘immersed’ into their mothers, as is evidenced by pregnancy. I supposed that if this were possible in the physical, it is not impossible spiritually. Christ was described as the One who was in the bosom of the Father (John 1:18), and the Spirit is the One who proceeds forth from the Father.

Moreover, you brought up the point that the Spirit has no name, and that having a name is characteristic of personhood. I then posited that Matthew 28:19 demonstrates that not only does He have a name, but it is the same name that the Father and Son have, namely, Jehovah/Yahweh. I was surprised you had never heard this argument before. Note, it is the one name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit—I emphasize, one shared name, and not “the name of the Father, and the name of the Son, and the name of the Spirit.”

You also mentioned how the spirit is referred to as “the spirit of Jehovah”, “God’s spirit” “my spirit”, etc., and you stated that “All such possessive uses of the holy spirit further argue that it is an instrumentality rather than a separate and distinct person.” My rebuttal to this was, ‘what of the constructions ‘Son of God’ and ‘my Father’? Do these mean that the entity being possessed (Son possessed by God, and Father possessed by the Son) is not a person? Hence I would conclude that your proposition was not valid. I plan to discuss your recent & remaining comments the next time we meet.