

**Coin Clipping—Jerry Trevino**

Toward the end of the thirteenth century, Edward I of England commissioned Florentine artists from Italy to coin currency for England. These artists procured sheets of gold and silver for their work. From these sheets of gold and silver, coins were cut and then hammered into shape. Because of this method, the coins were not given an exact weight and lacked the defined rimmed edge our coins have today. This lack of true uniformity led to trouble almost immediately. As these coins came into circulation, dishonest men found it profitable to clip the edges of the new currency. Over time a person could accumulate a savings of clippings and either mint new coins or melt the precious metal down and sell it by weight. This was easier to some than working an honest job to make a living. It wasn't long until many coins were not worth what they once were, their weight and shape being significantly reduced.



Unclipped Coin



Partly Clipped Coin



Clipped Coin

The clippings created chaos in the monetary system and commerce. Unbeknownst to some, people would receive clipped coins of a given value and try to reuse them, but the coins would be rejected because of their obvious defacement. No doubt this led to some heated exchanges at the market place. To curb this illegal activity, the Parliament of England passed the Treason Act of 1415 making it a crime of high treason to clip coins. Many a ne'er-do-well was led up Holburn Hill and executed as a public example.

Our great King has commissioned His church to keep His holy precepts. We know that *His commandments are not grievous* (1Jn. 5:3), *the statutes of the Lord are right* (Psa. 19:8), and *the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether* (Psa. 19:9). That standard that God has set is sure (Psa. 19:7); He has meted out a just weight and determined it.

Proverbs 16:11, *A just weight and balance are the LORD's: all the weights of the bag are his work.* The measure that God set, is set forever, His word is settled in heaven (Psa. 119:89). The convictions that have been passed down to us from our fathers are still sure. The Holy Ghost did not instill convictions in the church for them to be later changed. However, we have some amongst us who having handled these precious truths find it easier to clip a conviction here and there for their own benefit.

It's much more convenient to allow heavy tithers to watch a little Hollywood than to uphold a just standard. *Clip, clip.* Why fight with rebellious young people over short skirts and wild hair-dos; it is just a passing trend, isn't it? *Clip.* On and on the clipping goes until what we have in our hands isn't quite what it used to be; it's lost its value. They are telling us that they are still Apostolic and Old Time Pentecostals, but they just don't measure up. Their holiness just isn't what it used to be.

Proverbs 11:1, *A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.*

Conviction clipping is causing confusion in our fellowship. We meet together with others to have church and their new worship isn't what our worship is. Their new songs don't quite hold the weight that those old songs of Zion do. After fellowshiping with spiritual coin clippers, you leave with the feeling you've been shortchanged.

Hold to the old ways, they still hold great value. Someday when the church gives to the master those talents He has placed in our hands—pray they have brought Him profit, and pray they are not clipped!

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"Come out from among them, and be ye separate." Separation is a biblical concept. It is applicable to individuals as well as to the corporate body of Christ on earth. Personal separation is required as well as ecclesiastical separation. Paul asks these two questions. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness?" This article is focusing on separation of the church Jesus is building from the world. As a corporate body, the church must be distinct from other groups. This includes others who claim the title, Christian.

The Catholic Church of the 16th century was definitely in need of reform. The major reformers made some changes but didn't return to the original biblical teachings concerning the gospel and the Godhead. The confusion and bloodshed that followed between factions gave Christianity a bad name. But was this true Christianity?

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Paul wrote these words to the church in Galatia. His gospel was made plain to the followers of John the Baptist outside Ephesus as recorded in Acts 19. Any group that preaches another gospel has a curse on it. Why would we want to have fellowship with a group that preaches a gospel that has the curse of God on it?

The majority of those groups that claim to be Christian proclaim another gospel and embrace false concepts of God. Are we better than them? No. But we are commanded to come out from among them and be separate. We are encouraged to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints. We may be lumped with other groups calling themselves Christian, but we are not of them. We must choose the narrow way of truth instead of the broad way of ecumenism.

Solomon is said to have been the wisest man who ever lived. During the course of his life, he transitioned from dependence upon God to dependence upon his own wisdom. The carnal mind is enmity with God, and no matter how smart we think we are, God's ways and thoughts are still much higher than ours. His carnal wisdom led him to a violation of God's Word by becoming unequally yoked with pagan wives. They led him into idolatry and the building of pagan temples in Jerusalem.

He is the perfect Old Testament example of someone embracing ecumenism. God was not pleased with his compromise and God hasn't changed.

We are not superior to others but there is still only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. We have chosen to submit to the Word of God and separate ourselves according to that Word. To ignore the Word of God in favor of ecumenism will bring the curse of God upon us.

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**Our Kingship and Its Responsibilities**

There is an old story of the young French prince and his trying experiences. Louis XVI. and his beautiful and unfortunate queen had died on the scaffold in the Place de Révolution. The boy who ought to have inherited the throne of France, and who in fact, though he never reigned, has been numbered as Louis XVII. in the roll of monarchs, was left a prisoner. Evil had brought forth evil, as ever. An oppressed people had been roused to a spirit of devilish revenge. The child, it was said, was not only to be kept a prisoner and deprived of whatever rights he might be supposed to possess to the throne of his father, but all that was good in his nature was to be, if possible, destroyed. Evil men placed around him were to train his mind to evil thoughts, his heart to evil feelings, his lips to unlovely words. Naturally he suffered. But now and again, it is said, as his tormentors seemed to go beyond the limits of his endurance, or when God's voice prevailed in his young soul against them, the unhappy boy would waken to higher things, and explain in anguish: "I can't say it, I can't do it, for I was born to be a king."—*Knox Little*

Let us remember our heritage. We are sons of God—kings indeed! When facing temptation and evil, let us remember our birthright, and explain: "I can't do it, for I was born to be a king."

*Illustrations for Sermons—Clarence Edgar Rice, 1903*

**Mission Statement**

Since our first publication in the early eighties, our mission has been to provide "doctrine and instruction in righteousness" to the churches in the Philippines (2 Timothy 3:16). By request, we are expanding our circulation, trusting that God will bless and use it for the benefit of His kingdom.



the Trinity was "universal in all the ancient nations of the world." He went so far as to say that "the supreme divinity in almost all heathen nations was triune." While Hislop attempted to prove that mankind always believed in a "trinity," he also unwittingly shows the pagan origins of the idea of a "trinity."

**NO TEACHING OF A TRINITY IN OLD TESTAMENT JUDAISM**

Arthur Wainwright can find no doctrine remotely resembling the doctrine of the Trinity taught in Judaism, the ancestor of Christianity, until the time of Philo in the first century AD. And we know that Philo, even though he was a Jewish priest, was heavily influenced by Greek pagan thought.

The idea of a "plural" God was far from the Hebrew mind. The non-canonical book of Jubilees (second century BC) alters the plural verb of Genesis 1:26, in conformity with Genesis 1:27, stating, "And after all this he created man, a man and a woman, created he them" (Jubilees 2:14).

Both the Palestinian Targum and the Jerusalem Targum maintain that God was addressing the angels in Genesis 3:22 and in Genesis 11:7.

The Jews wrote the Old Testament under the inspiration of the Spirit, and they refute the presence of any "Trinity" in Genesis.

**VARIOUS ANCIENT PAGAN TRIADS**

The pagan idea of a triad is very old. Sumerians, according to Morris Jastrow, paid homage to a triad of El-lil "god or lord of the storm", Ea "water deity" of Eridu on the Persian Gulf, and Anu sun god of Ur-uk.

El-lil was called "the father of Sumer" ("Shinar") and "chief of gods", the "creator and sustainer of life." In the Sumerian eyes, the universe was apparently divided up among these three pre-eminent deities.

Later, Marduk, the "firstborn" of Ea and the patron deity of Babylon is made "god of the earth." His symbol, oddly enough, is the dragon. He was called "Bel" or "Baal" (lord).

Ashur, the god of the Assyrian capital was a "sun god", and his consort or wife was Ishtar, the "great mother" goddess of Nineveh, which was a city founded by Ninus or Nimrod. Ishtar, known as Ashtoreth to the Phoenicians, and Astarte to the Greeks, was often portrayed riding on a lion. She was called the daughter of the moon, and identified in astrology as the Roman Venus ("goddess of love"). She was also known as Nana or Madonna (Lady).

Morris Jastrow tells us that the Mother Goddess was quite common throughout the Middle East. She was brought from Asia Minor to Rome with the hope that her statue (idol) might save the Roman state from the invading Carthaginians.

## **Evangelism in ACTS—E. W. Wheeler**

### **Preparing for Pentecost**

The purpose of this segment of this series is to examine those background elements that factored into the remarkable birth and rapid growth of the early church.

#### **I. Jewish Roots of the Church**

The church was built on the foundation of Judaism, whose history spanned forty-two generations before Christ (Matthew 1:17). Jewish doctrines, culture, and traditions were rooted in the doctrine of one God. Their teachings included strong family values, high standards of moral behavior, and a strong loyalty to centers of worship which included financial support of and a deep respect for the ministry. Those who received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost were among the most devout. It can be argued that none of these people were lost since they were faithful to the teachings of Moses. Progress can be expected to be much greater when we are not working with unbelievers. All of these were one-God people. None were immoral or dishonest. All knew and respected God and His Word. God brought these devout people from across the known world. They lived in Jerusalem until God poured out the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:5). We know that all except the apostles left Jerusalem during the great persecution that spread after Stephen's death, so they would have taken the gospel with them (Acts 8:1; 11:19). The Jewish roots of Christianity were a major factor in the birth of the church and its rapid growth.

#### **II. The Influence of John the Baptist**

The ministry of John the Baptist had a significant impact on the birth of the church and its rapid spread. There had not been a greater ministry than that of John (Matthew 11:11). After his death, the populace viewed him as a prophet (Matthew 21:26). He was so well known that even Herod had heard of him (Mark 6:14), but his statement about Herod's marriage cost him his head (Matthew 4:3-11). John taught a strict message of repentance, refusing to baptize many religious leaders (Matthew 3:5-6), although baptizing a great number of common people (Matthew 3:5-6). His baptismal services were so well attended that he needed "much water" (John 3:23). Mark says he preached to "all the land of Judea" (Mark 1:5). Luke says he preached to "all the people of Israel" (Acts 13:24). Not only did John preach to and baptize many people; he also produced faithful converts who served God for many years and carried his message widely. Apollos was a disciple of John the Baptist and since he was from Alexandria, we would expect that there were also disciples of John in Alexandria, just a few hundred miles southeast of Jerusalem. We first find Apollos in Ephesus which is several hundred miles northeast of Jerusalem (Acts 18:24). The Bible tells us he "came to Ephesus" (Acts 18:24). We can only wonder what other places he visited.

John the Baptist had other disciples in Ephesus. When Paul found them and preached the new birth message to them, they did not know the Holy Ghost had been poured out almost twenty years before (Acts 19:1-7). These few facts indicate that John the Baptist had a very effective ministry. About twenty years after his death we can find faithful disciples scattered over a wide area. Since he preached a very strict message of repentance, we can expect these people to have been very devout, closely resembling modern day Apostolics in moral

behavior. John's disciples in Ephesus were so devout that they received the Holy Ghost upon hearing the good news. When we consider the kind and number of disciples John produced, it is axiomatic that many of these repentant people were among the three thousand who received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. We should keep this fact in mind when we study the great success of that first day of the church.

#### **III. The Influence of our Lord, Jesus Christ**

As Jesus began His ministry, we see two kinds of believers in the second chapter of John. His disciples believed on Him after seeing the miracle where Jesus turned the water into wine (John 2:11). Later, we read that "many believed in His name when they saw the miracles He did" (John 2:23). The Amplified says, "they identified themselves with his party," but Jesus did not "commit Himself unto them"—He did not trust them. Jesus started His ministry with a small group of true believers. He did not trust the great numbers, "because He knew all men" (John 2:24). Jesus invested His ministry in a small group of teachable, dedicated, and loyal followers. This group grew to 120 within three years. They were the core of the New Testament church. The church was founded on the dedicated few, not the curious masses. Besides this dedicated core group of leaders, Jesus ministered to many thousands of people in preparing for the day of Pentecost and the subsequent growth of the church. Matthew used the term "multitude" over thirty times in describing Jesus' ministry. On two occasions, He ministered to groups totaling 9,000 men (Matthew 14:21; 15:28). When we consider the number of women and children likely to have been present as well, we estimate the total number of people to have been between 30,000 and 40,000.

Of these many thousands of people, Jesus healed every sick person present. Given the living conditions of that day, that was probably a great percentage of those present—probably several hundred, perhaps a few thousand healed during His ministry. Besides healing all these people, Jesus, by miracles, fed all those people. History records people still testifying of personal healings by Jesus, near the end of the first century. The testimonies of many thousands who were touched by Jesus' ministry had a very powerful impact on the birth of the church. The Scriptures give us a brief insight into about one month of the life of Jesus. We can only wonder what He accomplished in the other one thousand days of His ministry. John supposed that the world did not have enough libraries to hold all the books it would take to chronicle the life of Jesus (John 21:25).

#### **IV. The Influence of the Disciples of Jesus**

The disciples were a powerful influence in the preparation for the birth of the church. These men were so committed to assisting Jesus, that Peter could say, "we have forsaken all and followed thee" (Matt. 19:27). Their self-discipline was like that of soldiers. On short notice, they forsook businesses to follow Jesus (Mark 1:17-20). Luke says "they forsook all and followed Him (Luke 5:11). Later, Jesus commissioned an additional seventy disciples. Having undergone extensive and intensive training by the greatest of all teachers, these ministries had a profound effect on the birth and development of the church. Historians say that within the first two generations, the church evangelized 28 percent of the world and translated the Bible into six languages at a cost of 25,000 martyrs.

#### **V. Conclusion**

I believe there is a great potential for growth. If the Scriptures are to be our example, we should expect to make great investments in the work of God to see that growth. How can we expect similar results unless we are willing to make similar investments of time, energy, and resources?

## The Origin of the Trinity (Part One)—William Chalfant

### I. TRINITY ORIGINS

#### THE ANTIQUITY OF PAGAN TRINITIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

This paper will propose to examine the philosophical and pagan origins of the Trinity and its early development. Pagan pantheons (national families of gods) of the various ethnic gods will be compared, and triads (sets of three gods) in these pantheons will be examined for specific Trinitarian qualities. The antiquity of the Babylonian pantheon, and its subsequent influence upon the various pantheons, is pointed out.

The idea of the Greek “Logos” (Word), a secondary, derived messenger god, is seen in the ancient pantheons of the nations with a clear differentiation observed between the pagan philosophical use of the term “logos” (word), and the Hebrew understanding of the term in their writings up to the time of Philo, the Jewish priest-philosopher of Alexandria.

The gnostic influence of the Greek and neoplatonic philosophers upon the architects of the Christian Trinity is emphasized, especially the critical role of Philo in the development of the Logos doctrine, which is a keystone doctrine of Trinitarian theology.

The Catholic fathers of the Trinity are identified, and comments will be made upon the comparative, developed Trinitarian theology found among them.

Theological concepts developed by early Trinitarians will be noted. One such example is subordinationism, a fatal flaw of Trinitarian theology, which forever subordinates Jesus Christ to the status of a secondary, derived God. Although officially denied, subordinationism still exists in popular Trinitarian teaching.

The antiquity of the Trinity is not denied. On the contrary, the Trinity doctrine has taken many millennia to develop, and is still in the process of change.

Our study will show that the Trinity is actually of pagan, philosophical ancestry, and was engrafted onto, and accommodated to, Christian theology.

Many scholars in comparative religion and mythology have found common relationships and attributes among the various pantheons.

Alexander Hislop, in his *TWO BABYLONS*, seems to trace the various mythologies back to a common heritage. Hislop pointed out the antiquity of the theological concept of the Trinity by giving examples of pagan trinities in Siberia, Japan, and India. He noted that the recognition of

## The World Before the Text—D. S. Garza

An area of study that I feel needs more attention is an area of hermeneutics that one author calls “the world before the text.” Basically meaning that all interpreters have a preunderstanding of the world and a set of presuppositions or assumptions that subsequently become a major factor in determining how everything else is perceived and interpreted.

In other words, everybody begins with a belief system of some kind. Martin Heidegger [*Being and Time*] says that “An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us.” Also, W. Randolph Tate [*Interpreting the Bible*] contends that “presuppositions are not generally subjected to examination or exegesis, but affect exegesis and interpretation profoundly.”

Presuppositions that have not been fully examined by the light of Scripture should be areas of concern and focus since some of those unexamined areas may be remnants of our theological past. Needless to say, that it is of the utmost importance to mentally track down and eliminate elements of Romanism and Protestantism. Without this process, our interpretive outcome will be adversely affected.

All Protestant beliefs must be scrutinized as diligently as Romanism because error is error, regardless of its origin. And for those that have come out of Romanism, there’s no telling what kind of previously held traditions or beliefs are still potential factors in their interpretive process. To create an awareness in these areas would significantly help the interpreter.

Time spent on hermeneutical methodologies and other aspects of the art and science of interpretation is very important. But it is equally vital to be cognizant of the totality of our presuppositions, since this also will affect and determine how we interpret the scriptures.

It is not just the final position we take on a particular doctrine that is important, but equally important, if not more significantly so to the hermeneutical process, is where we start our exegetical journey. In other words, have the assumptions and a priori opinions that the final decision is based on been fully examined? In short, both the point of origination (our “world before the text”) and the final outcome (our doctrinal positions) are critical.

We must become keenly aware of “our world before the text.” Klein, Bloomberg, and Hubbard Jr., [*Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*] say that “Therefore, as interpreters we must discover, state, and consciously adopt those assumptions we agree with and can defend, or else we will uncritically retain those we already have, whether or not they are adequate and valid. The failure to undertake this step often leads to *eisegesis*—the ‘reading into’ a text the meaning the interpreter prefers.”

They also state that everybody brings meaning to the text, and that those who believe that they have eliminated all presuppositional aspects and can look at a text in an objective manner are either “deceived” or “naïve.” Therefore, as apostolic interpreters and students of the Word of God, we have a serious obligation to those we teach to dredge up and critically ascertain all our beliefs.