

The Gospel According to Paulina

By Jeff Lockwood

And so it came to pass that the people gathered around Jesus with their many questions in different languages, which was no problem because Jesus was a *polyglot*.

“Tell me, master,” said Bill, “is it your teaching that a man shouldn’t have more than one wife?”

“That is right,” replied Jesus, “to do so would be *polygyny*, and that is a bad thing.”

“Then tell me, master,” said Linda, “is it your teaching that a woman shouldn’t have more than one husband?”

“Indeed,” said Jesus, “to do so would be *polyandry*, and that is a bad thing.”

Those who had drawn close to the LORD murmured, and one brave individual addressed Jesus.

“But have you not preached that we must love everyone?” asked David.

“That is right,” said Jesus, “and what’s more, your love should extend to your enemies.”

“And so,” the courageous fellow continued, “are we to understand that it would be good to be *polyamorous*, loving everybody? But wouldn’t that be even more sinful than mere *polygamy*?”

Jesus sighed deeply. “You are a sneaky devil, David.” And with that, Jesus turned David into a bonobo, because chimpanzees are infamously frisky primates. “Does anyone else have a question for me?” asked the LORD.

Rather cautiously, Catie stepped forward and asked, “Teacher, you came into the world to defeat *polytheism*, right?”

“Well...” said Jesus, “remember that my Father’s first commandment was to have no other gods before me.”

“Doesn’t that endorse *polytheism*, but require that you and your dad are the biggest and best gods?”

“No!” answered Jesus, “we are one God. Not two.”

“But what about the Holy Spirit?” said Bob, now somewhat encouraged by Catie’s questioning. “Is the dove a god, and the flame and—”

“Stop!” said Jesus with a deep sigh. “There are three persons in one God.” With this, Clyde stepped forward.

“So master, as a chemist I think of the trinity like a *polymer*. You know, like *polystyrene* or *polypropylene*, where there is one big chemical made up of repeated units.

Jesus rubbed the back of his neck and winced. “No, God is not like that,” he said. “In a *polymer*, each of the smaller units is identical. God the father, God the son, and the God holy spirit are different from one another.”

Clyde stepped back and Chris came forward. “So master, as an engineer educated in California which is on the very far coast of the Red Sea, I think of the trinity like Cal *Poly*. There’s one campus in San Luis Obispo, one in Pomona, and one in Humbolt. They are all different, but they are comprise Cal *Polytechnic* University.”

Jesus rubbed his beard and shook his head. “Nope, that’s not it either. Each campus can do its own thing, but the divine trinity is always united as the godhead.”

Again those who had gathered around Jesus murmured, and one guy said, perhaps a bit too loudly, “Jesus Christ, this sure sounds like *polytheism* to me!” Having heard Jeff’s blasphemy, Jesus turned him into an insect which has three parts—a head, thorax, and abdomen—and thought to himself that he might’ve used a locust as a metaphor of God, but it was now too late.

As the insolent, six-legged fellow hopped away. Sara came forward with some trepidation. “So master, as a geometrician from Egypt, I imagine the trinity in terms of an equilateral *polygon*.”

“God is not a triangle,” said Jesus shaking his head. At this point, one fellow who happened to be married to a woman named *Polly* also shook his head because he knew that his wife was at home and couldn’t believe that “*Polly* was gone” no matter what this mathematician said about her. It turns out that the Israelites weren’t terribly bright.

“Well then,” continued Sara, “how about a *polycentric* presence in the world?”

“Huh?” said Jesus, who was a carpenter and hadn’t taken much in the way of higher math.

“We usually think of everything as having a single center, a point that is the arithmetic mean position of all the points in the surface or volume of the figure.”

“Ah,” said Jesus who was a teacher was also a pretty good student when he paid attention. “You are coming closer. But God is love and reality is even grander than you imagine. Each of you,” he said, waving his hand over the gathered people, “is a center of love. Humanity is *polycentric* love-made-flesh.”

“Or might we each be a corner of a *polygon* with infinite sides?” asked Sara excitedly.

Jesus smiled and said, “Such a figure would be a circle, the perfect shape to represent completeness and purity.”

By now the crowd had grown, having heard about people getting turned into chimpanzees and locusts and not wanting to miss the drama. But they weren’t much interested in geometry. Jesus turned to his disciples and said, “Let’s get these people something to eat.”

“What shall we serve?” asked the disciples.

“Think,” said Jesus, pointing to his head. “For God’s sake use the brains you were given. Humans are *polyphagous* and will want some variety.”

“Hmmm...” murmured the disciples. “So perhaps we can provide loaves and fishes?”

“Yes,” said the LORD, nodding sagely. “See if you can find any tilapia, as they are wonderfully *polymorphic* and thereby exemplify the diversity of life and so please God greatly.”

“Tilapia, got it,” said Peter, who was a fisherman.

“And be sure to get whole wheat bread, as the *polysaccharides* form dietary fiber, and regularity is a blessed condition,” said Jesus.

The disciples looked quizzically at Jesus, being quite clueless as to the nature of *polysaccharides*. As they scattered through the town to find the loaves and fishes, Jesus turned his eyes to the heavens and said: “Father, I don’t ask for much, but how about just one disciple who’s a *polymath*?”

Amen.