

The Trinity

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The Trinity

The complex doctrine of the Trinity is so simply wonderful and wonderfully simple as to demand a divine origin.

By the Trinity is meant the unity of three persons in one Godhead; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Representing God as one, the Scriptures also ascribe divinity to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Trinity is three persons in one God. It is simple to say, yet the explanation has evaded man since the subject was undertaken for study. We cannot explain the *how* of the Trinity only the *fact* of it.

The work each member of the Trinity is involved in is also very complicated. Man cannot adequately explain these things so how could he devise them?

God is one. God is three.

There is one God and within God are three personalities. There is one essence and there is one nature. There are three persons. The term 'God' normally in Scripture relates to, not a particular person of the Trinity, but to the essence and nature of God. It refers to 'deity.' There are times when 'God' is used and elsewhere in the context the Word identifies 'God' as one particular person of the Trinity.

'There is but one God. The Trinity must be held in harmony with the singleness of the divine essence or substance:' (Pardington, Revelation George P. Ph.D.; 'Outline Studies In Christian Doctrine'; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1926, p 85)

‘By the unity of God we mean that there is but one God and that the divine nature is undivided and indivisible. (Thiessen, Henry C.; ‘Lectures In Systematic Theology’; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1949, p 134)

Pardington breaks nine names into the following categories: ‘The principal names of God are nine, falling into three classes of three names each and suggesting, many think, the Trinity.’ (Pardington, Revelation George P. Ph.D.; ‘Outline Studies In Christian Doctrine’; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1926, p 87 Cited in Derickson’s Notes on Theology: A Textbook in Theology by Stanley L. Derickson)

The three primary names for God are ‘God,’ ‘Lord’ and Lord.

1. God — Elohim: ‘El’ means ‘strength or the Strong One’ and ‘ohim’ comes from verb ‘Alah’ which means ‘to bind oneself by an oath.’ (Pardington.)

Walvoord mentions, ‘The derivation of this name is somewhat obscure. Some trace it to a root which means ‘the strong One,’ and others to a root which denotes ‘fear.’ He feels the overall meaning would relate to ‘reverence.’ (Walvoord, John F. Editor; ‘Lewis Sperry Chafer Systematic Theology’; Wheaton: Victor Books, Vol. I & II, 1988) Ryrie opts for the idea of Strong one. (Ryrie, Charles C.; ‘Basic Theology’; Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986, p 45)

Pardington mentions that ‘El’ and ‘Eloah’ are used as abbreviations for Elohim. He also mentions that Elohim is a plural noun, but it is used to indicate a single God. The Trinity seems to be indi-

cated in this usage of the word. (Pardington, Revelation George P. Ph.D.; 'Outline Studies In Christian Doctrine'; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1926, p 88)

The idea of the Trinity is not ascribed to by liberals and Jews. The Jews, whilst acknowledging the plurality of God, naturally do not want a Trinity as this would mean accepting Jesus. They attribute the plurality of God to a plural of majesty and not indicative of numbers.

Walvoord indicates that the Trinity is not always indicated. The context would or would not indicate it. Genesis 1:26 would be an example of this, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness;....' The term is used in Deuteronomy 6:4, 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:' This uses the plural term in a passage that states that He is one thus showing very clearly the Trinity.

This term is used of God and other gods as well. Ryrie mentions the term appears in relation to deity 2,570 times and 2,310 of those times it refers to God the true God.

2. Lord — Yhwh: Spelling varies with the author. Walvoord & Chafer use Yahweh; Pardington uses Yahwe; and Ryrie uses YHWH. Ryrie mentions that it occurs about 5,321 times in the Old Testament. (p 47)

The Jews felt that God's name was too sacred to pronounce so they eliminated the vowels and pronounced just the consonants. We do not know how to pronounce this name due to the loss of the vowels. Ryrie mentions that the Jews substituted the term 'adoni' for YHWH until the post-exilic

days when they combined the term adoni and the term YHWH to form a word that would remind the reader to use the term adoni. This became our term Jehovah. The English equivalent is Jehovah. The term Jehovah and Elohim occur together in Genesis 2:4. The name comes from the verb ‘havah’ which means ‘to be and to become’ (Pardington) It relates to the “‘self-existent One who reveals Himself,’ or, ‘the Coming One.” (Pardington, p 88)

Yahwe is translated as ‘LORD’ — with all capital letters in the King James. This is the term used for the true God. Chafer mentions that this name is defined in Exodus 3:13,14 where it is stated, ‘I am the I am.’

Walvoord lists some things we can know of God through this name. ‘He does not change. . .He is the King who will reign forever. . .He is the Author and creator. . . .’ (Walvoord, p 172) This is the name Eve used of God in Genesis 4:1. It was used by people in Seth’s day, Genesis 4:26. It was used by Noah, Genesis 9:26. It was used by Abraham, Genesis 12:8; 15:2,8.

3. God Adonai: Genesis 15:2 ‘Lord’ is adonai. ‘means master, or husband.’ (Pardington p 88) An application of this is the fact that Christ is Master and Husband, as was God in the Old Testament.

Derickson says: We know that there are three persons in the Trinity.

We know that there is the Father.

We know that there is the Son.

We know that there is the Holy Spirit.

We know that these do not operate in

succession.

We know that these operate simultaneously.

We know that these are all a unity within God.

We know that there are subordinations
among the three.
What we *don't* know is that they are all God.

(Derickson's Notes on Theology: A Textbook in Theology by Stanley L. Derickson)

At times we tend to begin to think of them as individuals. They are all God, and as such they all deserve worship, adoration and all those things that we tend to think of as, for God the Father. They are distinct in person and purpose yet the three are recognized in the Scriptures:

The Father: Romans 1:7, 'To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints Grace to you and peace from God our Father....'

The Son: Hebrews 1:8, 'Unto the Son he saith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever....'

The Holy Spirit: Acts 5:3-4, 'Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost... thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God'

Reasons for Distinctions:

1. Identification: There is the obvious, in that there needs to be a way of distinguishing the three members of the Trinity from one another.

2. Ministry: There is a specific area of ministry for all three persons of the Trinity. *The Father is the Prime mover and planner. The Son is the prime activator. The Holy Spirit is the prime messenger between God and man.*

3. Subordination: The three have definite ministries and places in the overall scheme of the decrees. The Father seems to be the one that set the plan into motion, while the Son is the one that provided the possibility of the plan's completion, through His shed blood. The Spirit is the person

that moves in the universe and in man to do the work of the Father. (It is to be remembered that the Son also was about the work of the Father.)

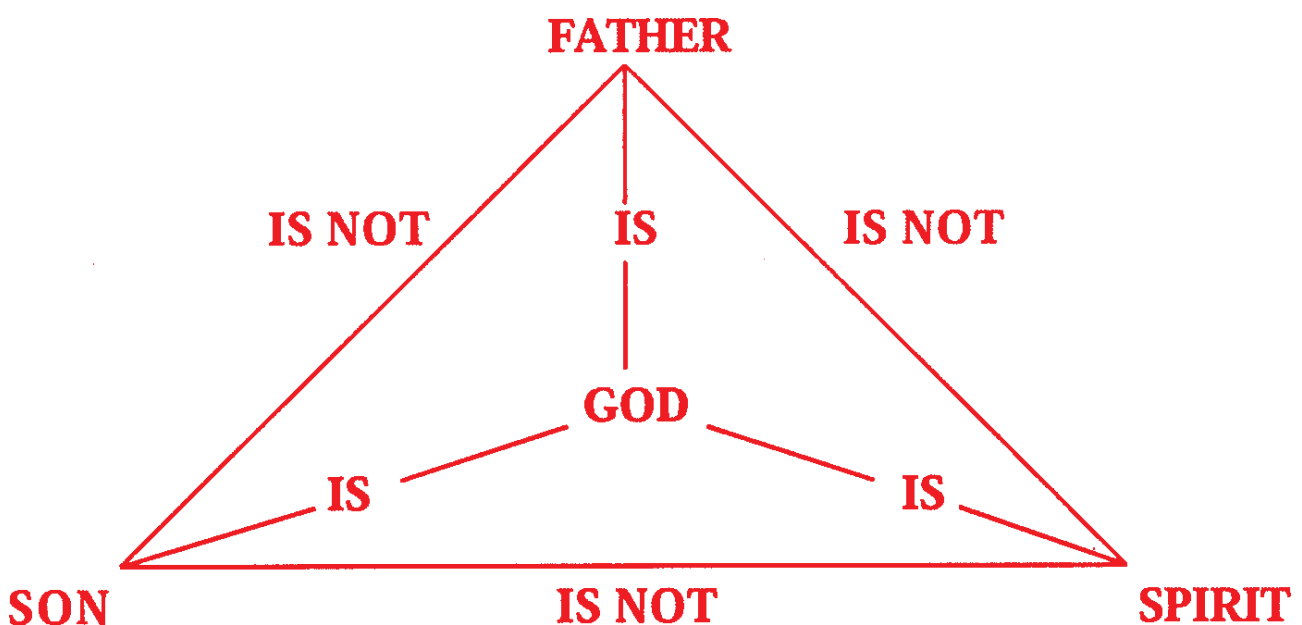
4. Man's Limited Understanding: Some might suggest that this is to help us grasp the concept of God. Man cannot comprehend God and so God put his Being into the terms that we could understand with our mentality.

Derickson says that this would be similar to anthropomorphisms. The terminology used and the frequency of use would indicate that the three are very real and not to be viewed as anthropomorphisms.



An ancient diagram of the Trinity

as published in Stanley L. Derickson's *Notes On Theology*



GOD THE FATHER

Five areas in which He is the Father:

- a. He is the Father of all creation. He planned and instigated the creation of the heavens and the earth. Malachi 2:10, Acts 17:29, Hebrews 12:9, James 1:17.
- b. He is the Father of Israel. Exodus 4:22
- c. He is the Father of Christ.
- d. He is the Father of all believers. John 1:12
- e. He is the Father of all mankind. This is accepted and taught by many religions, both past and present. Acts 17:22-31 Verse 29 mentions, 'Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God....'

What is the Father to you?

- a. He should be your comfort.
- b. He should be your strength.
- c. He should be your hope.
- d. He should be your concentration in prayer.
- e. He should be your guide in holy living. If He is not these things to you, then you are not enjoying the God that saved you for His joy, His purpose, and His glory.

GOD THE SON

1. He is the Son of man. This is a title that the Lord used of Himself. Luke 6:22
2. He is the Son of God. He is completely and totally God. Mark 1:1
3. He is the Son of Mary. He is completely and totally man. Matthew 1:20-21
4. He is the Son of David. He is descended from the royal line of David, so that He can sit upon David's throne in the Millennial kingdom. Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 1:30-33

What is the Son to you?

- a. He should be your saviour.
- b. He should be your brother.
- c. He should be your example.
- d. He should be your message.
- e. He should be your reason for serving.

Again, if God the Son is not these things to you, you are then missing out on the true joy and power of Almighty God.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. He is the Spirit of God. He is in close relation to the Father. Matthew 12:28
2. He is Spirit of the Lord. He is in close relation to the Son. Luke 4:18
3. He is the Holy Spirit. He is Himself. Luke 11:13
4. He is the Spirit of truth. John 14:17, John 15:26

What is the Spirit to you?

- a. He should be your guide.
- b. He should be your teacher.
- c. He should be your comfort.
- d. He should be your illuminator.

If God the Holy Spirit is not these things to you then you will not be in close communication with the God that extended His mercy to you through salvation.

(Guthrie, Shirley C. Jr.; 'Christian Doctrines'; Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1968)



(The original paper-print publication used a graphic here which, because of copyright restrictions, cannot be reproduced in this electronic edition. The space has been left blank to maintain continuity with Dr Hartley's original page numbering)

Do we not see God the Father as the one over us with power to judge, God the Son as the one in front of us with power to cleanse, and God the Holy Spirit as the one in us with power to minister? This is the God that we serve. He is not just the Father, He is not just the Son, and He is not just the Holy Spirit. This demands that we never concentrate on one or two to the exclusion of the other. We tend to separate, divide and isolate the members of the Trinity for our purpose of study, and I fear we leave them that way at times. He is all three As Well As One.

TRINITARIANISM

The Trinity of God is His tri-personal existence as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The essence is simultaneously three persons and three persons are simultaneously one essence.’ (Miller, Dr. David; Theology Class Notes; Western Baptist College; Salem, OR)

The Athanasian Creed states: ‘We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance.’ (Quoted in Bancroft’s Elemental Theology. Taken from the book, Elemental Theology by Emery H. Bancroft. Copyright 1977 by Baptist Bible College. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. p 65)

Bancroft mentions, ‘The Trinity is therefore three eternally interconstituted, interrelated, inter-existent, and therefore inseparable persons within one being and of one substance or essence.’ (Taken from the book, Elemental Theology by Emery H. Bancroft. Copyright 1977 by Baptist Bible College. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. p 65)

FALSE VIEWS OF THE TRINITY

Unitarianism: The unitarians trace their roots to Arius or Arianism. They feel that the Father created the Son.

Sebellianism: The Father was the God of the Old Testament, The Son was the God of the New Testament and The Holy Spirit is the God of this time. There is only one God but He has manifested himself in three different ways in three different times.

Tritheism: This holds to three separate Gods.

Swedenborgianism: There are three elements to God. Just as there are body, soul and spirit in man, there are Father, Son and Holy Spirit in God.

WHO IS GOD?

A. He is the Father: John 6:27, ‘for him hath God the Father sealed.’; Romans 1:7; Galatians 1:1,3. He is not only the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, but He is the Father of all living, and in a special sense the Father of the believer.

B. He is the Son: Matthew 1:22-23 tells of the announcement of the incarnation of God as the son of Mary. (Luke mentions the incarnation as well.) He is declared to be the Son of God in John 5:25. John 20:28 shows that Thomas knew that Christ was God.

C. He is the Spirit: Acts 5:3,4 tells of Ananias and Sapphira lying to the Holy Spirit. They would not have died if this had not been God. Attributes of deity are used of the Spirit as well (Hebrews 9:14; 1 Corinthians 2:10).

GOD IS ONE. God is a unity even though there are three persons within that unity. This is seen in both the Old and New Testaments. Deuteronomy 4:35, I Kings 8:60, Isaiah 45:5, Mark 12:29-32, I Co. 8:4-6.

GOD IS THREE. The term Trinity is not used in Scripture, however, the Trinity is hinted at in the Old Testament:

1. Many times God is a plural noun Genesis 1:1,26; 3:22; 11:6,7; 20:13; 48:15; Isaiah 6:8.

2. Genesis 11:7 is concerned with the tower of Babel and the Lord is going to go down to see. The verb ‘come’ is plural and this requires a plural

speaker. The speaker is speaking to two or more. 'Come let us go down....'

3. Lord is distinguished from Lord. Genesis 19:24, 'Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven;' Hosea 1:7, 'But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord, their God....'. (This is God speaking of Christ.)

4. The Lord has a Son. This is a little used text, yet is of great importance. Psalm 2:7, 'I will declare the decree The Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.'

5. Genesis 1:1,2, mentions that God created and that the Spirit moved upon the waters.

6. Genesis 6:3, 'And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man....'

While the Trinity is hinted at in the Old Testament

the Trinity is taught in the New Testament.

1. In the baptismal scene we see the Trinity clearly Matthew 3:16,17. Christ is being baptized, The Father is speaking, and the Holy Spirit is descending.

2. John depicts the Trinity quite clearly John 14:16,17. In this text we see Christ asking the Father to send the Spirit.

3. Matthew 28:19 mentions all three in the baptismal formula for the church age.

4. Peter clearly mentioned the Trinity, 1 Peter 1:2. 'Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.'

5. Paul also mentions the Trinity in one of his

prayers, 2 Corinthians 13:14. ‘The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.’

Creation

We can see the Trinity in the creation, if we draw a number of passages together to answer the question, “Who did it?”

1. **The Spirit:** Genesis 1:2
2. **The Word:** John 1:1-14; Hebrews 11:3
3. **God through Christ:** Ephesians 3:9
4. **The Son:** Colossians 1:15-19
5. **God by Christ:** Hebrews 1:2 (**Christ upholds all things. Hebrews 1:3**)
6. **The Father and the Son:** Proverbs 30:4
7. **The Father for His pleasure:** Revelation 4:11

SUBORDINATION

Some theologians get upset when you speak of subordination, or differences in duties within the Godhead, yet the Scripture clearly teaches this aspect of God. A few points and references on this subject will suffice.

1. **God Sent Christ:** John 6:29; John 8:29,42
2. **Christ Was Fulfilling God’s Plan:** John 10:18
3. **God Is The Head Of Christ:** 1 Corinthians 11:3
4. **God Is Christ’s Father:** John 20:17

Each person of the Godhead has **a different ministry** to us, thus fulfilling all our needs.

a. **The Holy Spirit** teaches, convicts, illumines and helps us in our prayers.

b. **Christ** takes our burdens and saves us. He also presents us to God righteous

c. **The Father** controls our lives — guides our lives. He is our Father and someone that is ap-

proachable on a very intimate basis. If the above is true then we have no reason to look outside of the Trinity and the Scriptures for fulfilment in any area of our lives.

When we study the word, we must not overemphasize any one of the God head to the exclusion of the others. The exclusion will cause an unbalanced view, if not a cultic view of God. He is God, He is plural in persons, He is all that we have in the way of deity, and He is all that we need in salvation. He is all that is needed by man, creation, or the spirit world. He has brought all into existence and He continues to uphold that creation. He may present Himself in different duties or places of ministry, yet He is fully God in all three of these persons.

The Argument for the Trinity

a. God is one. Unity is ascribed to God.

b. The Father is divine and a distinct person. The Word 'Father' is used in the Scriptures in a twofold sense in relation to the Godhead: sometimes as equivalent to God, sometimes to the first person of the Trinity.

1. Passages where 'Father' is used as equivalent to God, not implying personal distinctions. Deuteronomy 32:6; 2 Samuel 7:14; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalms 89:26; Isaiah 63:16; Jeremiah 3:19; Malachi 2:10; Matthew 6:9; Mark 11:25; Luke 12:30; John 4:21,23,24; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Philippians 4:20; James 1:17; 1 John 2:15,16

2. Passages applied to God in contrast with Christ, denoting a special relation to Christ as Son, in His office of Redeemer. Psalms 2:1-11; Matthew 11:27; 25:34; Mark 8:38; 14:36; John 5:18-23,26,27; John 10:15,30; 17:1; Acts 2:33; Romans 15:6; 1

Corinthians 8:6; 15:24; 2 Corinthians 11:31; Galatians 1:1-4; Ephesians 1:2,3; 4:5,6; Philippians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 3:11,13; 2 Thessalonians 2:16; 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; Titus 1:4; Philemon 1:3; 1 Peter 1:2,3; 2 Peter 1:17; 1 John 1:3; 1 John 4:14; Jude 1:1; Revelation 3:21

c. The Son divine, a distinct person from the Father.

1. Christ pre-existent. Existed as a distinct person before He came into the world. Micah 5:2; John 8:56-58; 17:5; 1 Corinthians 15:47; Philippians 2:6,7; Colossians 1:17; 1 John 1:1; Revelation 22:13,16 (read 13 & 16 together)

2. Not merely pre-existent, but pre-eminent, above all things except the Father, co-eternal with the Father. Matthew 11:27; 28:18; Luke 20:41-44; John 3:13,31; Acts 10:36; Romans 14:9; Ephesians 1:20-22; Philippians 2:9,10; Colossians 1:15,17,18; Hebrews 1:4-6; 1 Peter 3:22; Revelation 1:5; 3:14

3. Creator of the universe. John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2,10

4. Divine attributes ascribed to Him

a. Omnipotence. Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 28:18; John 10:17,18; 11:25; 1 Corinthians 1:24; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 2:10; 2 Timothy 1:10; Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 1:8

b. Omnipresence. Matthew 18:20; 28:20; Ephesians 1:23

c. Eternity. Micah 5:2; John 1:1; Revelation 1:8

d. Omniscience. Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 2:24,25; 21:17; Acts 1:24; Colossians 2:3; Revelation 2:23

5. The divine name is applied to Him as to no other being except the Father, implying supreme divinity. Psalms 102:24,25; Hebrews 1:8-10; Isaiah

7:14; 9:6; Malachi 3:1; Matthew 1:23; John 1:1; 20:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 9:5; Ephesians 5:5; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 2:9; Titus 1:3; 2:13; Hebrews 1:8-10; Psalms 102:24,25; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 17:14; 19:16

6. Exhibited in the Scriptures as the object of religious worship. Matthew 2:11; 14:33; 15:25; Luke 24:52; John 5:23; Acts 7:59,60; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 12:8,9; Galatians 1:5; Philippians 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 3:11,12; 2 Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 1:6; Psalms 97:7; 2 Peter 3:18; Revelation 5:13

d. The Holy Spirit is divine and a distinct person from the Father and the Son.

1. The Holy Spirit is divine. Called the Spirit of the Father, the Spirit of the Son, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of life. Genesis 1:2; 6:3; Nehemiah 9:30; Isaiah 63:10; Ezekiel 36:27,28; Acts 2:16,17; Joel 2:28; Matthew 10:20; Luke 12:12; John 14:16,17; 15:26; Acts 5:3,4; 28:25; Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:8; Hebrews 2:4; 1 Peter 1:2

2. Is distinct from Father and Son, and is personal. The personal pronoun 'He' applied to Him; personal acts ascribed to Him. Matthew 3:16,17; 28:19; Mark 1:10,11; Luke 3:21,22; John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; Acts 13:2,4; 15:28; Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 12:11

3. Converting, regenerating power ascribed to Him. Nehemiah 9:20; Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36:26,27; 37:14; Joel 2:28; Matthew 3:11; John 3:5,6; 14:26; Acts 9:31; Romans 8:9,11,14; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Galatians 4:6; 5:22; Ephesians 1:13; 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 John 3:24; Revelation 22:17

e. The Father, Son, and Spirit are classed together, separately from all other beings, as divine.

Matthew 28:19; Romans 8:9,14-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 1:20,21

Biblical evidence: divinity

1. That the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are personally distinguished from each other. There is recognized throughout a personal relation of the Father and Son to each other. So of the Holy Spirit to both.

2. They each have divine names and attributes.
3. Yet there is only one God.

Summarised from

R. A. Torrey's **NEW TOPICAL TEXTBOOK**



A summary of the Trinity as found in different confessions of faith:

RULE OF FAITH

(SECOND CENTURY, AS RECORDED BY IRENÆUS):

‘. . .this faith: in one God, the Father Almighty, who made the heaven and the earth and the seas and all the things that are in them; and in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was made flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who made known through the prophets the plan of salvation, and the coming, and the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord, and his future appearing from heaven in the glory of the Father to sum up all things and to raise anew all flesh of the whole human race. . .’

A PORTION OF THE BAPTISMAL CONFES- SION (THIRD CENTURY, HIPPOLYTUS):

‘When the person being baptized goes down into the water, he who baptizes him, putting his hand on him, shall say: “Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty? ... Do you believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was born of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was dead and buried, and rose again the third day, alive from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father, and will come to judge the living and the dead? ... Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, in the holy church, and the resurrection of the body?” The person being baptized shall say: “I believe,” and then he is baptized....’

THE APOSTLES’ CREED

(Possibly THIRD CENTURY)

‘The Symbolum Apostolorum was developed between the 2nd and 9th centuries. It is the most popular creed used in worship by Western Christians. Its central doctrines are those of the Trinity and God the Creator. Legend has it that the Apostles wrote this creed on the tenth day after Christ’s ascension into heaven . . . each of the doctrines found in the creed can be traced to statements current in the apostolic period. The earliest written version of the creed is perhaps the Interrogatory Creed of Hippolytus (c.215 A.D.). The current form is first found in the writings of Caesarius of Arles (d 542). The creed was apparently used as a summary of Christian doctrine for baptismal candidates in the churches of Rome, and, thus, became known as The Roman Symbol. As in Hippolytus’ version it was given in question and answer format with the baptismal candidates an-

swering in the affirmative that they believed each statement.’ (Quotation - author unknown)

LATIN TEXT (C. A.D. 700)

Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem, Creatorem caeli et terrae. Et in Iesum Christum, Filium eius unicum, Dominum nostrum, qui conceptus est de Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria Virgine, passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus, mortuus, et sepultus, descendit ad infernos, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit ad caelos, sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris omnipotentis, inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos. Credo in Spiritum Sanctum, sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum communionem, remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem et vitam aeternam. Amen.*

* Other manuscripts have ‘*ad inferos*’ = to the ‘middle or lower region’ or ‘place of the dead.’ ‘*Ad infernos*’ means ‘into hell,’ i.e. the place of the damned. This is the cause of the variant English translations which follow.

TRADITIONAL ENGLISH VERSION

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. AMEN.

MODERN ENGLISH VERSION

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. AMEN.

THE NICENE CREED (325 A.D. ENGLISH VERSION 1549 (WITH A FEW MINOR UPDATES))

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And we believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

MODERN WORDING (The Interdenominational Committee on Liturgical Texts)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic

Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

A portion from the **HEIDELBERG CATECHISM, 1563** (Written by Olevianus and Ursinus and revised by the Synod of Dort)

Question 22. What is then necessary for a Christian to believe?

Answer. All things promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith briefly teach us.

Question 23. What are these articles?

Answer. 1. I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: 2. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord: 3. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary: 4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried: He descended into hell: 5. The third day he rose again from the dead: 6. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty: 7. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead: 8. I believe in the Holy Ghost: 9. I believe an holy catholic church: the communion of saints: 10. The forgiveness of sins: 11. The resurrection of the body: 12. And the life everlasting. AMEN.

Question 24. How are these articles divided?

Answer. Into three parts; the first is of God the Father, and our creation; ⁽¹⁾ the second of God the Son, and our redemption; ⁽²⁾ the third of God the Holy Ghost, and our sanctification. ⁽³⁾

Question 25. Since there is but one only ⁽⁴⁾ divine essence, why speakest thou of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

Answer. Because God hath so revealed himself

in his word, that these three distinct persons are the one only true and eternal God.

Footnotes: (1) Genesis 1, (2) 1 Peter 1:18,19, (3) 1 Peter 1:21,22, (4) Deuteronomy 6:4

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH 1646 (A portion of CHAPTER 2: OF GOD, AND OF THE HOLY TRINITY)

I. There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

II. God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleases. In His sight all things are open and manifest, His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works,

and in all His commands. To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them.

III. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.

A segment from THE WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM

Question 4: What is God?

Answer 4: God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Question 5: Are there more Gods than one?

Answer 5: There is but one only, the living and true God.

Question 6: How many persons are there in the Godhead?

Answer 6: There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

A small portion of Martin Luther's THE LARGE CATECHISM

“...That it may be most easily and clearly understood as it is to be taught to children, we shall briefly sum up the entire Creed in three chief articles, according to the three persons in the Godhead, to whom everything that we believe is related, So that the First Article, of God the Father,

explains Creation, the Second Article, of the Son, Redemption, and the Third, of the Holy Ghost, Sanctification. Just as though the Creed were briefly comprehended in so many words: I believe in God the Father, who has created me; I believe in God the Son, who has redeemed me; I believe in the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies me. One God and one faith, but three persons....

Moody's Conviction in regard to the Trinity:

**“I am a full believer in
The Apostles’ Creed”**

**- Sermon: THE SECRET POWER
by Dwight L. Moody, Northfield,
Mass., May 1st, 1881**

A segment from A PURITAN CATECHISM (By C. H. Spurgeon ‘Heir of the Puritans’) Published about October 14, 1855, when Spurgeon was 21 years old. On October 14, Spurgeon preached (Sermon No. 46) to several thousand who gathered to hear him at New Park Street Chapel. When the sermon was published it contained an announcement of this catechism. The text that morning was, ‘Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.’ Psalms 90:1.

4. Q. *What is God?*

A. God is Spirit, (John 4:24) infinite, (Job 11:7) eternal, (Psalms 90:2; 1 Timothy 1:17) and unchangeable (James 1:17) in his being, (Ezekiel 3:14) wisdom, power, (Psalms 147:5) holiness, (Revelation 4:8) justice, goodness and truth. (Ezekiel 34:6,7)

5. Q. *Are there more Gods than one?*

A. There is but one only, (Deuteronomy 6:4) the living and true God. (Jeremiah 10:10)

6. Q. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?*

A. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, the same in essence, equal in power and glory. (1 John 5:7; Matthew 28:19)

John Wesley's comment on the Trinity: “Tell me how it is that in this room there are three candles and but one light, and I will explain to you the mode of the Divine existence.”

Snow is water, and ice is water, and water is water; these three are one.
- Joseph Dare.

Faith is a Trinity. It is one — faith in God; and it is three — faith in God, faith in self, and faith in humanity.

- Rose E. Cleveland.

Trinity: Biblical References

As suggested in the COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE by Matthew Henry 1662 -1714 (Matthew Henry began his Commentary, November 1704. The first volume was published 1708 (folio). This first volume with four others appeared in uniform edition 1710 (folio). It was completed posthumously)

Genesis 32:24-32 The Angel who wrestled with Jacob was the second Person in the sacred Trinity, who was afterwards God manifest in the flesh, and who, dwelling in human nature, is called Immanuel, Hosea 12:4,5.

Numbers 7:10 Vs. 10-89 ... He who now spake to Moses, as the Shechinah or Divine Majesty, from between the Cherubim, was the Eternal Word, the second Person in the Trinity; for all God's communion with man is by his Son, by whom he made the world, and rules the church, who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

Deuteronomy 6:4, 5 Here is a brief summary of religion, containing the first principles of faith and obedience. Jehovah our God is the only living and true God; he only is God, and he is but One God. Let us not desire to have any other. The threefold mention of the Divine names, and the plural number of the word translated God, seem plainly to intimate a Trinity of persons, even in this express declaration of the unity of the Godhead. Happy those who have this one Lord for their God. It is better to have one fountain than a thousand cisterns; one all-sufficient God than a thousand insufficient friends.

Ezekiel 1:26-28 The eternal Son, the second Person in the Trinity, who afterwards took the human nature, is here denoted.

Matthew 3:13-17 At Christ's baptism there was a manifestation of the three Persons in the sacred

Trinity. The Father confirming the Son to be Mediator; the Son solemnly entering upon the work; the Holy Spirit descending on him, to be through his mediation communicated to his people.

Luke 3:21, 22 The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and there came a voice from heaven, from God the Father, from the excellencies glory. Thus was a proof of the Holy Trinity, of the Three Persons in the Godhead, given at the baptism of Christ.

1 John 5:6-8 Whether this passage be cited or not, the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity stands equally firm and certain.

Revelation 1:4-8 This blessing is in the name of God, of the Holy Trinity, it is an act of adoration. The Father is first named; he is described as the Jehovah who is, and who was, and who is to come, eternal, unchangeable. The Holy Spirit is called the seven spirits, the perfect Spirit of God, in whom there is a diversity of gifts and operations. The Lord Jesus Christ was from eternity, a Witness to all the counsels of God. He is the First-born from the dead, who will by his own power raise up his people.

General references to the Trinity: Gen 1:26; Gen 3:22; Isa 6:3; Isa 6:8; Isa 11:2-3; Isa 42:1; Matt 12:18; Isa 48:16; Isa 61:1-3; Luke 4:18; Isa 63:9-10; Matt 1:18; Matt 1:20; Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Matt 12:28; Matt 28:19; Luke 1:35; Luke 3:22; Matt 3:16; Luke 4:1; Luke 4:14; John 1:32-33; John 3:34-35; John 7:39; John 14:16-17; John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7; John 16:13-15; John 20:22; Acts 1:2; Acts 1:4-5; Acts 2:33; Acts 10:36-38; Rom 1:3-4; Rom 8:9-11; Rom 8:26-27; 1 Cor 2:10-11; 1 Cor 6:19; 1 Cor 8:6; 1 Cor 12:3-6; 2 Cor 1:21-22; 2 Cor 5:5; 2 Cor 3:17; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 4:4; Gal 4:6; Phil 1:19; Col 2:2; 2 Thess 2:13-14; 2 Thess 2:16; 1 Tim 3:16; Tit 3:4-6; Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 1:2; 1 Pet 3:18; 1 John 5:6-7; Rev 4:8