

The Doctrine of the Trinity

Definition: There is only one God who eternally exists as three persons.

The Biblical Basis

- 1. The Father is God:** Rom. 1:7; 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2,3; Gal. 1:1, 3, 4; Eph 1:2, 3; 4:6; 5:20; 6:23; Phil. 1:2; 2:11; 4:20; Col. 1:2; 3:17; 1 Thes. 1:1, 3; 3:11, 13; 2 Thes. 1:1, 2; 2:16; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2, Philemon 1:3; James 1:27; 1 Peter 1:2, 3; 2 John 3; Jude 1:1; Rev 1:6
- 2. The Son is Fully God & Fully Human:** (a) FULLY GOD—Isa. 9:6; Matt. 1:23; John 1:1; 14:9; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Col. 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:8; 2 Peter 1:1. Also compare Matt. 4:10 to Matt. 14:33; John 8:58-59 (Ex. 3:14); 9:38; Heb. 1:6; Rev. 19:9-10; 22:8-9. (b) FULLY HUMAN—John 1:14, Rom. 1:2-3; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 2:14, 17-18; 4:14-16; 1 John 4:2
- 3. The Holy Spirit is a Living Being (Person) & Fully God:** (a) LIVING PERSON—The scriptures always use the pronoun “he” when referring to the Spirit rather than “it” (John 15:26; 16:13). Personal actions and feelings are ascribed to Him in John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 13:2; 15:28; Rom. 8:27; 1 Cor. 2:10; 12:11; Eph. 4:30. (b) FULLY GOD—He is the Lord (2 Cor. 3:17). He is listed alongside the Father and Son (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14). According to Acts 5:3-4, a sin against the Spirit is a sin against God. Matt. 1:20 says that it was the Holy Spirit who made Mary pregnant, but throughout the NT Jesus is called the Son of God. He has divine attributes such as being eternal (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7), omniscience (Isa. 11:2; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Eph. 1:17), and omnipotence (Isa. 11:2; Acts 1:8). He does divine works such as creation (Gen. 1:2), regeneration (Titus 3:5), and sanctification (1 Peter 1:2).
- 4. There is Only One God:** Deut. 4:35, 39; 6:4; 32:39; 2 Sam. 7:22; 1 Chr. 17:20; Ps. 86:10; Isa. 43:10; 44:6, 8; 45:5, 18, 21-22; 46:9; Mark 12:29, 32; John 17:3; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5; Jude 25
- 5. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are Three Distinct Persons:** Matt. 3:16-17; 27:46; 28:19; John 5:32, 37; 11:41-42; 14:26; 16:7; 17:1-5; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 13:14; Gal 1:3; 2 Thes. 2:16; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20-21

When we put all five of these facts together we end up with the Trinity:

- 1) The Father is God
- 2) The Son is God
- 3) The Holy Spirit is God
- 4) There is Only One God
- 5) The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are Three Distinct Persons
- 6) Conclusion—There is One God Who Eternally Exists as Three Persons

Two Most Common Heresies To Guard Against:

SABELLIANISM (MODALISM)— stresses the one God and leaves out the distinction between the three persons. **Says** that the Father is the Son, the Son is the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is the Father. People commit this error when they try to explain the Trinity by saying that a man can be a father, son, and uncle at the same time. This implies that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are merely three different modes in which God appears. This is the official doctrinal position of “Jesus Only” churches like the United Pentecostal Church, which was forced out of the Assemblies of God in 1916 because of this. Many of the arguments used by cults like the Jehovah’s Witnesses against the Trinity are really arguments against Sabellianism. For example, they ask, “If the Father and Jesus are one, how could Jesus pray to Him?”

ARIANISM—says only the Father is God. Jesus is a lesser, created being. He is far greater than all the rest of creation (including the angels) and is second only to God Himself. According to this view, the Holy Spirit is merely the impersonal power of God. The Jehovah’s Witnesses are an example of a group that holds to this view today. They say that Jesus is a god but not the God, Jehovah. “He is a ‘mighty god,’ but not the Almighty God, who is Jehovah.” “He was the first and direct creation of Jehovah.” “The Son, as the First-born, Only-begotten and the ‘creation of God,’ had a beginning. That the Father is greater and older than the Son is reasonable, easy to understand and is what the Bible teaches.” “The holy spirit is the invisible active force of Almighty God...it is not a person, but God’s active force.”

God Has Always Existed as Three Persons:

- 1) Jesus is eternal—Heb. 7:3; Rev. 2:8 (Isa. 44:6; 48:12); Rev. 22:13.
- 2) The Holy Spirit is eternal—Heb. 9:14

All Three Persons Were Involved in Creation:

- 1) The Father—Gen. 1:1, Ps. 33:6, 9; Isa. 45:18; Acts 4:24; 14:15; Heb. 11:3; Rev. 4:11.
- 2) The Son—John 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2.
- 3) The Spirit—Gen 1:2.

All Three Persons Were Involved in Salvation:

- 1) The Father—John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 2 Cor. 5:18-19; Gal. 4:4-5.
- 2) The Son—John 10:11, 17-18; Rom. 3:24; 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3.
- 3) The Spirit—John 3:5; 16:8; Titus 3:5.