



Sermon on the Trinity – the “Tri-“ unity

- We worship one God: Monotheism
- Isaiah 44: “*This is what the Lord says—...*”
- *I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God.*
- *7 Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come—*
- *yes, let them foretell what will come. 8 Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me?*
- *No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.”*

Christian! What DO you believe? What we believe about God is important. What the Church believes is what we have tried to summarize in the Creeds; We have 150 Creeds and Confessions:

- Apostles' Creed
- Creed of Nicaea
- Nicene Creed
- Chalcedonian Creed
- Athanasian Creed
- Neighbor's story

The Trinity is a Target

Everyone attacks the Trinity: Hindus, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Unitarians, etc. They are better at attack than Christian's are at defense!

You, too need to understand because we are to bring the message of our God to others!

So, I am back to: Christian! What do you believe about the Trinity?

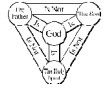
Getting it wrong (keenly feeling what James said about teachers being judged more strictly)

There are many ways this can go wrong:

- **Modalism – Sabellianism – Tritheism – Apollinarianism – Arianism – Docetism –**
Jesus was a hologram **Macedonianism – Adoptionism – Partialism – 1/3 God**

Most of these are not “crazy”, but all are wrong. **But WHO CARES if we are wrong?**
Isn't this just nitpicking?

Your belief in Christ hangs on your understanding of the Trinity... how else can you find salvation in Christ!



68% of Evangelicals do not believe that Jesus is God. Are they saved??

The Bible gives a very limited amount of information about how to explain the composition of the Trinity.

The more I talk about it, the worse it will get, but: Three Persons – Father, Son, & Holy Spirit – in one Unity that is God. The Unity is God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the Three Persons of God. I'm going to stop.

Dr. James White, in his book, *the Forgotten Trinity*: “Within the one Being that is God there exists eternally three co-equal and co-eternal persons, namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

Old Testament

Well, with the advantage of hindsight, the Trinity can be found in the Old Testament though the emphasis in that polytheistic world fell more on the concept of the **One God**.

So as you go out into the world you need knowledge!

Holy Spirit in the OT:

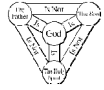
- The Spirit participated in creation (Gen. 1:2).
- The Spirit came upon certain judges, warriors, and prophets;
- The Spirit played a prominent role in Old Testament prophecy. David declared that *“the Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue”* (2 Sam. 23:2)

First person of the Trinity: Father

- There are many Old Testament passages that refer to God as Father.
- (Isaiah 63:16). *“For you are our father, though Abraham does not know us and Israel does not acknowledge us; you, O LORD, are our father; our Redeemer from of old is your name”*
- (Malachi 2:10). *“Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then are we faithless to one another, profaning the covenant of our ancestors?”*

Second Person of the Trinity

We see him, for example, in The Angel of The Lord: The Angel of the Lord has the power to forgive sins



- Exodus 23:20, 21: "[God says] Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him.
- There Is A Distinction Between The Lord In Heaven And The One On Earth (1st & 2nd persons)
 - "Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah - from the LORD out of the heavens. Thus He overthrew those cities and the entire plain,...(Genesis 19:24)."
- Psalm 110 Of David. "The LORD (Jehovah) says to my Lord (Adoni): "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." (Requoted in Matthew 22:44.)

Problems in the New Testament

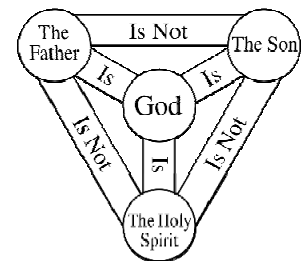
Not all problems are solved in the NT. There are new testament texts that also confuse people: "The Father is greater than I" in John 14:28

But in this verse, the Being is the same = God; the Father's role is 'greater' because we see the levels of submission in the Trinity as we see levels of submission in marriage. Man and woman, the two are one, but retain their persons although the Husband is the head of the wife.

Genesis 2:24: "the two will become one (echad) flesh."

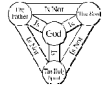
One concept that helped me understand the full intertwining of the Trinity was from Bishop Burton of Lexington wrote:

"The Father is not the true God without the Son or the Holy Spirit" Not just the "is" and "Is Not" of the Trinity Shield, but "Isn't without".



Like to say four things here:

1. The Father is not the Son: An important distinction we can address in Matthew 3:16: "And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, ..., the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; .., a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."
2. Jesus is God: Colossians 2: "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,..."
3. Jesus is claimed to be God – why do you think they crucified him?? Jesus is God: Titus 2:11-13 "[we should] live self-controlled. upright and godly lives in



*this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our **great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ...**”*

The Unitarians get thrown off by this phrase “great God and Savior, Jesus Christ”.

4. Jesus calls himself God: John 8:58 – *““Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!””* The “ego eimi”. Bad grammar. Quoting Jahweh from the OT: Isaiah 43:10: *““You are my witnesses,” declares the Lord, “and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am **he**. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me...”*

John 13:19 *““I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am **who I am**.”*

Revelation 22:12 – Alpha & Omega and, of course, John 1. The Bible sort of forces us to apply the Trinity to what we read, otherwise it makes little sense.

Finally, The Holy Spirit is God

- Acts 5 – Ananias and Saffira – lied to the Holy Spirit. Verse 4: lied to God.
- Is the Spirit personal? Does he Acts 13:2 – *“the Holy Spirit said set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them.”*
- Acts 10:19 – *“19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.””*
- Matthew 3:29 – the Holy Spirit can be blasphemed.
- Ephesians 4:30 – do not grieve the Spirit of God.
- Hebrews 10:29 – you can insult the Holy Spirit
- Matthews 28:19 – go to all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit.

So, I am back to: Christian! What do you believe about the Trinity?

We are asked to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ

We are to study to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

You, too need to understand because we are to bring the message of our God to others!

Let us pray: