

The Biblical Teaching of the Trinity

by Kyle White

Introduction

The intent of this tract is to present the truth of the Trinity simply and plainly. Volumes have been written by men whose minds have attempted to explain the mystery involved in that which God has revealed about Himself. This mystery is revealed in Scripture, but requires spiritual minds to receive.

If you have struggled with the concept of a being that is one and yet three, please take time to ponder the Scripture set forth in this tract. The infinite God is far beyond our ability to fully comprehend. If this is understood at the outset, then it will be easier to receive what He says about Himself, even though there may be nothing in the created realm that compares. Doesn't it make sense that the Creator would exist outside of His creation, and that nothing in the creation could adequately compare to Him? This is precisely why He says in Exodus 20:4, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*

The doctrine of the Trinity is not the attempt of mortal men to find in Scripture what his own natural mind has developed. This doctrine is the result of finite minds, born of the Spirit, setting forth what they have seen as they have honestly read Scripture. It is the only reasonable conclusion in light of the revelation that God has given of Himself. As you will see in the Scriptures that follow: there are three persons who are identified as God, and these three persons exist at the same time as one being, in relationship to one another.

Direct Statement

For those who would contend that the Bible nowhere mentions the word "Trinity," God has preserved for us the record concerning Himself in 1 John 5:7, *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.* This is the clearest single statement in the Word of God concerning the

Trinity, and it is the only statement that makes sense in light of the rest of Scripture. According to scholars, the manuscript evidence for this verse is weak. Yet, it still remains the most concise expression of the triune being of God found in textual history. Even if this one verse were removed from the text of Scripture, the revelation of God through His Word confirms that He is one God Who is eternally three.

There is Only One God

That there is only one God cannot be denied by any who believe the Word of God:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD—Deuteronomy 6:4.

Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God—Isaiah 44:6 (see also John 17:3; 1 Cor. 8:4; 1 Timothy 2:5).

Scriptures too numerous to name explicitly teach the singularity of God. Any teaching that promotes a multiplicity of gods is foreign to the Scripture and is to be rejected as heresy by God's people.

Plurality in Reference to God

Elohim is translated *God* in Old Testament Scripture. It is the plural form of *eloah* and is used in the first verse of the Bible, Genesis 1:1: *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*. And then in Genesis 1:26, both the plural name and plural pronoun are used: *And God said, Let us make man in our image...* That is certainly a strange way for one person to speak if he is speaking to himself! Someone will object, "But the plural form in the Hebrew emphasizes the majesty of a thing, not necessarily the number." Such objection is worthy of consideration. God certainly is majestic, which is implied in the plural form of His name. But in Genesis 1:26, the use of plural pronouns leads to the conclusion that there is more than one person being referenced in the conversation. This is a clear example of plurality in reference to God.

It is also worthy of note that twice in Scripture God is described with a trilogy of words: *holy, holy, holy*.

And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, [is] the LORD of hosts: the whole earth [is] full of his glory—Isaiah 6:3.

And the four beasts had each of them six wings about [him]; and [they were] full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come—Revelation 4:8.

Why three times? Why not four or half a dozen, or once? Could it be that the number of persons in the *LORD* being addressed is in fact three? While this is not a conclusive

argument in itself, when joined with the rest of Biblical revelation it certainly seems to be a reasonable conclusion.

More Than One Called God

It is equally clear from scripture that there are three persons who are called God. The Father is called God:

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed—John 6:27.

To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called [to be] saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ—Romans 1:7. (Note that Jesus is distinct from the Father.)

Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power—1 Corinthians 15:24.

The Son is called God:

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us—Matthew 1:23.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God—John 5:18 (see also 10:30-33).

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, [is] for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness [is] the sceptre of thy kingdom—Hebrews 1:8.

To deny that Jesus Christ is God, one would have to simply ignore these and other like passages.

The Holy Spirit is called God:

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God—Acts 5:3-4.

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son:

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you—John 14:26.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, [even] the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me—John 15:26.

Someone will say, “but the Holy Spirit is simply the power of God, not a separate person.” You cannot read the above verses and draw that conclusion. Real, personal activity is ascribed to the Spirit! A power or force would not be referred to in such a personal fashion.

Qualities of Deity in all Three

Space in this little tract does not allow for all the references that could be given to show Divine qualities in the Father, Son and Spirit. Each is referred to as creating the worlds:

Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein—Isaiah 42:5.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made—John 1:3.

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ—Ephesians 3:9.

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him—Colossians 1:16.

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high—Hebrews 1:2-3.

The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life—Job 33:4.

Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth—Psalm 104:30.

Each is referred to as eternal:

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath [are] the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them—Deuteronomy 33:27.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace—Isaiah 9:6.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, [even] in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life—1 John 5:20.

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?—Hebrews 9:14.

One could argue successfully that there are many more references to characteristics of Deity in Jesus Christ, the Son, than in the Spirit. Though this be a fact, it is no argument against the qualities of Deity that ARE ascribed to the Spirit. Since Jesus Christ is the One the Spirit exalts (John 16:13), it makes sense that more is said of the Son than the Spirit.

It is the Spirit of God who led holy men to write of the deity of Jesus Christ: *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake [as they were] moved by the Holy Ghost* (2 Peter 1:21); and exalt Him as equal with God: *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God* (Philippians 2:6). Of this same Spirit, Jesus declared that no blasphemy against Him would be forgiven, though blasphemy against Himself could be: *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the [world] to come* (Matthew 12:31-32). Jesus Christ did not view the Holy Spirit as inferior to Himself.

What We Are to Make of All This

What has been shown so far is that there is only one God, and yet this one God is referred to as three different persons. We know that these persons are not simply the manifestations of God in three different ways at different times, for they are referred to in several texts as acting simultaneously:

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased—Matthew 3:16-17.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—Matthew 28:19.

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

There is only one explanation that addresses the singularity and plurality in reference to God in a sensible way, and that is the one given by John in 1 John 5:7, *these three are one*. They are separate and distinct as persons and yet are one in essence. They are equal! What is said of One can be said of the other, though they are distinguished by their activity. For example, in salvation we see in Ephesians 1, the Father chose in Jesus

Christ a people for Himself (vs. 4). The Son then gave Himself a ransom for these (vs. 7), who in time were regenerated and sealed with the Holy Spirit (vs. 13-14). The triune God is actively involved from the beginning to the end in the salvation of His people.

Too Much for Finite Minds

You may be saying to yourself, “I see what you are trying to say, but I just can’t comprehend all of that. It is much easier for my mind to accept a teaching that says that God is one, who is manifested in three different ways.” We must always keep in mind that God is infinite! We who are finite cannot expect to be able to fully comprehend Him who is infinite. If there were no questions surround the being of God, then surely He would be of the same nature as we.

When one considers the truth of the Trinity in scripture, the exclamation of the Psalmist rings so true, *Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it* (Psalm 139:6). Though it be beyond our finite level of comprehension, we believe and worship Him Who is one and is three! ❧

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