

## **The Trinity**

### **What is the Trinity?**

- The Trinity is the Christian doctrine concerning the nature of God, which defines one God existing in three, coeternal, consubstantial divine persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, three distinct persons sharing one essence/substance/nature.
- The Trinity is a concept that comes from Scripture.
- The word Trinity is not in the Bible. We invented it. But the concept is in the Bible.
- Found in the Apostles Creed, the Nicene creed. Hymns. Holy, Holy, Holy. Doxology.
- Great Commission contains it.
- Basically it is Tri (3) and Unity (as one).
- It is difficult to grasp.
  - Some aspects of God are simply too much for our comprehension. It is mysterious.
  - **1 Timothy 3:16** And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

### **It is important to understand the Trinity as much as we can, as this is primary to how we interpret Scripture and how we relate to God.**

- In the early church times, reason was king. Doctrines of the church have been tried to be created using human reasoning. This is where Deism came into existence – God created, then stepped back and no more intervention. No miracles.
- If we discard the Trinity, we lose all supernatural. We create a cult.
- To deny any aspect of the Trinity is not a form of Christianity – It is anti-Christian.

### **God is 3 persons, Father, Son, Spirit.**

- **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.
- **Matthew 3:16-17** When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. <sup>17</sup> And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

**In these verses we see all 3 members of the Trinity. It is obvious that the authors of the Bible believed in the Trinity even if they never used that word.**

### **Where did the doctrine of the Trinity come from?**

- Formal doctrine comes from a response to heresy.
- Heresy is a belief or practice that runs counter to what the Bible declares as essential truth.
- Dogma is the collective doctrines of the church.
- Tertullian came up with the official doctrine of the Trinity.
- Ousia – substance. The divinity of God. The Son and Spirit are not less than God. They share the same ousia.

**John 14:16** And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

- In Greek, the word for another is usually hetero. Meaning another of a different kind. (Heterosexuals are attracted to a different kind of human).
- Here, the word is allos – meaning another of the exact same kind.

### **Heresies that led to the formal doctrine.**

#### **Heresy #1 – Modalism**

- The Trinity represents 3 modes of God. There is only 1 person in the Godhead. He morphs into a different mode. He is whatever is necessary at the time. This is called modalism.

- Some Oneness preachers believe that God was God of the Old Testament, then He became Jesus, now He is the Holy Spirit.
- Based on - **John 16:7** Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.
- But Jesus is not talking about changing modes. He is talking about His death.

The baptism of Jesus destroys modalism.

- **Matthew 3:16-17** When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. <sup>17</sup> And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
- If modalism is true, then Jesus was schizophrenic in the garden.
- Modalists today include TD Jakes, Stephen Furtick.

## **Heresy # 2** – Christ is a created being

- This views Christ as less than the Father. Jesus was created out of the reasoning of the Father. Same with Holy Spirit.
- This is a very early heresy. Gnostics believe this.
- Paul argued against this.

The birth of Jesus is not when Jesus began. It is simply when He became flesh. It was His incarnation, not creation.

- **Colossians 1:16-17** For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.
- **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Nicene Creed was partially in response to this heresy.

Modern example = Jehovah's witness.

St. Nicholas punched Arius at the Council of Nicaea for this heresy.

### **Jesus is not lesser than God**

- **John 14:1** "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.
- **John 14:9** Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

### **Heresy #3** – Christ is not fully human - Docetism

- They believe the flesh is just a façade. Jesus is all God. He is not flesh.
- **John 1:14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
- He is 100% human. He bled, slept, ate, wept, got angry, had a will.
- He is God, but He was human.
- His humanity brought atonement. God became flesh to die in our place and impute righteousness to us.
- **Philippians 2:5-9** Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, <sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,
- Unification church believes this.
- John wrote the Epistle of 1 John to combat this heresy:
  - **1 John 4:2-3** By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, <sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

**Heresy #4** – The Trinity is 3 gods. Tritheism.

- **Exodus 20:3** “You shall have no other gods before Me.
- **1 Corinthians 8:4** Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* no other God but one.

The creeds helped the church avoid heresy and declare what is the essential doctrines of the church.

### **The Nicene Creed**

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, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and 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, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic (universal) 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.

## **Aspects of the Trinity:**

### **All 3 Persons are Divine. All 3 are God.**

**John 8:56-59** Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad." <sup>57</sup> Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" <sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM." <sup>59</sup> Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

**Acts 5:3-4** But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? <sup>4</sup> While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

**1 Corinthians 12:4-7** There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. <sup>5</sup> There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. <sup>6</sup> And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. <sup>7</sup> But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all*:

### **All 3 are distinct.**

**John 17:4-5** I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

**John 14:6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

**John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

**John 14:16-17** And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

### **All 3 are in perfect union**

- The Father ordains it, The Son acts it out, the Spirit brings it to effect.
- God speaks the world into being, the Son (the Word) creates it, the Spirit brings life.
- All 3 at creation working in perfect unity.

### **We are reflective of our Creator – Body Soul Spirit**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:23** Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- Our world is a reflection of His nature – Water land air

Elohim – Plural word.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-5** "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! <sup>5</sup>  
You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (The Shema)

YHWH our Elohim, YHWH is one!

When the Bible reveals something hard to understand, we must believe.  
That's why this is faith.

**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.

- Grace
- Love
- Communion