

The Godhead

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY BY BOB REIERSON

The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the fundamental and foundational doctrines of Christianity.

Because of its complexity many heresies have arisen from it. Without a proper Biblical understanding of this doctrine, it would be hard to have a proper understanding of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Man's ultimate goal in life should be to know God.

Jer. 9: ²³ Thus says the LORD, " Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; ²⁴ but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the LORD.

Dan 11: 32... but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits*.

Phil 3:8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the Law*, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

Knowing God intimately was lost in the Garden of Eden. God used to walk daily in the garden and fellowship with Adam and Eve. Mankind fell into sin and was barred from having that fellowship. Our sin has made a separation between God and us (Is 59:1). After Cain killed Abel, he moved away from the presence of the Lord (Gen 4:16) As men went further from the Lord their speculations about God became futile and exchanged the knowledge and the truth about God for many ideas about who God is. They started worshipping many gods; the Sun, Moon, Stars, idols, creating new gods. Now today many are confused about God. (Rom 1)

God took the initiative in restoring us to Him and access to Him is open in Christ Jesus.

The full knowledge of God remains veiled, our ability to understand His complexity is limited. Even after we come to a true knowledge of salvation, our minds are not renewed. (Rom 12:2)

As we read, study and obey and believe the Scriptures we come to develop our relationship to God and He reveals Himself to us. When we stand before Him the main question He will ask us will be based on did we know Him.

Matt 6: ³ But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

⁶ But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face ¹⁸ so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

John Wesley once said "can a worm understand a man, and how can a man understand God?"

Even though our knowledge of God is limited:

1. What knowledge we have has to line up with the Word of God.
2. As we grow in our understanding more revelation about God will also grow.
Jer. 29: 11-14 says if we seek Him we will find Him, if we search for Him with all our heart.
3. By loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength we come to know God and His ways. God knows the heart and controls the revelation about Him.
4. There is coming a day when He will reveal Himself to us fully
1 Cor 13: ¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known

The Trinity

The word trinity is not in the Bible. It is a good term. It is a theological term used to describe the Godhead. It was first used by an early church father named Tertullian. It comes from Tri-three and Unity- one, to describe the unity of God in three persons. When I am talking to someone who opposes this doctrine (such as a Jehovah Witness) I refrain from using the term trinity and use the scriptural term Godhead – Acts 17:29, Col. 2:9, Rom 1:19-20

In the Bible the Scriptures give us a revelation of the eternal Godhead, who is revealed Himself as one God existing in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each is distinguishable but indivisible in essence. They are co-eternal, co-existent, co- equal in nature, attributes, power and glory.

In the early church there were heretics teaching other doctrines about God. Some taught there were three separate Gods. (Tritheism) Some taught Jesus was a lesser God than the Father.

Some did not believe that Jesus became flesh. As heresies arose, the church gathered church leaders together in councils and produced Creeds that defined what the apostles had taught and what the church should be teaching.

In 1500 to combat the heresies of Unitarianism and Tritheism and preserve what the church believed, The Athanasian Creed was written:

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the universal faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled; without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic(universal) faith is this:

That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is; such is the Son; and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated; the Son uncreated; and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father unlimited; the Son unlimited; and the Holy Ghost unlimited. The Father eternal; the Son eternal; and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals; but one eternal.

As also there are not three uncreated; nor three infinites, but one uncreated; and one infinite. So likewise the Father is Almighty; the Son Almighty; and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighty; but one Almighty. So the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord; the Son Lord; and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity; to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord;

So are we forbidden by the catholic religion; to say, There are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created; but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten; but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid; the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity.

Understanding and Explaining the Trinity:

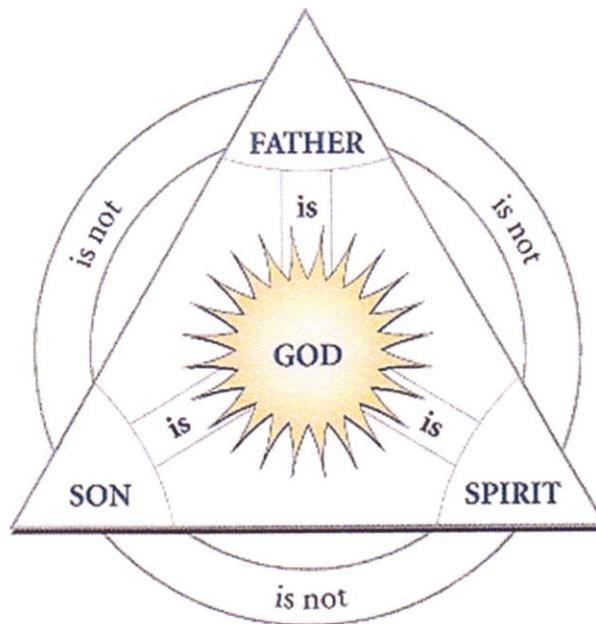
The only way we can understand the Trinity is by divine revelation. You will never understand the Trinity by human investigation, logic, philosophy, or science. The only way we understand this doctrine is what God says in His Word.

When we say there is a divine Trinity, one God in three persons it sounds like it defies logic.

- Can you understand a God that never had a beginning?
- Can you think of anything else that never had a beginning?
- Can you explain how God can be everywhere at the same time, feeding the birds, listening to every prayer, counting every hair, etc.

RA Torrey states: (1) God is Spirit and numbers belong primarily to the physical world, and difficulty must arise when we attempt to conceive spiritual being in forms of physical thought (2) God is infinite, we are finite. "He dwells in light no man can approach unto" Our attempts at a philosophical explanation of the tri-unity of God is an attempt to put facts of infinite being into the forms of finite thought, and of necessity can be—that God is essentially one, and He is also three. There is but one God, but this One God makes Himself known to man as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and they are separate personalities.

The Bible states clearly there is One God. The Bible also makes reference that God the Father is God. Jesus the Son is God, The Holy Spirit is God. An overemphasis on the oneness or the Threeness of God will produce heresy. So we say we believe in one God existing in three persons



One God

- Deut. 4:35 The Lord He is God there is none beside Him
- Is 44:6 Beside Me there is no God
- Deut. 6:4 Hear Oh Israel the Lord our God is One Lord
- Mark 12:32 For there is one God and there is none other but He
- Eph. 4:6 One God and Father of all

The Hebrew and Greek languages have 2 words for “one”

Hebrew- Yachead- Speaks of absolute unity, the mathematical number one Used 12X in Old Test.

Gen. 22 2, 12 Abraham offered up his only (yachead) son, Isaac

The Word Yachead is never used in reference to God.

Echad – speaks of a compound or collective unity which comprises more than one person i.e. a crowd, one people, one nation. Examples:

These two shall become one (echad) flesh Gen 2:24

People are gathered together as one Ezra 3:1

All the rest of Israel were of heart to make David king 1 Chron. 12:38

The word “echad” is used hundreds of times in the Old Test. This is the word used concerning one God.

The 2 Greek words which carry the same thought are “hies” and “monos”

Plurality in the Godhead

Gen. 1:1 In the beginning **God (Elo heim)** Plural can be translated Gods vs. 26

God said Let us make man in our image (Plarality) vs 27 He made man (Singular)

Gen 3:22 And God (Eloheim) said Man is become as one of us –(see Gen. 11:6)

Is. 6:8 The voice of the Lord saying Who will go for us?

Is 48: 16 The Lord God (Father) and His Spirit (Spirit) has sent Me (the Son)

Is 61: 1 The Spirit (Spirit) of the Lord (Father) is upon Me (the Son) cp Lk 4:18

Ps 110: 1 The Lord (the Father) said unto my Lord (the Son)

Zech. 12:1,9-10 Jehovah is speaking, they will look upon Me who they pierced (Jesus)

The Trinity at the Baptism of Jesus. The Father speaks from heaven, The Spirit descending on Jesus Matt 3 :16-17

The great commission Matt 28:19 Baptizing them in the Name (sing) of the Father Son and Holy Spirit (three)

The Resurrection of Jesus. God raised Jesus Col 2 :12 Jesus said Destroy this temple and in 3 days I will raise it up (John 2:19) yet in Rom.8 :11 says If the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead

1 Cor 12:4-6 the Gifts diversities of gifts but the same Spirit, ministrations but the same Lord (the Son) diversities of operations but the same God (the Father)

Eph 2:18 Access to the Father through His (the Son) by one Spirit

1 John 5:7-8 There are 3 that bear record in heaven the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit

God is Love- before He created anything He was eternally love which speaks of fellowship.

The Scriptures recognize Three persons as God, and the Scriptures say that there is one God.

The Father is God 1 Peter 1:2

Christ is God

- John 1:1-18
- John 20:28 the no-longer doubting Thomas declares my Lord and my God
- Romans 9:5 Christ... who is God over all, blessed forever Amen
- Titus 2:3 looking forward to the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior
- Heb 1:8 But of the Son he says Thy throne O God is forever

The Spirit is God Acts 5:3-4

These three are distinct from each other

Each of the persons of the Godhead is:

Eternal- The Eternal **Father** Deut 33:27 **Son** Phil 2:6 Micah 5:2 The **Spirit** Heb. 9:4

Omnipresent- the **Father** Jer 23:23-24 **Son** Eph 1:23 Matt 18:20 the **Spirit** Heb 9:14

Omniscient: the **Father** Heb 4:12 1 Jn 3:20 the **Son** Col 2:3 the **Spirit** 1 Cor 2:10

Omnipotent: **Father** Matt 19:26 **Son** Matt 28:18 Rev 1:8 **Spirit** 1 Cor 12: 8-11

Imutality: **Father** Mal 3:16 Jas 1:17 **Son** Heb 13:8

Heresies concerning the Godhead:

Arianism- Taught that God One Eternal Person created a super angelic being, the only begotten Son and the Son created the Spirit

Sabellianism – the Father Son and Holy Spirit are three aspects or three manifestations of the one God

Tritheism- Accepts the Threeness of God but reject His unity. Three Gods

Unitarianism- Accepts the existence of One God but reject His Threeness

Symbols and Types of the Trinity:

There are many types in the Bible, here are just a few:

- **Sun, Moon and Stars**
 - Sun: Source of light and life- The Father
 - Moon: becomes as blood Rev. 6:12- it's light is reflected from the Sun- Jesus
 - The Stars: the Holy Spirit in the saints
- **Noah's Ark**
 - One Ark for Salvation
 - First Story- Foundation --- Father
 - 2nd Story- had the Door cp. John 10 :9 Jesus is the Door
 - 3rd Story- the Window the Illuminator, where the Dove is released John 14:26 the Spirit
- **Abraham**- the Father / Isaac the only begotten Son./ **Jacob** had 12 sons
- **The Ark of the covenant**
 - The mercy seat: one piece of gold- cherub/ cherub/ mercy seat
 - The construction of the boards was gold/ wood/ gold
 - The contents of the ark were:
 - The table of the Law- The Father
 - The golden pot of Manna-the Son John 6:32-36
 - The Rod that budded- The Holy Spirit- fruitfulness

The Coverings for the Tabernacle-

- Badger's skin covered all- God the Father over all
- Ram;s skin dyed red- Jesus
- Goats hair curtains Holy Spirit inwrought workings and operations

The 3 Feasts of Israel-

- Tabernacles- God the Father- completeness of redemption
- Passover- the Lamb the Son
- Pentecost- the Holy Spirit

Conclusion: We want to know God in His fullness.

We should learn to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. Then we can love others. We should learn to love:

God our Father.

- Our Father which art in heaven
- Jesus prayed that we would develop this relationship John 17 :21- that they may be one even as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be in us...

Jesus our Savior and Lord

- .2 Cor 11:² For I am jealous for you with the jealousy of God himself. I promised you as a pure bride to one husband—Christ.

The Holy Spirit

- He is our Guide, Helper, Teacher, Comforter this all speaks of relationship
- His help is the only way to conquer sin and flesh. Gal 5
- We should pray and sing in the Spirit.

2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all