

The Doctrine of the Trinity

One of the early controversies in the church was that of the nature of God and the Trinity. In brief, in the 4th century, Arius, an elder in Alexandria began teaching that Jesus Christ was a created being, and that before being created by God the Father, Jesus did not exist. (This belief is now called Arianism). The archdeacon of Alexandria, Athanasius, opposed Arius, and in the synod of 321 Arius was deposed. In 325 Emperor Constantine convened the first ecumenical council at **Nicea** and the matter was considered. One faction or the other predominated over the following years, and Athanasius himself was banished as many as five times when Arianism prevailed.

Eventually the church formulated and adopted the Athanasian creed which declared Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be equal and co-eternal, affirming the doctrine of the trinity.

But what does the Bible say of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

The Deity of God the Father

John 6:27 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.

1 Cor 8:6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Gal 1:1 Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;)

Gal 1:3 Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,

Eph 6:23 Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Phil 2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Th 1:1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Tim 1:2 To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Titus 1:4 To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.

1 Pet 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

2 Pet 1:17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

2 John 1:3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

Jude 1:1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

Luke 3:21-22 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, ²² And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

The Deity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mat 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Mat 26:39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Mat 26:42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

Mat 26:63-64 [NIV] But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." ⁶⁴ "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

John 8:17-19 It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. ¹⁸ I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. ¹⁹ Then said they unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know me, nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

John 9:35-38 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? ³⁶ He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? ³⁷ And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. ³⁸ And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

John 10:30-33 I and my Father are one. ³¹ Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. ³² Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? ³³ The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

John 13:13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

Rev 1:8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Eph 3:9 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:

Col 1:12-16 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: ¹³ Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: ¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: ¹⁵ Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: ¹⁶ 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:

Col 2:8-9 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. ⁹ For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

John 1:1-3,14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² The same was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. ¹⁴ And the Word was made 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.

The Word is identified as God and creator here in John, and the Word was made flesh, God incarnate. In conjunction with Ephesians 3:9 and Colossians 1:12-16, this is clearly speaking of Jesus Christ as God and Creator.

The Deity of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 5:3-4 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? ⁴ 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.

Here in verse 3, Peter says Ananias has lied to the Holy Ghost, and in the next verse Peter says Ananias has lied to God. Clearly then according to Peter, the Holy Spirit is

indeed deity, a part of the Godhead. This is also apparent from the following verse in the book of Matthew-

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

According to Matthew, baptism is to be in the name of all three persons of the Godhead.

Also, according to Scripture, the Holy Spirit -

- Participated in creation - Gen 1:2
- Is a Comforter - John 14:26
- Is eternal - Heb 9:14
- Speaks - 1 Tim 4:1; Rev 14:13
- Teaches - John 14:26
- Reveals the future - Luke 2:26
- Bears Witness - Rom 8:16
- Guides to the truth - John 16:13
- Gives life (quickens) - Rom 8:11; 1Pet 3:18
- Reproves - John 16:8
- Makes Intercession - Rom 8:26
- Indwells the believer - 1 Cor 6:19
- Distributes gifts - 1 Cor 12:11
- Seals the believer - Eph 1:13, 4:30
- Invites the Sinner - Rev 22:17
- Can be Blasphemed - Mat 12:31-32
- Conceived Jesus in Mary - Mat 1:20

A Trinity, but only one God

Mal 2:10 Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?

Mark 12:32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

Rom 3:30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

1 Cor 8:6 But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.

Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

1 Tim 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

One God, Yet Triune

All three entities of the Trinity were present at the baptism of Jesus-

Mat 3:13-17 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. ¹⁴ But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? ¹⁵ And Jesus answering said unto him, **Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.** Then he suffered him. ¹⁶ 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: ¹⁷ And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

So the Bible teaches that the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are all deity, each distinct, yet each part of the Godhead, but there is only one God. While difficult for humanity to comprehend, the Trinity is indeed the truth, not because of the creeds of men, but because it is taught by the Bible.