

Discipleship:
An
Introduction to
Systematic Theology and
Apologetics

The Doctrines of God: The Trinity Part 2

The Heights Church January 17, 2016

The Trinity

The Doctrine of the Trinity is progressively revealed in Scripture.

1. Bridging the Old and New Testament

Jesus asked them a question, saying, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” He said to them, “How is it then that David, in the **Spirit**, calls him **Lord**, saying,

The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet? (Quoted from Psalm 110:1)

If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?” And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions. Matthew 22:41-46

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In the Hebrew Old Testament: **Yehovah said to Adonay**

In the New Testament: **Kyrios said to Kyrios**

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1. Bridging the Old and New Testament

- In light of the NT Psalm 110:1 says God the Father said to God the Son, Sit at my (God the Father's) right hand.
- The Pharisees would not admit to Jesus a plurality of persons in one God (Matthew 22:41-46) and hence could not answer Jesus' question. To this day Jews still have the same problem. The messiah was not to be just a great warrior/king but the Son of God!

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2. The New Testament

And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the **Spirit of God** descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a **voice from heaven** said, “This is my beloved **Son**, with whom I am well pleased.” Matthew 3:16-17

make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**, Matthew 28:19

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

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2. The New Testament

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same **Spirit**; and there are varieties of service, but the same **Lord**; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same **God** who empowers them all in everyone.

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

In the NT authors generally use

- *kyrios* translated as **Lord** to refer to God the Son and
- *theos* translated as **God** to refer to God the Father

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2. The New Testament

- We will never fully understand the mystery of the Trinity but we can summarize the teaching of Scripture regarding the Trinity into three statements:
 1. God is three persons.
 2. Each person is fully God
 3. There is one God

The Trinity

1. God is three persons.
 - As previously seen the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are distinct persons not different names or offices for the same person.
 - The Holy Spirit is not just the power of God or some kind of a Star Wars “Force.” The Holy Spirit must be a person because:
 1. The Greek word for Spirit is the neuter word *pneuma*. But in John 14:26; 15:26; and 16:13-14 the masculine pronoun is used for the Holy Spirit.
 2. The Greek word *paraklētos* (a person who helps or gives comfort or counsel to another person or persons) is used for the Holy Spirit in John 14:16, 26; 15:26; and 16:7.
 3. If the Holy Spirit is the power of God then verses like Luke 4:14 **Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, would make no sense: i.e: Jesus returned in the power of the power of God.**

The Trinity

2. Each Person is fully God.

- **God the Father is obviously God and hence fully God.**
- **God the Son is fully God.**
 - **For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, Colossians 2:9**
 - **He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. Hebrews 1:3**
 - **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1.**

The Trinity

2. Each Person is fully God.

- God the Father is obviously God and hence fully God.
- God the Son is fully God.
 - It is universally agreed that the Word refers to Jesus. So Jesus is God.
 - Note: the Jehovah's Witnesses translate this as the *Word was a god*. Therefore, Jesus is a heavenly being but not fully God. Their argument is based upon the fact that the definite article (the) does not appear in the Greek before God. However, this is normal for Greek when the linking verb is "to be" (Colwell's rule). In 1989 The Jehovah's Witnesses acknowledged that Colwell's rule applied but then said "the testimony of the entire Bible is that Jesus is not Almighty God" without any evidence to support their view.

The Trinity

2. Each Person is fully God.

- The Holy Spirit is fully God.

The Holy Spirit is classified on an equal level with the Father and Son.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and of the **Son** and of the **Holy Spirit**, Matthew 28:19

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to **lie to the Holy Spirit** and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? **You have not lied to man but to God.**” Acts 5:3-4

The Trinity

3. There is one God.

Hear, O Israel: The **Lord** our **God**, the **Lord** is one. Deuteronomy 6:4
Yehovah Elohim

Or is **God** the **God** of Jews only? Is he not the **God** of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since **God** is one—who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Romans 3:30

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

You believe that **God** is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! James 2:19

Theos