

# The One True God (Pt. 3)

Tom Pennington | April 30, 2017

# The Nature of God



# I. What God Is Not

- A. Anti-theism / Atheism – there is no god.
- B. Pantheism – all is god.
- C. Polytheism – there are many gods.
- D. Gods of other monotheistic faiths: Islam, Zoroastrianism



## II. What God Is

- A. A Being
- B. Living
- C. Infinite
- D. Spirit
- E. Personal
- F. Trinity

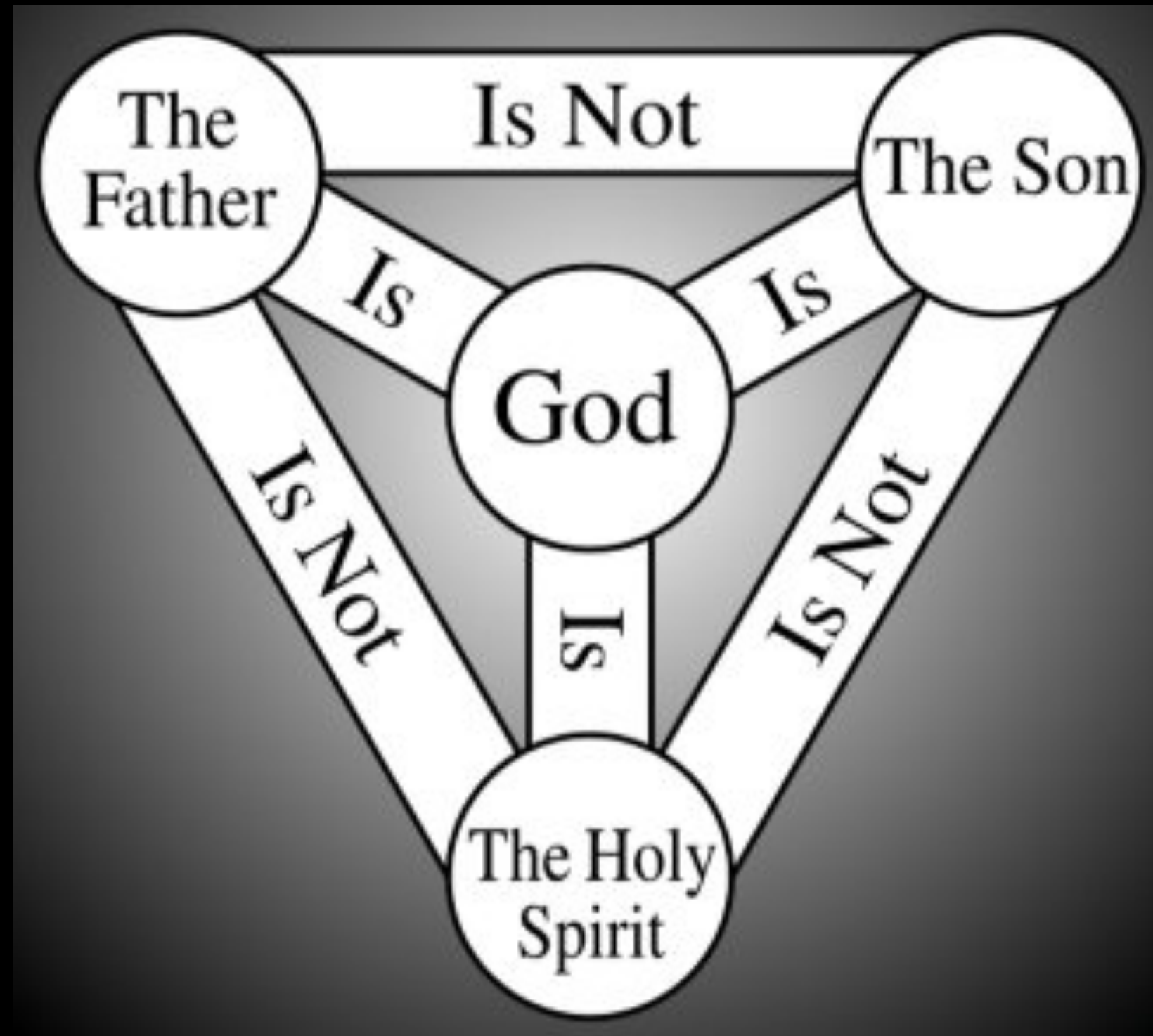


# The Trinity: Seven Scriptural Propositions

1. The Father is God.
2. The Son is God.
3. The Holy Spirit is God.
4. The Father is not the Son.
5. The Father is not the Holy Spirit.
6. The Son is not the Holy Spirit.
7. There is only one God.



“The Shield of the Trinity” (*early 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. AD*)



# I. The Trinity Defined

## A. What It's Not

1. Tri-theism – three gods
2. Partialism – each Person has 1/3 of essence
3. Modalism – not three Persons but only One Person in different modes
  - Sabellianism, or Modalistic Monarchianism
  - Only one God who assumes three different roles or modes.
    - E.g., a man can be a husband, a father, and a son at the same time.
  - United Pentecostals (aka, Jesus-only Pentecostals or oneness Pentecostals)



# I. The Trinity Defined

## A. What It's Not

4. Subordinationism (Arianism) – only the Father is in essence God; Christ and the Spirit are created and subordinate.
  - Denies the deity of Jesus Christ.
  - Arius, bishop of Alexandria (died 336 AD)
  - God the Son & the Spirit were created by God the Father.
  - The Son existed before the rest of creation and is far greater than the rest of creation, he is still not equal to the Father in all his attributes.





# I. The Trinity Defined

## A. What It's Not

### 4. Subordinationism (Arianism)

- Argued from...
- **1)** Christ being the only begotten Son (e.g., John 1:14, 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9).
  - But originally *monogenes* described an only child (Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38).
  - One of a kind.
  - E.g., Heb. 11:17



# I. The Trinity Defined

## A. What It's Not

### 4. Subordinationism (Arianism)

- Argued from...
- **2)** Col. 1:15—"firstborn of all creation."
  - Used most often of one who is preeminent but is not the literal firstborn (cf. Ps. 89:27).
- Arius's views were condemned at the Council of Nicea in AD 325.
- Today: Jehovah's Witnesses



# I. The Trinity Defined

## B. What It Is

1. God is one in His essential Being or constitutional nature (essence).
2. In the one divine Being there are three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit .



## *Biblical Doctrine...*

“These distinct modes of relationship establish a definite order (Lat. *taxis*) within the Trinity, so that it is proper to say (with respect to their relationship only, not with respect to their essence, glory, or majesty) that the Father is first, the Son is second, and the Spirit is third.”



# I. The Trinity Defined

## B. What It Is

1. God is one in His essential Being or constitutional nature (essence).
2. In the one divine Being there are three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit .
3. The essence of God belongs equally to each of the three persons.



## II. The Trinity Defended

### A. The Intimations of the Old Testament

- 1) Plural pronouns and plural verbs
  - Gen. 1:26
  - Gen. 3:22
  - Gen. 11:7



## II. The Trinity Defended

### A. The Intimations of the Old Testament

- 2) Elohim
  - Plural in form
  - Usually gets a singular verb, except in:
    - Gen. 20:13 – *caused to wander* = plural
    - Gen. 35:7 – *revealed* = plural
    - 2 Sam. 7:23 – God went (plural) to redeem Israel.



## II. The Trinity Defended

### A. The Intimations of the Old Testament

- 3) Plural forms of Creator and Maker
  - God is referred to as creator or maker and in Hebrew the word for *creator* or *maker* is plural.
  - Job 35:10; Ps. 149:2; Eccl. 12:1; Is. 54:5





## II. The Trinity Defended

### A. The Intimations of the Old Testament

- 4) Distinctions between members of the Godhead
  - Gen. 19:24 – Lord rained...from the Lord
  - Hos. 1:7 – God is speaking: “I will deliver them by the Lord their God.”
  - Ps. 2:7 (v. 4= Lord speaking—he said to me, you are my Son); 45:6-7 (cf. Heb. 1:8—applies it to Christ); 110:1 (cf. Matt. 22:41-46)
  - Is. 48:16—note verse 12—the first and the last; “the LORD God has sent me and His Spirit”
  - Gen. 6:3—the Lord said, “My Spirit will not always strive with man.”



# II. The Trinity Defended

## A. The Intimations of the Old Testament

- 5) The Angel of the Lord
  - Identified as YHWH yet distinguished from Him.
  - Gen. 16:7–13
  - Gen. 18:1–21
  - Gen. 22:11–18
  - Gen. 31:11–13
  - Ex. 3:2–5



## II. The Trinity Defended

- B. The Scriptural Evidence of the Three Propositions
  - 1) There is One God.
  - 2) Christ is God.
  - 3) Christ is Distinct from the Father.



# 1. There is One God.

- Deut. 6:4 - "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!
- Deut. 4:39 – "Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.
- Deut. 32:39 – 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me.
- Is. 45:5 – "I am the LORD, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God (cf. Isaiah 43:10; 44:6, 9; 45:5-6, 21–22).



# 1. There is One God.

- John 17:3 -- This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.
- 1 Cor. 8:4-6 – we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.
- 1 Tim. 2:5 –there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus,
- Jam. 2:19 – You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.



## 2. Christ Is God.

- a) He is called God.
  - Is. 9:6; John 1:1, 18; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:8; 1 John 5:20



## 2. Christ Is God.

- b) OT descriptions of YHWH are applied to Christ in the NT.
  - i) Attributes
  - ii) Work of creation
    - Cf. John 1:3 and Is. 42:5
  - iii) Worship (cf. Ex. 20:3, 5)
    - John 5:23; Heb. 1:6; Phil. 2:10–11 (cf. Isa. 45:23)



## 2. Christ Is God.

- c) The name of YHWH is applied to Christ.
  - Matt. 3:3; cf. Is. 40:3
  - John 12:41; cf. Is. 6:1
  - 1 Pet. 3:15; cf. Is. 8:13
  - Eph. 4:7–8; cf. Ps. 68:18
  - Heb. 1:6; cf. Ps. 97:7
  - Heb. 1:10–12; cf. Ps. 102:25–27
  - John 8:58; cf. Ex. 3:14





### 3. Christ Is Distinct From the Father.

- Ps. 2:7 - "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.
- Psalm 110:1 -- The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."; cf. Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42; Acts 2:34-35; Heb. 1:13.
- Matthew 27:46 -- About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?" that is, "MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?"



### 3. Christ Is Distinct From the Father.

- John 5:32
- Galatians 4:4 – God sent forth His Son.
- Rev. 1:1 – the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him.



## II. The Trinity Defended

- A. The Intimations of the Old Testament
- B. The Scriptural Evidence of the Three Propositions
- C. The New Testament Passages that link the members of the Trinity.



## C. The NT Passages that Link the Trinity

- Matt. 3:16-17 - After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, 17 and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased."



## C. The NT Passages that Link the Trinity

- Matt. 28:19 - "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit..."
  - a) Not—"into the names [plural]..."; or "into the name of the Father, into the name of the Son, and into the name of the Spirit."
  - b) Not—"into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit [omitting the recurring articles]."



## B.B. Warfield on Matt. 28:19

“He could not have been understood otherwise than as substituting for the Name of Jehovah this other Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and this could not possibly have meant to His disciples anything else than that Jehovah was now to be known to them by the new Name, of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The only alternative would have been that..Jesus was supplanting Jehovah by a new God... There is not alternative, therefore,, to understanding Jesus here to be giving for His community a new Name to Jehovah and that new name to be the threefold Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”



## C. The NT Passages that Link the Trinity

- 1 Cor. 1:3
- 1 Cor. 12:4-6
- 2 Cor. 13:14
- 2 Th. 2:16–17
- Gal. 1:3
- Eph. 4:4-6
- 1 Pet. 1:2
- Jude 20-21



## II. The Trinity Defended

- A. The Intimations of the Old Testament
- B. The Scriptural Evidence of the Three Propositions
- C. The New Testament Passages that link the members of the Trinity.
- D. The Three Persons Work in Harmonious Unity.





# D. The Three Persons Work in Harmonious Unity

- Same attributes
  - E.g., Power: Father (1 Pet. 1:5), Son (2 Cor. 12:9), Spirit (Rom. 15:19).
- Same works...
  - Creation: Father (Gen. 1:1); Son (Col. 1:16); Spirit (Job 26:13; Ps. 104:30)
  - Incarnation: all three (Luke 1:35)
  - The Atonement: Heb. 9:14 – Christ, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God.
  - The Resurrection: Father (Acts 2:32), Son (John 10:17, 18), Spirit (Rom. 1:4).
  - Salvation: 1 Pet. 1:2
  - Indwelling of the Christian: John 14:15-23



## II. The Trinity Defended

- A. The Intimations of the Old Testament
- B. The Scriptural Evidence of the Three Propositions
- C. The New Testament Passages that link the members of the Trinity.
- D. The Three Persons Work in Harmonious Unity.
- E. The Early Creeds



# The Apostles' Creed

"I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord; ... I believe in the Holy Ghost."



# The Nicene Creed

“We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance (homoousion) with the Father” (Council of Nicea, AD 325.).



# The Athanasian Creed

"We worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity. Neither confounding the persons, nor separating the substance."



# The Athanasian Creed

*Biblical Doctrine:* “The classic Christian doctrine of the Trinity is well summarized by what is known as the Athanasian Creed. Though it bears his name, Athanasius (AD 295–373) did not write it; rather, it seems to have been penned in the fifth or sixth century AD at the earliest. The key defining statements are captured in this phrase: ‘We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance.’ The doctrine of the Trinity, simply put, is that God is absolutely and eternally one essence subsisting in three distinct and ordered persons without division and without replication of the essence.”



# Implications of the Trinity

- 1) Salvation
- 2) Revelation
- 3) Relationship
  - i) We were made for relationship—with God and with others.
  - ii) Our lives must center on relationships.

